

Module: **Visual Conditions and Functional Vision:
Early Intervention Issues**

Session 1: Working with Families and Eye Care Professionals

Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading A: Chernus-Mansfield

1. Identify five key statements shared by Chernus-Mansfield that reflect feelings parents may experience after receiving a diagnosis of blindness for their young child.
 - **All the joy in their life is gone.**
 - **I can't kill this stranger, I can't break away, it will remain with me forever.**
 - **The loss shatters their dreams that are most basic to their child's existence.**
 - **The time following the diagnosis is a mourning period.**
 - **They feel like their perfect baby has died, and now they have a different one.**
 - **The happiest time of their life is now the saddest.**
 - **They feel an overwhelming need to understand a cause or reason.**
 - **They have no satisfying answers to relieve pain or diminish feelings.**
 - **They feel life is not fair.**
 - **They feel the pain comes and goes forever.**

2. Chernus-Mansfield lists eight ingredients necessary for a successful doctor-patient relationship or doctor-patient interaction. Identify the critical ingredients and a key statement for each that is necessary in establishing a successful parent-TVI relationship.
 - **Consideration. Give the family undivided attention when talking about delicate information, treat people as you would like to be treated**
 - **Truth. Truth doesn't mean brutality, be delicate and truthful when sharing and discussing difficult information with families**
 - **Clarity. Use plain language, do not use jargon when helping families understand information**
 - **Awareness. Be aware of how a family is feeling, think about how the diagnosis affects them**

- **Compassion.** Recognize the influence and importance of expression, body language, and tone of voice when speaking with families
 - **Trust.** Be honest at all times, parents must trust that you recognize their pain and sorrow and that you will not abandon them
 - **Accessibility.** Families may need to have information explained to them on multiple occasions
 - **Professional kindness.** Communicate with families in a helpful and meaningful way, let families know you care and are concerned about their welfare and the welfare of their child
3. Review the list of resources shared with future pediatric ophthalmologists at the end of the reading. Identify three local resources you could share with your pediatric ophthalmologists as resources they could share with a family that has just received the diagnosis of having a child with a visual impairment. **Answers will vary based upon what is available in specific communities. Answers may include such services and contact information as a social worker for the blind, local early intervention program, school for the blind, and parent support groups, or Web sites.**

Chernus-Mansfield, N. (2003). Breaking the news: The role of the physician. In K.W. Wright & P.H. Spiegel (Eds.), *Pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus* (2nd ed., pp. 71-76). New York: Springer.