

**Health ([Http://Www.Philly.Com/Health](http://www.philly.com/health))**

# The T.E.A.M. that helped this brain tumor survivor take charge

**Updated:** SEPTEMBER 5, 2017 — 10:54 AM EDT



**PHOTOBIN PHOTOGRAPHY**

Claire Snyman is a brain tumor survivor who now is helping other patients be better advocates for themselves.

---

by **Claire Snyman**, For the Inquirer

---

A serious health diagnosis can leave anyone feeling shattered and powerless, unsure where to turn. How do we ride the wave of uncertainty?

After my brain tumor diagnosis, I realized there would be many roles I would take on. I knew I had to shake the feelings of being helpless. So I tried to apply the same skills I used in my job as a product manager to navigate the uncharted waters of the health-care system. So I became a:

- **Tracker:** I tracked how I was feeling, what my doctors were saying, and kept copies of all my medical reports. I became the holder of all information about my condition in my big red binder. This became my voice.
- **Educator:** I educated myself on my condition so that I could have informed discussions with my health-care team.
- **Asker:** I started to be curious and ask questions like “Why?,” “What if?,” and “How can we do this together?” This was the most challenging — learning to find the courage to ask questions. But it also opened up a new channel of communication with my doctor.
- **Manager:** I knew that teams can become effective with good management and maybe the same could be true for my health care. I set objectives such as: What do I want for my health care, from my medical team, and from the doctor’s appointment I was about to attend? This helped remove some of the emotion and helped regain control of uncertain situations.

Did you notice **T**racker, **E**ducator, **A**sker and **M**anager spell the word T.E.A.M?

Along with my support *team* at home and my medical *team* in the health-care system, I now had another T.E.A.M by my side. This T.E.A.M. approach, that I started using during my patient journey, helped me to take more responsibility for my care, manage my condition with my health-care partners, and have a better overall health experience. I was now an active participant in my health care in collaboration with my medical team.

Find your T.E.A.M. to support you so can be active in your health care. Your health is in your hands.

*Claire Snyman is an author and a [blogger \(http://twosteps.ca/blog-claire-snyman-brain-tumor-survivor/\)](http://twosteps.ca/blog-claire-snyman-brain-tumor-survivor/). She works as a volunteer in the brain tumor community and is a speaker. Contact her on Twitter: @clairehsnyman. This column appears through our*

*partnership with Inspire (<https://www.inspire.com/>), an Arlington, Va., company with condition-specific online support communities for more than a million patients and caregivers.*

---

**Published:** September 5, 2017 — 3:01 AM EDT | **Updated:** September 5, 2017 — 10:54 AM EDT

---

© Copyright (<http://www.philly.com/philly/about/copyright/>)2017 Philadelphia Media Network (Digital), LLC  
[Terms of Use & Privacy Policy \(\[http://www.philly.com/philly/about/terms\\\_of\\\_use/\]\(http://www.philly.com/philly/about/terms\_of\_use/\)\)](http://www.philly.com/philly/about/terms_of_use/)

