

Creating Positive Conversations With Patients

With a focus on Giving Bad News

with
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**It's at the point that
we have to give bad
news that things
tend to escalate.**

**How not to
give bad
news.**

**Where did the
employee go
wrong with us?**

LET ME KNOW IN THE CHAT.

**A doctor inspired
me to learn the best
way to give bad
news.**

4 KEYS TO GIVING BAD NEWS

Clearly explain the situation

Acknowledge concern

Manage expectations

Guide to the next steps

**Challenging
scenarios we'll take
on in this training.**

A patient is significantly late to their appointment and the front desk staff member has to deliver the news that they will not be seen that day.

**Appointments are running behind schedule
due to provider back-up.**

A staff member is helping a patient who is irritated because their phone call has been transferred between a couple of different departments at the health center.

A patient returns to the health center after having a discussion with their physician regarding receiving a specific intervention/referral (i.e., prescription, referral to a program, or a physician attestation regarding disability and/or illness). The physician has made a clinical decision to not provide this patient with that referral, and the front desk staff member must communicate this to the patient.

**We'll start with keys
to bad news, and
move on to other
frameworks.**

4 KEYS TO GIVING BAD NEWS

Clearly explain the situation

Acknowledge concern

Manage expectations

Guide to the next steps

BE CLEAR

KEY ACTION 1

How: Explain the issue.

Be brief - No preamble, no fluff, no excessive apology

Be assertive -not passive, not aggressive/defensive

Be confident in your delivery

ACKNOWLEDGE IMPACT

KEY ACTION 2

Why: Recognizing the person's concern helps you preempt escalation and move the person from the emotional right-brain to a focus on resolving the issue.

How: One sentence to recognize the inconvenience:

"I know this delay throws off your entire day/schedule...."

"I realize this puts you in a bind."

"We want to get you in with the doctor as much as you want that."



ALLOW THE PERSON TO RESPOND

KEY ACTION 3

Why: Pausing to let the person respond protects you from over-explaining or losing confidence, and it gives them a chance to express emotions or ask questions.

How: After key action 2, pause.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

KEY ACTION 4

Why:

To prevent further disappointment by establishing what you can realistically achieve.

How:

Be transparent

Avoid assumptions

Keep customers apprised

Are there options you can offer?

PRACTICE GIVING BAD NEWS

A. Apply the 4 keys to this scenario: A patient is significantly late to their appointment and the front desk staff member has to deliver the news that they will not be seen that day.

B. Apply the 4 keys to this scenario: Appointments are running behind schedule due to provider back-up.

THE PERSON WHO MOST RECENTLY GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL WILL LEAD THIS DISCUSSION.

Adopt & Apply

**More help for
creating positive
conversations**

CREATING COMMON GROUND

Validation

Optioning

Pacing

VALIDATION

“It seems like...”

“It sounds like...”

“It looks like...”

OPTIONING

The more options a person has, the more likely they are to calm down without de-escalation tactics.

PACING

Pace urgency

Pace with agreement

If you outpace, walk it back

Adopt & Apply

PRACTICE OPPORTUNITY

A. A patient returns to the health center after having a discussion with their physician regarding receiving a specific intervention/referral (i.e., prescription, referral to a program, or a physician attestation regarding disability and/or illness). The physician has made a clinical decision to not provide this patient with that referral, and the front desk staff member must communicate this to the patient.

Or

B. A staff member is helping a patient who is irritated because their phone call has been transferred between a couple of different departments at the health center.

THE PERSON WHO HAS THE MOST SIBLINGS WILL LEAD THIS DISCUSSION.

Meeting un-expressed needs





**TAKE
THAT FIRST
STEP**

Pause & Capture Ideas



**Start
Stop
Continue**

Thank you!