

### Objectives for Communication of Radiation Risks with Patients

1. To delineate data used to prepare for discussions on risk
2. To illustrate how I try to relax patients to promote discussion
3. To describe methods used to focus patients on important aspects of their concerns
4. To advocate open-mindedness and respect in discussions with patients.

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### Case #1 Patient discovered to be pregnant after CT of abdomen/pelvis

- First contact - initial data
  - Clarify professional limitations
- Allay emotional stress, be understanding and compassionate
- Assess the circumstances: patient's perspective versus actual situation
- Assess the potential risk
- Rely on my experience to communicate a perspective
- Help patient realistically assess her circumstance --- be positive

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### Case # 2 Father of girl who had frequent urinary tract examinations is concerned about radiation

- Assess the circumstances: Listen to the caller explain his/her perspective
  - Explain professional limitations
- Assess the risk: is the risk the radiation or the quality of healthcare?
- Help patient realistically assess circumstance
- Provide some options for the caller

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### Case #3 Patient desperate for relief from suffering suggests suicide an option

- Express empathy, assure patient you will assist as best you can
- Assess circumstance ---- listen a lot
- Focus patient on what the patient can do to find help
- Be reassuring and encourage to seek help from specialists

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### Case #4 Patient claims rashes on back are due to lumbar spine examination.

- Take claim seriously
- Provide patient with demonstration of sincere effort to understand
- Provide honest evaluation from experience

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