



Life-altering experiences often give reason for one to "Speak Up." In June of 2013, I visited five healthcare providers in three days seeking assistance for swelling in my neck and face, as well as difficulty breathing. Uncomfortable with my Strep Throat diagnosis, I pursued other opinions. My final visit to the emergency room revealed my true diagnosis to be Ludwig's Angina, an infection caused by a calcium deposit lodged in my salivary gland. Awakening from life-saving surgery and the medically induced coma that followed, I was informed that I had approximately 8 to 10 hours left to live had I not continued to pursue a solution to my illness. My airway passage was closing, and if I had not been "in tune" with my body and spoken up about my health care, I would not be here today. As a proactive survivor, I developed my personal platform "Get In Tune and JUST BREATHE". Just Breathe being the directions I was given before surgery as they attempted to secure my airway passage.

Please join me as I share the importance of becoming an involved and informed participant on your health care team.

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Miss Goldsboro 2015

If you would like more information, or allow me to speak to your group, please contact me at:
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Please follow my Journey on these Social Media outlets

 <https://www.facebook.com/GetInTuneandJB>

 <https://twitter.com/GetInTuneandJB>

SpeakUP™



Understanding your doctors and other caregivers

It can be difficult to understand what your doctors and other caregivers are telling you about your care and treatment. This brochure has questions and answers to help you understand caregivers.

Understanding your doctors and other caregivers

Questions to ask your caregivers

- Is there someone who can help you understand your doctor, nurse, and other caregivers?
- Is there someone who can help you understand how to take your medicine?
- Is there any written information in your language?
- Is there any written information in your language that is easy to read?
- Is there someone who speaks your language who can help you talk to caregivers?
- Is there a support group for people like you? For people with your illness or condition?
- Are there other resources for you?

Get in Tune and JUST BREATHE 
Engage Educate and Empower



What can you do if you don't understand what your caregiver is saying?

Tell them you don't understand. Use body language. If you don't understand shake your head to show that "No, I don't understand." Ask lots of questions. By asking questions you're helping them understand what you need.

What can you do if they explain and you still don't understand?

Tell them you still don't understand. Try to be as clear as possible about what you do not understand. Caregivers have a duty to help you understand. You should not leave until you understand what to do and what is happening to you.

What if the caregiver is rushed

and doesn't have time to answer your questions?

Ask them if you need to schedule another appointment when they can answer your questions.

What can you do if you speak

another language?

Ask for someone who speaks your language. This person can help you talk to caregivers. This person should work for the hospital or health center. Their job is to help people who speak other languages. This person may not be in the office. He or she may be on the telephone. You have the right to get free help from someone who speaks your language. Ask if there is paper work in your language.

What can you do if you have trouble reading? Or if you cannot read?

Don't be embarrassed. Tell your caregivers. They can help you. They can explain paper work to you. They may even have paper work that is easy to read and understand.

Your doctor's instructions are not

clear. Should you try to figure it

out yourself?

No. Instructions from your doctor or others are important. Tell them what you think the instructions are. Tell them if they need to write down the doctor to have someone talk to your family member or friend who helps you take your medicine. Ask the doctor to have someone talk to your family member or friend, too.

What if you don't understand

written instructions?

Tell your caregivers. Tell them that you need to have the instructions read to you. Tell them you need instructions that are easy to read. Or that you need instructions in your language.

What can you do if you don't

understand the instructions for

your medicine?

Tell your doctor if you need help. Tell them what you think the instructions are. Tell them if you don't understand how to take your medicine. Tell them if you don't understand when to take your medicine. Some patients don't understand and take too much or too little of the medicine. That can be dangerous.

How can you remember all of

your medicines?

Ask for a card for your medicines. Ask your

caregiver to help you write down the medicines and the amount you take. Bring the card with you every time you go to the doctor.

The doctor says I need to have a

"procedure." What does that mean?

A procedure can be an operation or a treatment.

A procedure can be a test with special equipment.

You might be put to sleep or a part of your body

might be numbed. Ask questions about what will

be done to you. If you speak another language

ask for someone who speaks your language.

Even if you're in the emergency room you need

to understand what will happen to you.

What is informed consent?

Informed consent means that you know how your

illness or condition will be treated. It means that

you agree to the operation or treatment. It means

that you understand the risks. That you know

about other treatments available to you. And that

you know what can happen if you aren't treated.

You will be asked to sign paper work after you

agree to the treatment. You need to decide if you

will sign or not sign the paper work only after you

You don't understand the paper

work you're given to fill out. What

can you do?

Ask caregivers to explain the paper work. Ask them if they can help you fill it out.

Your caregiver asked you to do

something that is against your culture

or religion. What can you do?

Tell your caregiver about your culture. Or tell them about your religious beliefs. Explain to them what you need to do. When they know what is important to you, they can understand better how to take care of you. There may be a way to meet your caregiver's needs and your needs.

Where can you find more information

about your illness or condition?

You can ask another doctor for their opinion. Visit your local library. Ask the people who work at the library for help. If you use a computer, you can look on the Internet. You can try the Medical Library Association by typing in www.nlm.nih.gov/resources/consumer_index.html. Or try Medline Plus by typing in <http://medlineplus.gov/>. You should talk to your doctor about what you learn.

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