

# Appendix A

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## THE WORDS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE PATIENT

Even after reviewing the guidelines above on disclosing adverse events to patients, you may find it helpful to consider some model language. In the case of a medication error, one might say this:

Let me tell you what happened. We gave you a chemotherapeutic agent, carboplatin, instead of the pamidronate you were supposed to receive.

I want to discuss with you what this means for your health, but first I'd like to apologize.

I'm sorry. This shouldn't have happened. Right now, I don't know exactly how this happened, but I promise you that we're going to find out what happened and do everything we can to make sure that it doesn't happen again. I will share with you what we find as soon as I know, but it may take some time to get to the bottom of it all.

Once again, let me say how sorry I am that this happened.

Now, what does this mean for your health? You received only a fraction of the usual dose of carboplatin, so it is unlikely you will have any adverse effects from the infusion. However, I would like to monitor you closely over the next weeks. In patients who receive a full dose, the side effects we expect include....We usually monitor patients for these side effects by....We treat these side effects by....I want to see you in my clinic tomorrow so we can....

# Appendix D

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## TRAINING FOR COMMUNICATION

### Basic Steps for Medical Dialogue<sup>28</sup>

- Preparing
- Initiating conversation
- Actively listening
- Acknowledging what you have heard
- Responding

### Communication Using a Skills-Based Model<sup>26</sup>

- Preparation
  - Review the facts*
  - Identify and involve the appropriate participants*
  - Use an appropriate setting*
- Verbal initiation of the conversation
  - Determine patient and family readiness to participate*
  - Assess the patient and family's medical literacy and ability to understand*
  - Determine the patient and family's level of medical understanding in general*
- Presenting the facts
  - Simple description of what happened*
  - What is known of the outcome at that point*
  - Describe the next steps*
  - Sincerely acknowledge the patient and family's suffering*

- Concluding the conversation
  - Summarize*
  - Repeat key questions raised*
  - Establish the follow-up*
- Documentation
  - Describe the event*
  - Describe the discussion*

### Other Communication Considerations

- No medical jargon
- Cultural/language barriers
- Speak slowly
- Be aware of body language
- Don't overwhelm with information—don't oversimplify either
- Allow ample time for questions—don't monopolize the conversation