



Delivering Bad News

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Chairs have to deliver difficult news to...

- Part- and Full-time Faculty
 - Students
 - Administrators
 - Alumni
 - Community Members
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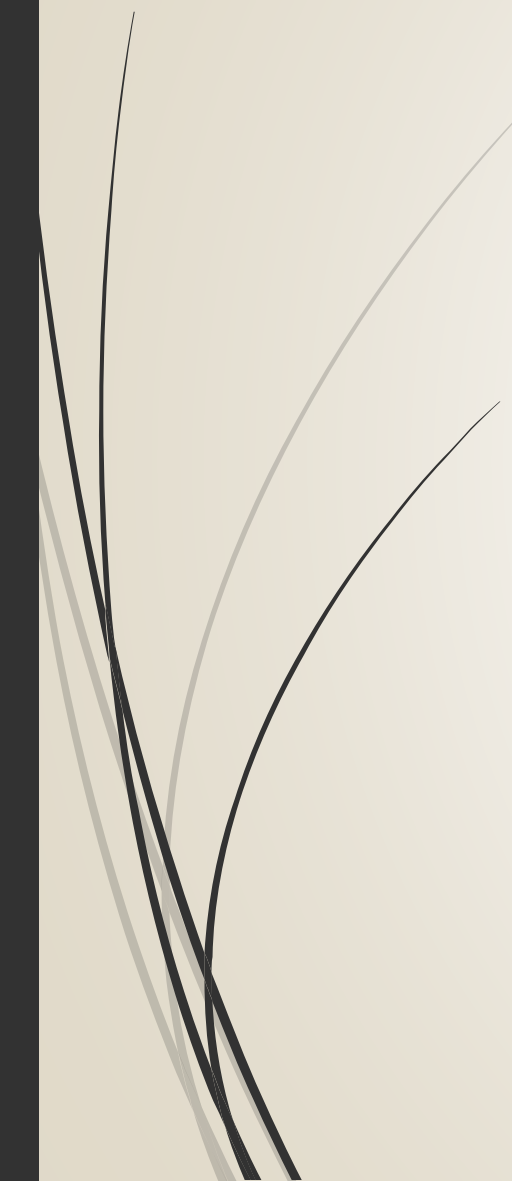
Challenges in delivering difficult news

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- Saying the difficult thing
 - Responding to recipient's reactions
 - Offering support to recipient in difficult times
 - Avoiding misperception or misunderstanding
 - Creating further difficulties with institutional procedures



SPIKES Protocol

An Approach for Delivering Difficult News

- **Developed in oncology**
 - **Used successfully for many years**
 - **Applicable to a range of circumstances**
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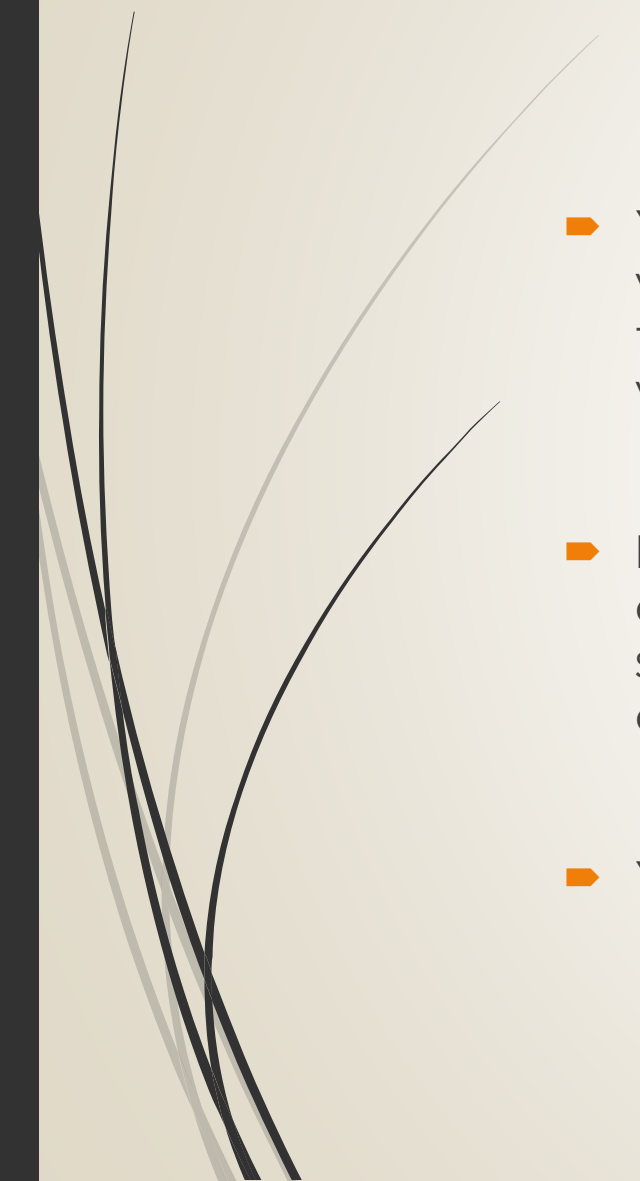


SPIKES Protocol

- **S**ET up the conversation
- Assess **P**ERCEPTIONS
- Obtain **I**NVITATION
- Give **K**NOWLEDGE
- Assess **E**MOTIONS
- **S**UMMARIZE next steps



Case Study – Faculty Member

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- ▶ Your department's courses have seen a drop in enrollment. You've been told you'll be reduced by one term faculty position. A cut of this nature had been the subject of informal discussion among tenured faculty for a few weeks, so you share the news with them prior to talking to the term faculty member.
 - ▶ Later that week, the term faculty member comes to your office. She's noticed others seem to be avoiding interaction with her and, frankly, are acting a little strange. She decided to come to you after a colleague asked if she'd give him all of her materials for an upcoming course so he could teach it.
 - ▶ You've been delaying this difficult conversation, but there's no avoiding it now.



Case Study - Student



- ▶ You've reviewed a grade dispute in a class taught by another faculty member in your department. While the student seems quite sincere in his belief that he was graded unfairly, your perception of the situation and the policy in the syllabus is that he was given the same options as other students. You believe the grade should stand.
- ▶ In previous situations of this nature, you've sent an email to the student saying you believe the grade should stand. You've usually included information on the next step in the dispute process, just in case the student wishes to pursue it.
- ▶ How might the SPIKES protocol influence the way you handle the interaction with the student?