

## **Role play – Disclosing Medical Error**

Agenda: Read the scenario silently and prepare (2 min.), do role play (5-10 min), debrief the role play as a group (20 min.)

**Objectives** – After participating in this role play, learners will be able to:

- Describe the emotions experienced by health care professionals and by patients when discussing a medical error
- Disclose errors in compassionate, patient-centered ways, including the effective use of apology where appropriate

### **Instructions for the patient role (Mr. T)**

Setting: The exam room of your doctor's office

Scenario: You went to the Emergency Department last week for a sharp, stabbing pain in your right chest that made it hard to breathe. You had returned from a business trip to Europe a day earlier, where you had caught a cold. The ED doctor worried at first that you might have a pulmonary embolism (PE) following your 7-hour flight and obtained a chest CT scan. It was negative for PE, but it did show a nodule in the bottom of your left lung. The ED doctor said you should see your physician to get it worked up. Fortunately, you are able to be seen late this afternoon and are in the exam room waiting for Dr. N to enter.

You have been in good health, so this news has been a real shock to you. Other than taking blood pressure medicines and about 3 years ago having abdominal pains that went away on their own, you haven't needed much. Dr. N ordered an abdominal CT scan back then, but everything came out fine.

You are feeling worried about this nodule. The ED doctor made a strong point about the need to be seen, so he must be concerned about it. You have 2 kids in college with tuition to pay for, and business hasn't been all that strong the past few years, so you don't feel secure that you can miss a lot of work and travel with medical issues.