

PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

Stories

Suzanne Nevins



"What I went through, physically it's a challenge, and I still deal with it every day, but what do I do now with the emotions? I was wondering how I was going to manage it all. I was seeking help; I knew something was wrong. I happened to go to the patient safety person and she gave me this video of someone's story who experienced something similar, and I thought to myself, **"I'm not alone!"** I think to have someone on the other end — that person who knew how it felt. I think that's what we search for. And the next day I called and it was the beginning of my healing journey."

Tami Rich



"This sense of relief washed over me, as if I'd put down a heavy burden. Having someone who truly understood my family's experience, who didn't try to fix me, or tell me what I should do, but who instead was able to listen with empathy and kinship, changed everything for me. Once I was able to speak it out loud, I'd finally be able to process it and begin to heal."

CONTACT US TODAY:

PeerSupport@state.ma.us

617-701-8271

BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov/support



**BETSY
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for Patient Safety

Patient and Family
PEER SUPPORT

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Patient and Family PEER SUPPORT NETWORK



*Helping people find the support
they need when something has gone
wrong in their medical care.*



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Did something go wrong with your medical care? Are you having a hard time coping with what has happened?

That is not uncommon. Other people who have experienced a medical error say they have had feelings like these:

- trouble sleeping or eating
- anger, guilt, frustration
- trouble thinking or concentrating
- images or thoughts of the event that occur in expected moments
- depressed mood, irritability, loss of interest or pleasure
- drug or alcohol abuse
- feelings of inadequacy and loneliness
- loss of trust
- feelings that health care professionals don't care about you
- a desire to connect with others experiencing similar trauma

The Patient and Family Peer Support Network is here to help with the difficult feelings that people sometimes experience after a medical treatment or procedure did not go as planned.

If this happened to you or someone you love, you can talk to others who have been there about your emotions and needs.

Sometimes, during medical treatments, mistakes are made. These mistakes are called medical errors and they happen to tens of thousands of Massachusetts patients and families each year. Here are some examples:

- A patient was given the wrong medication and ended up in the hospital
- A patient got an infection from surgery and had to stay in the hospital for longer
- Test results were lost and a patient's cancer wasn't diagnosed for many months
- A nursing home resident fell while being transferred out of bed and broke her hip

Who are the peer supporters?

Peer supporters are trained volunteers who provide encouragement, support and resources to other patients and families who have a similar experience.



What to expect?

Call the Betsy Lehman Center and talk to a trained member of our staff.

Next, you will be connected with a peer supporter who has had a similar experience.

You and the peer supporter can together decide how much and what kind of help you need most.

You are not alone.
We can help.