

## OBJECTIVES FOR COMMON CLINICAL PROBLEMS

### Breaking Bad News

A. KNOWLEDGE: Students should be able to define, describe and discuss:

1. Basic clinical communication skills as described in the Calgary-Cambridge Guide to the medical interview.
2. Patient-centered approach to patient communication, i.e. the incorporation of:
  - The patient's unique experience of illness in a broad psychosocial context
  - The biomedical aspects of disease
3. The steps involved in communicating bad news to patients. These would include, but are not limited to:
  - Preparing the setting
  - Initiating the session
  - Sharing the information
  - Demonstrating sensitivity and empathy to the patient
  - Responding to patient's questions (stated and unstated) and concerns
  - Providing emotional support to the patient and family
  - Discussing future plans and follow-up
  - Summarizing and close the interaction
  - Documenting the discussion with the patient

B. SKILLS: Students should be able to demonstrate in interactions with simulated patients the following communication skills:

1. Establish initial rapport demonstrating respect and interest in the patient
2. Establish what the patient already knows or fears
3. Assess how much info the patient wants to know
4. Provide a warning to prepare a patient that difficult news is about to be given
5. Give information simply, honestly, and in small chunks
6. Allow for pauses and silences
7. Repeat important points and frequently check for understanding and feelings
8. Acknowledge and validate feelings
9. Explore patient's hopes and what is important for them in the future
10. Identify a management plan and a time frame for what is to happen next
11. Emphasize partnership with the patient
12. Identify support systems and involve relatives and friends

