

## MODULE 3

# Challenging Consultations

## General Acute



### Disclosing errors. (Slide 83)

#### Background

Violet has rheumatoid arthritis and is attending the Rheumatology clinic today for a review appointment. She is generally well and her arthritis is reasonably controlled on her current medication. She has however a sore left knee, which is worse with walking and getting in the way of day to day tasks. A decision was made on discussion with her doctor to inject the sore left knee. Violet is happy with this and moves to the bed for her knee injection. The doctor prepares the syringe and injection pack, returns to the bedside and injects the right knee.

After the consultation, he realises it is the wrong knee that has been injected. This means that a healthy joint has been injected which is most likely a zero harm event, but does carry the possibility of introducing infection (as would be the case with injecting the correct joint). There is also the discomfort of the unneeded procedure.

The patient will need to have the correct knee (the left one) injected to gain any therapeutic benefit.

#### Say something like

*“Now let’s look at a video of a clinician disclosing an error. In this video clip the patient is actually an actor. Watch the video clip and identify what skills the clinician uses.”*



## Skills

In this interaction, the clinician uses good communication skills that help him manage this challenging consultation. He:

- Starts with a warm **greeting** – ‘Hello Mrs Edwards’ and shakes hands
- **Body language:** sit down at eye level/warm facial expression/good eye-contact
- **Warning shot:** ‘I know that you were getting ready to go home, and I have asked you to come in again to speak to me because I have something very important to tell you’... pauses
- **Apologised:** ‘I realised that I have injected the wrong knee... I am really sorry’
- Used good **active listening** skills (head-nodding, leaning, eye-contact, pauses, silence)
- **Small chunks:** ‘I was rushed’ – pause – ‘I was distracted’ – pause – ‘I didn’t do that’ – pause – ‘I am really sorry’
- **No jargon**
- **Demonstrating empathy:** ‘I can see that you are very upset’...
- **Sign-posting:** ‘We have three options’...
- **Acknowledged:** ‘I was rushed’ – ‘I was distracted’ – ‘I made a mistake’... ‘I am really sorry’
- **Closing the session:** ‘Thank you’ and shakes hands

