

[How to Avoid Medical Gaslighting](#)

Joseph Herrgard January 01, 2023 12:00 PM



In 2015 Tracy Wilson tested positive for strep and flu, but her experience as a healthcare provider led her to believe it could be something more serious. She went to the emergency room to seek additional care, but was met with dismissal from her doctor. Fortunately, she went to another emergency room a couple of days later where she tested positive for viral meningitis.

“Looking back at this situation, I know now and understand that I was gaslit by this healthcare provider and I could have died,” she says. “I know how to handle myself in future appointments, but not everyone knows how to do that.”

Tracy Wilson takes part in panel discussion at the South by Southwest conference Today, Tracy uses her voice to encourage patients to be advocates for their health. She took part in a panel discussion this month at the South by Southwest conference titled “Gaslighting in Women’s Healthcare,” and raises awareness of the issue on the SHE Media digital platform.

Here are Tracy’s top strategies for advocating for yourself in a medical setting:

Trust your instincts. “[Your instincts] are never going to steer you wrong. Make sure you’re listening to what your gut is telling you to do.”

Research your healthcare provider. Just like you research a new gadget or appliance, Tracy says it’s the same for a new healthcare provider. “You want to make sure you’re entrusting your health to someone who is compassionate and skilled in their field.”

Gain clarity. “Make sure you understand exactly what is being said to you. Don’t leave that visit being unsure, and if they need to sit down with you longer, then they need to sit down with you longer.”

Come prepared. Tracy suggests going to your appointment with all your questions written down, and not leaving until all of them are answered. “That’s what your healthcare providers are there for.”

Seek a second opinion. Lastly, if you’re not satisfied with the answers or diagnosis, it’s okay to seek a second opinion. “Your very life may depend on it.”