A Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis

What to say and how to say it.
The most common cancer diagnosis for men in 2012 was prostate (1 in 5), **bowel (1 in 11)**, melanoma (1 in 14) and lung (1 in 13)

*Source: AIHW analysis of the Australian Cancer Database*
The most common cancer diagnosis for women in 2012 was breast (1 in 8), bowel (1 in 15), gynaecological (1 in 22) and melanoma (1 in 24).

Source: AIHW analysis of the Australian Cancer Database
Survival rates for bowel cancer

Between 1983–1987 and 2008–2012, 5-year relative survival from bowel cancer improved from 48% to 68%.

Source: AIHW analysis of the Australian Cancer Database
You have cancer.

Breaking bad news is the responsibility of the doctor.
Communication Essentials

• Look interested
• Try to look relaxed
• Body language
• Facial expression
• Use of touch
• Eye contact
• Ask open ended questions
• Listen, listen, listen
So what happens next??

- Create a quite environment
- Help identify the client’s feelings
- Be empathetic, honest, genuine & credible
Studies have shown that only a proportion of the initial consultation is remembered.

It is important that a carer is present.

Source: Cancer Council Victoria
It's about them not you...
Acknowledge the news and encourage the patient to express their feelings if they wish to

Be aware of your role and of your limitations
Information should be given simply and honestly in language the patient understands.

Detail won’t be remembered but the way you explain it will be
Don’t rush off.

Allow for as much time as needed. It’s important.
Feedback from our Doctors

‘a great asset for our service’

‘as a doctor it is reassuring to know that after I speak with the patient I can leave them with you, they are supported and that you follow up with them the next day’

‘provides excellent support to both the clinician and the patient’

‘it is fantastic!’

‘excellent initiative that should be widely implemented’
Feedback from out patients

‘very grateful for your assistance’

‘very grateful to have a calm presence guiding me through the information.’

‘wonderful to be supported by a nurse’

‘presence of a nurse invaluable for all the follow up support and to answer questions’

‘a special THANK YOU for your very kind attention, especially to my wife’
Resources:

For patients, families and carers

Bowel Cancer Australia  www.bowelcanceraustralia.org
Cancer Council  www.cancervic.org.au
Beyond Blue  www.beyondblue.org.au

For health professionals

Cancer Australia  www.canceraustralia.gov.au
National Health and Medical Research Council  www.nhmrc.gov.au