

Telephone Call checklist – Unwelcome News

Framework	Remember:	Notes:
<p><b>PREPARE YOURSELF</b></p>	<p>Clarify in your own mind the purpose of the conversation you are about to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you need to find out from the other person?</li> <li>• What new understanding do you need the other person to reach?</li> </ul> <p>Know that you are doing this from a place of compassion</p>	
<p><b>FIND OUT ABOUT THE PERSON YOU ARE TALKING TO</b></p>	<p>Find out who you are talking to and (if it's a phone call) where they are. Is it safe for them to talk?</p> <p>Tell them the name of the person you are talking/ calling about, and ask their relationship to that person (check you are speaking to the right family).</p> <p>Find out what the person you are talking to already knows and/or expects, and how they feel about that.</p> <p>Summarise what the person has told you.</p> <p>Are they alone? Is someone else around to support them? (This will probably suggest bad news is coming)</p>	
<p><b>BRING THE PERSON TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION</b></p>	<p>Describe some of the things that are wrong with the unwell person, in such a way that you are forecasting that a discussion of bad news is going to come</p> <p>Summarise the new developments, checking for understanding. Ask whether they have any questions.</p> <p>Prepare them to hear bad news by expressing your compassion</p>	

	<p>Tell them <b>clearly</b> what you know and/or expect to happen</p> <p>Keep the message simple and clear: use non-medical words. Pause to let them take in each part of your message.</p> <p>Wait and allow silence after giving the information.</p>	
<b>CLOSURE</b>	<p>If possible, try to deliver something that is something of comfort if you can say it truthfully</p> <p>Express compassion again</p> <p>Discuss future arrangements FU phone call? Messages to pass to patient? Death Certificate &amp; belongings</p> <p>Goodbyes</p> <p>Help to orientate the person to their next steps. What are they going to do now? Do they have anyone to talk to? Are there people they need to inform? Who will help them to do this?</p> <p>Remind them of your name, and say goodbye</p> <p>Write the conversation up straight away. The next person to call will need to build on the conversation you have just finished.</p>	
<b>SELF CARE</b>	<p>If the conversation causes you distress, there should be time for you to take a break afterwards; someone in your organisation designated to listen if you wish to talk; regular supervision sessions for you to debrief and reflect.</p>	