



How to Break Bad News

Hearing about a loved one's passing is a heavy and disorienting experience. For you, the person responsible for disseminating the sad news, the task can also be difficult and stressful.

Before breaking bad news, please consider the following suggestions:

1. Advance preparation ♦

Prepare the environment:

Try to arrange a quiet, private, and undisturbed environment (avoid crowded public places) to give the recipients a safe space to express any possible emotions that may arise after hearing the bad news.

Presence of family and friends:

If possible, make sure they are with family and friends, as their support and companionship can provide comfort during difficult times.

Stabilize yourself:

It is normal to feel stressed, nervous, or hesitant before delivering bad news. Remember to stabilize yourself by taking a few deep breaths and allowing yourself a pause before speaking.



2. Breaking bad news



Provide mental preparation:

Before delivering the news, try to get a feel for how the person is feeling and what they might expect. Use a simple opening to prepare them mentally and create a buffer (e.g. “I’m sorry, I may have to tell you a bad news.”).

Deliver the message gradually:

Deliver the news gradually, speaking clearly and calmly. Keep it straightforward (e.g. “He has passed away.”). Allow pauses for them to process the information. Appropriate physical contact, such as a gentle pat on the shoulder, can provide a sense of reassurance and comfort.

3. After breaking the news



Provide empathic responses:

Accept the recipient’s feelings after they hear the bad news. Offer empathetic responses to show understanding (e.g. “I know it’s really hard to take in, and it must be painful.”).

Offer silence and space:

Allow silence and space for their grief and emotional pain. Just being there for them is already a great support.

Discuss the next step:

Once they seem more settled, briefly explain the next steps and check if they understand. Avoid overwhelming them with too much information and detail at this moment. The goal is to help them focus on the present and get a sense of what to expect moving forward.

