MEDICAL GASLIGHTING:

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE FEELING DISMISSED?

Medical Gaslighting occurs when healthcare professionals dismiss, invalidate, ignore, or refuse to investigate your symptoms.

Nobody likes to be dismissed and no one likes to be accused of gaslighting. In a perfect world, patients will avoid being dismissed by employing proactive actions. If those don't work, this tip sheet also offers responsive actions.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS: PREPARING FOR APPOINTMENTS



FIND A PRIMARY PHYSICIAN WHO IS A GOOD MATCH

- Build a relationship with a provider you know and trust, and who can provide you with valuable resources
- Ask your primary physician to help with care coordination and to advocate for you with specialists

COME PREPARED

- Research your provider, and your symptoms/potential treatment
- Have a symptom journal with detailed descriptions
- o Example:
  - ✓ My entire body feels fatigued all the time, I struggle to be active, and I cannot focus on tasks in front of me.
  - X I'm feeling tired.
- Bring a short list of questions to ask the provider
- Set expectations: let the provider know what your priorities are, what you need help with, and how you think they can help

AFFIRM YOUR FEELINGS & SYMPTOMS

- Let the doctor know that you know your wellness baseline and that what you're experiencing is not normal for you
  - Give concrete examples of your symptoms
  - Give concrete examples of how you feel at your normal baseline
- Don't be afraid to advocate for yourself by voicing your feelings in a calm, controlled, and respectable manner
- Be honest and open about your feelings/symptoms
- You know you best, trust your feelings/symptoms

BRING A SUPPORT PERSON

- ·Go to appointments with someone who knows you and who you trust

Center for Patient Partnerships
Research, Education, Advocacy. Justice.

CONTACT US

WWW.PATIENTPARTNERSHIPS.WISC.EDU

(608) 890 - 0321 | info@cpp.wisc.edu

MEDICAL GASLIGHTING:
WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE FEELING DISMISSED?

RESPONSIVE ACTIONS: DURING OR AFTER APPOINTMENTS

CLARIFY & VOCALIZE CONCERNS

- Ask clarifying questions to make sure you and the provider are on the same page
- Ask for documentation or tests
- Ask why treatments are being suggested, ruled out, or are not an option
  - Don't be afraid to **respectfully disagree** with what the provider is saying or remind the provider why a treatment will not work for you
- Since the provider is also an expert, consider their perspective
  - It's okay to be vocal, but make sure it's **appropriate**: let them know you appreciate their expertise but you are the expert on yourself
- Consider asking to compromise and modify a plan
- If trying to clarify is not working, name what you are feeling: "I am feeling dismissed" And repeat what care you are looking for: "I think you can help with X treatment for this reason."

USE ADVOCACY RESOURCES

- Seek help from patient advocates through healthcare organizations or insurance companies
- Work with a therapist/support groups to strengthen self-advocacy skills

SEEK ALTERNATIVE CARE

- Get a second opinion
  - Providers often recognize the value in this and can help you find a second opinion
- Find a new provider
  - Prioritize making relationships with your provider. But, if you cannot maintain a relationship, it may be worthwhile to seek a new provider

FREE SERVICES

GET HELP NOW

OVERALL, KEEP THE FOCUS ON YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

Center for Patient Partnerships
Research, Education, Advocacy. Justice.

CONTACT US

WWW.PATIENTPARTNERSHIPS.WISC.EDU

(608) 890 - 0321 | info@cpp.wisc.edu