

HOW TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST MEDICAL GASLIGHTING

Medical gaslighting is when a healthcare provider dismisses or invalidates your concerns. It can lead to poor care and negative health outcomes. Research suggests that women and people of color are more likely to experience medical gaslighting.

by Dr. Caroline Antler, PhD, MS

1 TRACK YOUR SYMPTOMS

Having a record of your symptoms can help you advocate for yourself and document your disease progression. Apps such as Guava (www.guavahealth.com) can be great for tracking symptoms and integrating medical records.

2 BRING A LIST OF QUESTIONS

Writing out your specific questions for your provider before the appointment can be helpful to keep you on track and ensure you have all of your concerns addressed.

3 BRING A SUPPORT PERSON

Research suggests that having a support person with you at an appointment who can vouch for you and your experienced symptoms (especially if they are a cis white man) can greatly improve outcomes from medical appointments. Even having someone on a video call might help.

4 ASK THEM TO DOCUMENT IT

If you request a test or imaging and the provider refuses to order it, request that they document their refusal in your chart with their justification. This pushes them to take a second to reconsider their decision and might prompt them to explain their reasoning.

5 TAKE NOTES OR ASK TO RECORD

Taking notes or having someone else take notes for you during the appointment can help you to keep a record and document any gaslighting. Alternatively, you can ask to audio record the appointment, but please note that you may need permission for this as it is illegal to record someone without consent in many states.

6 ASK ABOUT DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

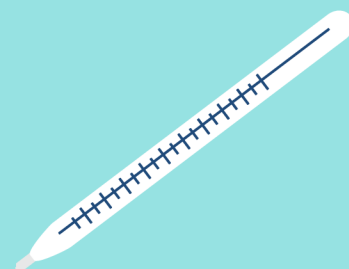
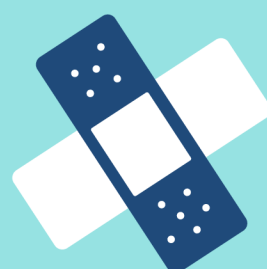
When a provider is considering your case they should have a list of differential diagnoses in their mind. You can try asking them “what is your differential diagnosis for X symptom?” After they list these off, you can then ask them to clarify how they ruled out the other conditions. This can help the provider reflect on their reasoning for their decisions and on whether or not additional testing is needed.

7 SEEK A SECOND OPINION

Seeking a second opinion is often a great course of action if you can afford it. Finding providers that are recommended by other patients with the condition you have or suspect you have can make a world of difference. Look for these providers on condition organization pages or in patient support groups.

8 SEEK OUT SUPPORT

Medical gaslighting can be traumatic and incredibly difficult to cope with. Joining support groups online for your various conditions (suspected or diagnosed) or even starting therapy can be incredibly helpful.



To learn more, please check out the resources available at www.antlerclinic.com/more-resources

To learn more about Dr. Antler, her experiences with medical gaslighting, and how she supports patients, see her bio here: <https://antlerclinic.com/drantler>



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