Delivering serious news

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Disclosure

Nothing to disclose
Introduction

- In the Netherlands

- 550-600 new pediatric oncology patients/year

- Survival ± 75 %

- Each year: 140-150 children dying from cancer/treatment

- Cancer: biggest cause of death in children > 1 y
Communication

- 2 channels of communication
  - Emotional
  - Cognitive

- Emotional:
  - Quicker
  - Faster
  - More powerful

- When you feel emotional, the cognitive part of your brain goes silent

- Strong emotions: attend to the emotion FIRST before you give cognitive information
GUIDE

- Get ready
- Understand What the patient/family knows
- Inform
- Dignify emotion
- Equip the patient for the next steps
Get ready

- All the information!
- Prepare mentally
- Prepare headline
- Reserve time
- Privacy
- Everyone in the room?
- Pager
Understand

- Understand what the patient/family knows
- Tell me what you understood...
- In their own words
- See the emotion
Inform

- Start with the headline
- Clearly
- In 1 sentence
- Most important piece of information you want them to take away
- 5th grade terms
- So short they can tell it at home
After information

- STOP!
- Be silent
- Wait for the patient to respond
After information

- STOP !
- Be silent
- Wait for the patient to respond

- DO NOT
After information

- STOP!
- Be silent
- Wait for the patient to respond

- DO NOT
- Fill the silence with technical details
After information

- STOP!
- Be silent
- Wait for the patient to respond

- DO NOT
- Fill the silence with technical details
- Give false hope
After information

**STOP !**
- Be silent
- Wait for the patient to respond

**DO NOT**
- Fill the silence with technical details
- Give false hope
- Say everything will be OK
After information

- STOP!
- Be silent
- Wait for the patient to respond

- DO NOT
- Fill the silence with technical details
- Give false hope
- Say everything will be OK
- Try to FIX it!
After information

- STOP!
- Be silent
- Wait for the patient to respond

- DO NOT
- Fill the silence with technical details
- Give false hope
- Say everything will be OK
- Try to FIX it!

- Self soothing
Dignify emotion

- Expect the first response to be emotion

- Acknowledge the emotion explicitly
  - I can see this is not what you were hoping for
  - I understand this comes as a shock
  - ...

...
Responding to emotion: NURSE

- Naming:
  - I can see you are frustrated...

- Understand:
  - This helps me understand nog even nakijken

- Respect:

- Support:
  - I will make sure you ...

- Explore:
  - Tell me more about what this means to you
Response with empathy
This must be very hard for you
I can’t even imagine what this must be like for you

Don’t say: I understand ... you don’t!
Equip the patient for the next step

- Ask permission:
- Would it be OK if I explain to you .... ?

- Don’t dismiss concerns
- Don’t say everything will be OK
- Ask if they understood everything : can you tell me...

- ‘I wish’ statements
Introduction

- Communication is a learnable skill
- Follow the mind maps
- DO’s:
  - After the info: STOP!
  - Attend to the emotion FIRST
- Practice