

Grid of Faulty Frames

Intern	Frame #	Sr. Resident
The sr. resident said earlier this family might sue. I'm trying to get the parents to focus on the positive so they don't. It would be good for their son if they focus on the positive.	1	This family might sue. Associating the team that makes care decisions with the error further erodes parents' confidence. Since the ones who made the mistake didn't disclose, the least damaging to the institution is a trainee who doesn't make decisions.
This family had a reputation for being angry, and there is no point in hanging around while a situation is escalating. My plan was to let them know quickly and then come back when they had calmed down.	2	This is a traumatic subject. My aunt suffered a stroke as a result of a medical error, and all I can think about is my blinding anger about that. So I thought the intern would actually be more able to handle the disclosure than I.
I really have no idea how to disclose an error and deal with the family members' reactions, so I just stated the facts and got out as quickly as I could.	3	I thought everyone had serious practice with simulated disclosures in medical school. I hover over the interns during procedures, and I thought this was a chance for one to taste independence.
I thought we were giving great news. In fact, I was surprised when the Sr. resident didn't want to be there for the joy. I was totally thrown off-balance by the mom's reaction. I had nothing to say.	4	The same lab error meant we also had to disclose to another family that their daughter had previously undiagnosed leukemia. I took the harder disclosure, and gave an easy one to the intern.