



Don't go it alone

The irony of bad health news is that it often brings out the best in people. A longing for closeness and real intimacy with loved ones and disdain for wasting time are common but welcome results of serious illness. Let friends and family reach out and love you. Being with those that care is perhaps the best medicine of all.

**For more information,
call us at:
1-855-959-7340
Or visit our website at:
www.ichpcolorado.com
and check out
In The Spotlight...**

**Connecting Members to
Healthy Living**

Hope is the promise that even if things look bad, life can turn on a dime. Hope gives meaning and the chance to make each day count. Faith, like hope, is a belief in things unseen. For many it is belief in God or higher power. For others, it is a belief in the power of love itself through the care of family and friends. Faith tells us that we are never alone in our suffering, and that makes all the difference in the world.



By Drew Edwards, EdD, MS
© 2009 Achieve Solutions



WHEN THE NEWS FROM THE DOCTOR IS BAD



- Have hope.
- Have faith.
- Get support from others.

Claudia's Story



After reviewing my MRI, my doctor called and said hesitantly, “This might be a brain tumor.” I was stunned—then angry. I thought, why is she being so vague? Is it, or is it not, a brain tumor? I wanted my doctor to tell me

straight out so I would know what I was dealing with. I spent the next few minutes in a sort of time warp trying to grasp the enormity of what she was saying. I could barely move or speak or think.

Afterward I sat in my kitchen and felt the deep isolation that only another person who has ever heard similar words could know. I was paralyzed with fear. I thought, I'm only 51—I'm not ready to die. But I wasn't exactly sure what I was afraid of.

After some time passed, I realized I had no way to categorize how I felt. What does it mean to hear that you have something that might kill you, and what am I supposed to do now? I thought, this can't be happening.

For the next 4 hours I sat at the computer researching brain tumors until I was completely overwhelmed, frustrated and emotionally and physically drained.

It did not ease my fear—it only increased the sense that I was not in control. I felt alone and terrified. I kept thinking, what am I going to do now?

—Claudia

Shock, disbelief and denial

Some of the reality in life is simply too painful or scary for us to deal with all at once. Claudia heard the words “brain tumor” and could not understand why this would happen to her. She sat stunned and alone. As reality sinks in, our denial fights back and keeps us from thinking about things that can drown our emotions.

Death, disability or serious illness are things we cannot think of happening to us or to someone close to us. It's too scary to think about or talk about. So when the news from the doctor is bad, our first reaction is shock and disbelief. “This can't be happening,” we say to ourselves. But it can. Are we ever ready? Maybe not. It shows us that life is shorter and more fragile than we ever imagined it would be.

The emotional flood

After denial comes a flood of emotions.

Anger, fear, depression, hopelessness and even guilt are widely found and likely to happen.

But everyone deals with these things differently. We can be filled with peace and feeling grateful one moment. We can be fearful the next. We get into trouble when we try to compare ourselves to others. We may believe that there is a correct way to act or think. That's not true. People are complex. However you respond to bad news is normal for you.

Fear, hope and faith

Fear might be the hardest emotion to deal with. Fear of the unknown, death, treatment, disability and fear for loved ones is usual. Hope and faith help people get through fear. In his book, *The Vital Balance*, psychiatrist Karl Meninger wrote about hope in dealing with his patients:

“It is our duty as physicians to estimate probabilities and to discipline expectations. But leading away from probabilities there are paths of possibility, toward which it is also our duty to hold aloft a light. And the name of that light is hope.”