

Program Director

Walter F. Baile, MD has refined the techniques of teaching communication skills to include video and other media. According to Dr. Baile, "Communication is the cornerstone of comprehensive cancer care... it allows oncology clinicians to build meaningful relationships with their patients." Dr. Baile has brought his talents in teaching communication skills to many parts of the world. He has published extensively in the area of oncology communication.

Project Director

Catherine D. Kirkwood, MPH, has 30 years of success in the development of educational programs for health care professionals in the Texas Medical Center. She is the former Clinical Education Director for the AIDS Education & Training Center (AIDS ETC) for Texas & Oklahoma and Education Manager for MD Anderson's Complementary/Integrative Medicine Education Resources (CIMER) Web site. She was Project Director for the International Health & Medical Media (FREDDIE) Award winning program "Important Conversations: Talking with Patients About Complementary Therapies" and the Telly Award winning program "Crossroads."

Program Faculty

Robert Buckman, MD, PhD, Medical Oncologist at the Princess Margaret Hospital, Professor at the University of Toronto and Adjunct Professor at MD Anderson has established many of the principles and protocols in the area of communication skills and his techniques are taught at hospitals and medical schools around the world. He has produced a video series for patients and their doctors explaining in laymen's terms the symptoms and treatment of common illnesses, from angina to breast cancer. This series earned a five star rating from the EPEC (Educating Practitioners in End of Life Care) program and a bronze award from the British Medical Association.

Jean Campbell, LCSW, CET III, TEP, Director of the Action Institute of California and Adjunct Professor at UCLA has utilized action methods and role training in medical, corporate and clinical settings for over a decade. She has offered trainings and workshops on a national and international level, and by utilizing action-oriented techniques that allow participants to "try on" new roles and behaviors rather than just talking about them, offers healthcare practitioners an opportunity to build skills they can take into their work with patients.

Daniel Epner, MD, Associate Professor, General Oncology, at MD Anderson received his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine and completed his clinical and research fellowship in medical oncology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. His primary clinical focus is on the international oncology patients seen in the International Cancer Assessment Center (ICAC). He has published several articles in peer-reviewed journals, is developing research and educational programs to improve communication between cancer patients and their providers and is studying the role culture plays in oncology practice.

Renato Lenzi, MD, FACP is a Medical Oncologist and Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology at MD Anderson. Dr. Lenzi has designed and taught communication skills workshops for oncologists nationally and internationally in collaboration with Drs. Baile and Buckman. He is currently conducting research on physician/patient communication in patients with pancreatic cancer and unknown primary cancer and in the design and evaluation of communication training in oncology.

Patricia A. Parker, PhD is a Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Behavioral Science at MD Anderson. Her primary focus is in conducting research in the area of health-care practitioner-patient communication and quality of life of individuals with cancer. She has several NIH-funded trials examining the associations between uncertainty and communication on psychosocial adjustment and quality of life in patients with advanced cancers. Her work also focuses on evaluating outcomes of communication skills training.

Phydddy Tacchi, RN, CNS, LMFT, LPC is a psychiatric Advanced Practice Nurse who specializes in the treatment of psychiatric difficulties patients and caregivers encounter in adjusting to living a life with cancer. She conducts workshops with cancer center staff to enhance their communication skills during difficult interactions with patients and families. She has produced two videos entitled "Caring for the Cancer Patient: The Caregiver's Perspective" and "Cancer & Marriage: Four Couples" and authored a caregiver booklet, "Caregivers: Facing the Challenge Together".

Rebecca Walters, MS, LMHC LCAT TEP, has been the director of the Hudson Valley Psychodrama Institute since 1989. She has almost thirty five years of experience using psychodrama and experiential methods in groupwork, therapy, counseling, training and education. Rebecca has brought her well received training seminars on the use of action methods to conferences and training institutes throughout the US and abroad and is known for her warmth, sensitivity, humor, and ability to create a safe environment in which students can learn and practice new skills and roles.

For more information:

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I*CARE

Interpersonal Communication and Relationship Enhancement



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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD Anderson
Cancer Center

Making Cancer History®

“Communication is a Skill Set which must be Learned and Practiced”

Anthony Back, MD, University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center: Principal Investigator “Oncotalk” Training Program

Communication skills determine:

- Patient and family satisfaction with care
- Motivation of patients to undergo harsh treatments
- Initiation of medical malpractice litigation
- Practitioner burnout
- The occurrence of medical errors
- The ability to obtain informed consent and accrual to clinical trials
- The ability to have difficult end-of-life discussions

Our Mission

Most cancer clinicians have not had the opportunity to develop their skills in managing difficult patient encounters such as those where there are strong emotions, stressed families or uncomfortable conversations when transitioning a patient to palliative care or discussing end of life.

Oncology providers want to extend their role beyond treating disease to establishing a therapeutic and supportive alliance with the patient and family. Our goal is to assist you in sharpening the skills necessary to manage these challenging encounters.*

*The I*CARE program addresses the requirements of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for residents and fellows in approved training programs in the areas of communication skills and professionalism.



MD Anderson

I*CARE

Interpersonal Communication and Relationship Enhancement

Programs:

I*CARE Web site www.mdanderson.org/icare:

- Video Library of Clinical Communication Skills (an educational resource for communication skills development).
- Materials designed to help you learn the fundamental principles of communication and advanced skills (discussing end-of-life issues, error disclosure, etc).
- Free Continuing Medical Education and Risk Management credits.
- Free downloads of teaching materials
- Free pocket guides to ensure a successful interaction with patients and families.

Fellow and Faculty Forums on Professionalism and Communication Skills:

- Didactic presentations on key communication skills, and demonstrations of “how to do it”.

Interactive Workshops:

- Interactive, “hands-on” workshops for clinical staff, administrators and other staff on various topics (communication challenges with patients, families and colleagues, stress and burnout, LEADERSHIP challenges and other topics relevant to oncology professionals.

Training:

- Individual private coaching sessions where participants may be observed by trainers and feedback is provided.

Train-the-Trainer:

- Interactive training to learn to apply skills to teach others and conduct workshops on stress & burnout and other topics.

Achieving Communication Excellence (ACE):

- Online lecture series with national/international speakers presenting successful techniques that may be used in your practice and with your colleagues. Free Continuing Medical Education and Risk Management credits available.

Research Opportunities:

- Participation in research projects in collaboration with scientists in the Department of Behavioral Science (assessing aspects of the oncologist/patient relationship through audio taping clinical encounters, impact of feedback of patient concerns on clinician and patient outcomes, impact of empathic expressions on patient emotional state and others).

Conferences:

- National/international experts discuss communication skills topics.

International Alliances:

- Our International Advisory Committee provides guidance and an understanding of the cultural aspects of communication skills.
- Worldwide collaborative relationships and educational agreements with Japan, Italy, Canada, Germany and Portugal.

For more information on these programs, please visit our Web site at: www.mdanderson.org/icare.

“Communication and Relationship Skills are the Cornerstone of Comprehensive Cancer Care”

Walter F. Baile, MD, Professor, Behavioral Science
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

