

GUIDE

FOR DISCUSSING SERIOUS NEWS

STEP	NOTES
GET READY Info, People, Place	<i>Make sure you have all the information you need at hand</i> <i>Make sure you have all the right people in the room</i> <i>Find a place with some privacy</i>
UNDERSTAND What the patient knows	<i>“What have other clinicians told you is going on?”</i> <i>“This helps me understand what you are thinking”</i>
INFORM Starting with a headline	<i>“The cancer has come back.”</i> <i>Give the information clearly and to the point with a one-sentence headline of the most important piece of information you want them to take away</i> <i>Avoid jargon</i> <i>After the headline you will need to give more information, but after giving the headline, STOP!</i>
DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY Respond directly to emotion	<i>“I can see this news is not what you were hoping for.”</i> <i>Expect the patient’s first response to be emotion</i> <i>Acknowledge the emotion explicitly</i>
EQUIP The patient for the next step	<i>“Is there anything I could do to make this a little easier?”</i> <i>“I want you to be prepared for the next step. Can I explain...”</i> <i>Don’t dismiss concerns or say that everything will be fine</i>