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**What message would you give to healthcare providers that could impact the next patient they see?**

**Leslie Lake**

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To a healthcare professional, I would say, the patient needs a safety net. The patient has just experienced, probably the most traumatic event in their lives by having a blood clot. We need that safety net, you must give them the safety net. You must understand that the patient is hearing one out of every ten words that you're speaking to them, and it's not enough to just send them home with a piece of paper giving them a prescription. They need, particularly in the first six months, but really in the first month, then two months, then three months, information about what has happened. Availability to call them, or email them, or text them and ask the questions. "I feel this, is it normal? I feel this, should I come back to the hospital? I feel this, should I go to the emergency room?" Availability of answering questions, and answering phone calls, and providing that safety net.

Also, to the patient, it's okay to be confused and it's okay to be scared. That's normal. It's going to take a long time until you really do feel normal because your body will heal itself over time, hopefully. Everybody heals differently and over a different period of time. Don't necessarily compare yourself to someone who healed faster than you might. Know that mentally, you're going to go through a lot and that's going to take a really long time, and don't be afraid to ask for help. Don't be afraid to ask for help about the physical issues that you're having. Don't be afraid to ask for help about the mental issues that you're having. To the healthcare professionals, I know everyone's busy, don't underestimate the mental health issue here, it is so critical to the long-term success of the patient.