Delivering Bad News

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An Effective Strategy

- Be VERY CLEAR in what you are saying
- Let the recipient complain/vent
- Be consistent and clean
- Recognize that people hear things differently
Some general rules

- Describe specific behaviors/problems
- Focus on behavior, not personality (“You missed deadlines” vs. “You are irresponsible”) 
- Encourage feedback and LISTEN 
- Begin and end with something positive and a plan for improvement
The Sandwich Model

- Start with GOOD news
- Deliver the BAD news in the middle
- End with POSITIVE feedback
But what if they yell at me?!!

- People may lose their temper when confronted with a performance problem.
- Tell yourself that they are not yelling at YOU, they are yelling at the CHAIR.
- Try your best to remain calm.
- Don’t get defensive or agree with the person.
Gender differences in receiving bad news

- Johnson and Helgeson (2002) report that men’s self-esteem is not affected much by feedback in annual reviews.
- Women’s self-esteem goes up slightly with positive feedback and down with negative feedback.
- Women are more willing to change behavior after feedback (and agree more with feedback).