



# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors

a guide for those who are triggered  
by the helpers they need to stay healthy

# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



Hello dear one,

This guide is for you if you are, like me, triggered by helping professionals. When you need to go to the doctor, get a procedure/test, get a massage, go to acupuncture, or need support of any kind and are flooded with fear, anxiety, tears, procrastination or shut down, this guide will 100% support you.

Let's begin by understanding why this is happening. Your nervous system has a protective response system that turns on when something is happening in the present (going to the doctor) that feels threatening to your nervous system. This protective response system is Autonomic, which means that your Nervous System's threat detector is checking for threats without you having to think about it. So, the reason your system may be feeling threatened and needing to protect, may not make sense to you while it's happening. But it's likely that something that happened in the past that was similar in some way to what's happening in the present around getting support from a helping professional, feels threatening to your system.

Hopefully, your visit is supportive for you. I want you to be able to feel that and be present while you're there.

And, if something doesn't feel good to you that you're able to share your thoughts and feelings with that healing person because you did the prep work in this document.

# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



Thanks to Neuroplasticity, your brain's ability to change patterns, you can show the nervous system that you're safe in a few different ways as you're setting up the doctor's appointment, while you're at the appointment, and after the appointment.

The information in this guide is based on 2 things.

1. My personal experience with medical trauma and 50 years of doctors and healing professionals that, while they mean well, do not typically have the awareness or training in working with clients and patients with medical trauma. Because of this, it is imperative that you take ownership and advocate for yourself by helping professionals in order to get the most out of your appointments.
2. My professional training in Yoga and Somatic Experiencing working with and understanding how the nervous system works.

Our nervous systems need 3 things to feel safe  
Context, Consent, Connection

Here I attempt to provide tools for you to feel relatively safe before, during and after your visit.

Please reach out with any questions,  
Dorie

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Print out this guide and keep it handy as you prepare for your doctor's appointment, procedure, surgery, or vaccine.



## Before Your Appointment

Preferably a few days or even a week prior, set aside 15 mins to reflect and connect with your BodyHome. Start by coming into a mindset of connecting with your BodyHome as if it was a baby. Listen to its wisdom as if it were an elder.

### Step 1

In a comfortable position, begin by noticing **your connection to the ground**. Feel all of the places where your body is touching the ground. Notice the pull of gravity on your body and let yourself receive the feeling of that pull.

As you hang out with the ground, start to notice when your body starts to settle and regulate. These signs can be:

- natural deeper breaths
- sighs
- yawns
- body tension decreasing
- jaw relaxing
- swallows, belly rumbles, burping or farting

After letting your body go through a few rounds of regulation, move on to Step 2.



# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



## Step 2

Connect to the **body part** that is going to be examined, poked, or touched by another person. Let that part know what's coming. You can do this with your words by talking to this part of yourself. Let it know that it's loved, that you're going to take care of it, and help it to understand the specific things that are going to happen. You might feel emotion when you do this. If you start to feel overwhelmed, try a few short check-ins throughout the week to begin building this relationship.

## Step 3

**Touch** this part of your body as you're talking to it. Most of your nerves are on your skin, so as you talk to your body AND feel your touch, it can bring about a sense of

"Body,  
I'm here with you and  
we're going to do this  
together".

# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



## Step 4

**Identify your emotions** about the appointment. Emotions come in the form of sensations, images, and impulses. Let yourself feel these in your body as you notice that you're still on the ground. Remember, this is a body experiencing rather than a rationalizing about what you think is going on. If this feels like too much, take breaks by looking around your space and naming colors and the names of objects that you see. Then go back inside. Shift your attention in and out a few times until you feel complete.

## Step 5

**Identify your needs:** While you're connecting with your body, ask what kind of support it might need while you're in the appointment. The next section features some things to consider. As you check in about each option, see how your body responds rather than your mind.

### Write it down

Grab a piece of paper and write down the answers you receive from your body. This will help you prepare for your appointment and your recovery. Take your specific requests into the appointment with you.

# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



Ask your body about what it might want when you consider the following questions.

When you ask, listen for an answer.

You might not get one right away, but it's asking and listening to your body that's important.

## Final pre-appointment considerations:

- Do I want a ride to and from the appointment?
- Do I want that ride from someone I know and trust or from an uber/lyft driver?
- Do I need the healing practitioner to know my medical/trauma history before the procedure?
- Do I want someone in the room to hold my hand so that I feel safer? If yes, a nurse or someone I know?
- Do I need to be told what's going to happen before it happens? Do I want the doctor to wait for consent before touching me?
- Do I want to know the steps prior to the procedure starting, throughout the procedure, or both?
- What kinds of extra self-care can I do as my body gets ready for the procedure? Extra baths? Massage? More water than usual, other forms of nourishment (food, laughter, stories, connection)?
- What practically will I need after the procedure (ointments, medication, supplements, food, people on call, Netflix cue, etc.)?

# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



## At Your Appointment

1. Before the procedure begins once again, let your body feel that you're on the ground and feel free to use touch to let your body know the thing is happening.
2. Pull out your notes (if needed) and let the people guiding you through the process know your history and what you need during this experience. You can let each person know individually - nurses, doctors, anesthesiologists, technicians. They should all know your wishes and honor them.

If, at any point, you don't feel supported, you CAN ask again for something different. You CAN walk out of the appointment if you're not getting the support you need.

## During the procedure

If you are awake for the procedure, it can feel supportive to keep talking to your body. If that feels like too much, orient to the space you're in. Whatever you can see around you, start to name the color and the name of the objects you see. You can do this in your mind or out loud. Even better if there's colors or textures to keep your senses enlivened and your body present.





# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



## After the procedure

As soon as possible after the procedure (this can be at the office or at home after), give your body some time to digest what just happened. It's really helpful to have someone with you for this (a Somatic Experiencing practitioner is ideal) as a witness, however if alone feels safer, definitely do that.

Digesting means letting any sensations, emotions, impulses and images move through you. You're not trying to make anything happen here. If you relax, your body will do this on its own. If it's hard to relax on your own, find a SE practitioner or a trusted friend to be with you. You may experience trembling, shaking, hot or cold waves, big huge polar bear breaths, you may see images, have an impulse to make sounds, or say words. Whatever your body wants/needs to do, let it happen. Let the waves move through you. You can do this in one chunk of time or it can likely take multiple rounds.

Continue to listen to your body as you heal from the procedure. Extra touch on this body part, continuing to talk with your body, and asking others for help are all loving options. See what works best and remember to treat your body like a baby and listen to its wisdom like its an elder.



# How to Advocate for Yourself with Doctors



My hope is that this guide will be a resource for you as you continue on your health journey.

Would you like 1 on 1 support working through this guide or in re-patterning how your nervous system responds to stress?

Contact me [here](#)

With LOVE and Regulation

*Dorie Silverman*

