

Key Takeaways

Here are the key takeaways of this module for your easy reference.

- As a veterinary professional, you should have the right skill to break the bad news to your clients. This enables you to support your client in his difficult time, relate to him and his family.
- The SPIKES protocol was developed for medical professionals to deliver news to their patients. SPIKES stands for:
 - Setting up
 - Perception
 - Invitation
 - Knowledge
 - Emotions with empathy
 - Strategy or summary
- Active listening is a key to successful communication with your clients. This involves:
 - Listen to your clients; don't just wait to speak
 - Hold your eye contact
 - Maintain a good posture
 - Nod periodically to encourage your client to speak
 - Mirror the speaker's body language to show interest
 - Allow the speaker to complete entire thoughts
- The nonverbal cues in the body language, such as an open posture, firm handshake and eye contact work best in a veterinary set up. As a veterinary professional, a positive and sympathetic body language can help you in supporting your clients and build rapport.
- You can help your clients to come in terms with the bad news with empathy. Empathy involves:
 - Nod whilst listening
 - Smile where appropriate
 - Leaning towards the person you are speaking with to show that you are engaged in the conversation
 - A gentle touch on the arm can convey support and sympathy if your client is comfortable

- There are several negative reactions faced by medical practitioners when delivering upsetting or unexpected news:
 - Anger
 - Verbal abuse
 - Physical aggression
 - Hysteria
 - Complete denial

- Time constraint and the physical environment of the veterinary clinic can pose barriers to good communication.
 - Prioritising your workload can keep you focused on what you really need to complete, thus achieving your daily milestones.
 - Research conducted in human healthcare settings shows that patients will feel more relaxed when they find elements that they can control, such as allowing the patient or the family members sitting in the reception to choose a certain TV channel that they prefer.