

Adapted from Back AL, et al. Cancer J Clin. 2005

Component	Purpose/goal	Physician statement
N Naming	<p>Name an emotion that the patient might be feeling to show you understand their experience.</p> <p>Use gentle language rather than making firm statements.</p>	<p>"It sounds like you are worried that..."</p> <p>"I wonder if you are feeling sad that..."</p>
U Understanding	<p>Show sensitive appreciation of the patient's predicament or feelings.</p> <p>Do not offer premature reassurance.</p>	<p>"My understanding of what you're saying is that you are concerned about..."</p> <p>"I cannot imagine receiving this news myself..."</p>
R Respecting	<p>Acknowledge and respect the patient's emotions to show empathy.</p> <p>Match the strength of the acknowledgment to the level of the patient's expression of emotion.</p>	<p>This can be nonverbal response or facial expression.</p> <p>"It is okay to be so ... about this situation. What you are going through would be hard for anyone."</p>
S Supporting	<p>Show concern and express a willingness to help.</p> <p>Acknowledge the patient's efforts to cope.</p>	<p>"I'll be with you during this illness, no matter what happens."</p> <p>"While you are in the emergency department, I'll be here to help, just let the nurse know and I'll be in as soon as I can."</p>
E Exploring	<p>Ask focused questions or express interest in something that the patient has mentioned to deepen the empathetic connection.</p>	<p>"You said you were worried about being a burden on your family. Tell me more about that."</p>

Reference: Back AL, Arnold RM, Baile WF, Tulskey JA, Fryer-Edwards K. Approaching difficult communication tasks in oncology. CA Cancer J Clin. 2005 May-Jun;55(3):164-77. doi: 10.3322/canjclin.55.3.164.