

All Rashed Out

Category: Coping

written by Esther Pottoore | August 16, 2022

What will tomorrow bring? This is the theme running in my head today as I zip in and out of patients' rooms: listening, comforting, joking. And, just trying to get through the day.

They aren't the only ones who are sick. I am still rashed out on my face and neck from one month ago.

Post-COVID, Round 3. A rash. Intense itching. Angioedema (swelling). Shortness of breath. My allergist and dermatologist are scratching their heads, trying to figure this out.

They have me taking heavy-duty asthma meds, plus high doses of prednisone. I am jumping out of my skin, amped up on speed. Yet, I still itch!

How do I comfort myself?

Acceptance.

I pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," asking for strength and patience.

When I ask the Lord, "Why me?," the answer I hear is, "Why not me?" As a health clinician, maybe I can use this to help the next patient who has my problem.

Self-advocacy.

I don't accept everything! I fight to be seen in a timely fashion. I push back against the incompetency from the specialist's staff.

"You can't come in," they tell me. "You had COVID."

"Miss, it was twelve days ago. My fever, cough, and fatigue have all gone away."

"No."

"Okay then, change me to a tele visit."

"I can't do that."

"But my rash is increasing, and so is my shortness of breath."

"Well I can't help you. And no, you cannot have my name!"

Assertiveness.

When my chart messages to the specialist go unanswered, I reach out and ask

for help, and with the help of a nurse practitioner colleague, I find a doctor who actually listens.

I am thankful and comforted, but I wonder: "What if I did not have connections? What if I did not know how to advocate for myself?"

Gratitude.

I comfort myself that I am surrounded by more good people than bad. I think about the primary care provider who returned my call at 10 pm, helping me decide whether to go to the emergency room or wait until the next morning.

I comfort myself that my extended family just arrived. Immigrated. Three more people in my house with whom I can speak freely, let my guard down. And, if I die, they will be here for my family.

Hope.

Struggling to breathe is scary. And so is the angioedema. The doctors are running more tests. I have to trust them and hope someone gets to the bottom of this and helps. Perhaps tomorrow, I will know more!

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