

## MODULE 3

# Challenging Consultations

Paediatric



## Delivering bad news. (Slide 67)

### Background

Kieran (age 4 years) has been referred by the GP to the team for assessment (query autism).

Kieran has been seen by the team and the paediatrician and paediatric nurse are now meeting with the parents to discuss their observations and talk about next steps.

### Say something like

*“Now let’s look at a video of an paediatrician and a paediatric nurse meeting with parents to to discuss their observations of Kieran. In this film the parents are actors. Watch the video clip and identify what communication skills the clinicians use.”*

### Skills

In this interaction, the clinicians use good communication skills to help them manage this challenging consultation:

- The nurse starts with a warm **greeting** – ‘Hi Barbara, Hi Christy... I am Grainne the clinic nurse and shakes hands’
- Paediatrician starts with a warm **greeting** – ‘Hello my name is’... and shakes hands
- **Signposting**... ‘Barbara remember we met earlier’...
- Invited the parents to take a seat
- Thanked the parents for coming in to talk to the team
- **Establishing initial rapport**: ‘It was lovely to meet Kieran... he is a lovely little fellow’
- **Warning shot**: ‘You are here today because your GP had some concerns about autism’ – pauses – ‘and having met Kieran and listened to your story’... ‘I too would have some concerns about autism’...

- **Demonstrating empathy:** *'I can see that this is very difficult'... 'I can see that this is upsetting' ... 'those are very normal concerns and worries that all parents have' (normalising)/'this is difficult news, I can see that it is upsetting for you... one of the difficulties is the uncertainty'*
- **Small chunks:** *'Let me just explain to you what we have observed this morning' – pauses – 'seeing and examining Kieran' – pauses – 'I think the fact that he is not using words at this stage' – pauses – 'the way he is not able to communicate... the way you would expect a child of his age to do so... and some of his behaviours'...*
- Used good **active listening** skills (head-nodding, leaning, eye-contact, moved closer)/*'I can hear from what you are saying'...*
- **Involving the parents:** *'I don't believe it is anything that you did or didn't do... you recognised that there was a problem and you came for help' (nurse)*
- **Body language** (good non-verbals) – sitting down/good eye contact/warm facial expression/leaning forwards/nodding/open body language/moved closer to parents when mother was distressed (nurse)/silent while parents reacted to the news and expressed their concerns/open gestures
- Spoke slowly and clearly
- **Avoid giving reassurance prematurely:** *'We don't know what causes autism... There is not a cure... children are affected differently by autism... it is very early at this stage to see how Kieran is going to progress'...*
- **Safety-netting:** *'We have a team here that hopefully will start working with you very soon... there's lots of things that the team can do and that they can teach you to do at home'...*
- **Next steps (nurse):** *'I will give you some leaflets to go home with today, because you will be coming back to see us in a few weeks... so have a read through them... write down any questions that you might have... we will go through them together'*
- **Next steps (paediatrician):** *'What we need to do now is arrange for Kieran to see a therapist for a formal assessment... the diagnosis of autism can only happen after that formal assessment... there are a few things that we need to do... check his hearing... after the therapist has seen you. I will see you back... here in 5 or 6 weeks after that...at that time I will have the therapists report... and we can talk then about all the things that the therapy team need to do... you are going to see Grainne and I here in the clinic... we are going to meet you regularly... we will answer any questions that you have as they come along'...*