

HOW TO COMMUNICATE DEMENTIA RISK TO YOUR PATIENTS

Disclosure of biological risk factors (such as APOE and biomarkers) is crucial in dementia prevention, but must be done through a person-centered and ethically sound strategy.

Assess Before Disclosing

- Health literacy and educational background
- Emotional state, values, and expectations
- Desire or refusal to know the risk

Explain Risk Clearly

- Use absolute numbers: "35 out of 100"
- Frame positively and negatively
- Avoid vague terms: say "35% chance" not "high risk"
- Use visual aids: icon arrays, pie/bar charts

Disclosing APOE Status

- Explain APOE4 without medical jargon
- Address family implications
- Emphasize variability: risk \neq certainty



Emotional and Ethical Support

Invite emotional responses: "How do you feel?". Allow pauses and follow-up discussions. Ensure support available post-disclosure.



Empower with Action

Lifestyle changes: diet, activity, sleep. Discuss treatment eligibility (e.g. monoclonals). Shared decisions with personalized prevention plans.

KEY PRINCIPLES



Well-Framed Risk



Ethically Guided



Health Literacy



Action-Oriented



Person-Centered

