



OSCE Checklist: **Breaking Bad News**

Opening the consultation		
1	Wash your hands and don PPE if appropriate	
2	Introduce yourself to the patient including your name and role	
3	Confirm the patient's name and date of birth	
4	Explain the reason for the consultation	
5	Gain consent to continue with the consultation	
Setting		
6	Undertake consultation in a comfortable, quiet and private space (if possible)	
7	Set up room appropriately (e.g. avoid physical barriers between yourself and the patient)	
8	Offer to have another person present (healthcare professional or family member) with the patient's consent	
Perception		
9	Explore the sequence of events leading up to the consultation (e.g. previous consultations and investigations)	
10	Establish what the patient already knows or is expecting to be told	
11	Identify any specific patient concerns	
Invitation		
12	Check the patient wishes to proceed with the consultation and be given the information	
Knowledge		
13	Use a warning shot prior to breaking the bad news	
14	Deliver the information in sizeable 'chunks' using simple and clear language to explain medical concepts	
15	Use silence and allow the patient to process what you have told them after each 'chunk'	
16	Respond to any questions appropriately, without providing false hope or inaccurate information	
17	Avoid using medical jargon or euphemisms	
Emotions and empathy		
18	Recognise and respond to the patient's emotions with empathy (verbal and non-verbal)	
Strategy and summary		
19	Provide a clear plan for next steps (e.g. specialist referral, follow up appointment)	
20	Summarise and check the patient's understanding	
21	Clarify any misunderstandings (if required)	
22	Offer assistance to tell others	

23	Signpost to sources of further information (e.g. specialist nurses, support groups) including written materials (if appropriate)	
Closing the consultation		
24	Dispose of PPE appropriately and wash your hands	
Key communication skills		
25	Active listening	
26	Empathy (verbal and non-verbal)	
27	Establishing rapport	
28	Summarising	
29	Signposting	

Read the full guide at
[geekymedics.com](https://www.geekymedics.com)



Download our
[clinical skills app](#)