



WEBINAR 
WEDNESDAYS

Building & Sustaining Healthy Habits

Wednesday, January 4 at 7pm ET

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Welcome Back!

New! In 2023

- We are launching a new website!
- Same Webinar, new time:

7 PM ET

Registration

- Re-register for the 2023 Webinar Series
- JUMPSTART, Your Questions Answered, and MS Moves registration will ***roll over***
 - If you no longer want information on any of these programs, please email info@cando-ms.org

How to Ask Questions During the Webinar



Type in your questions using the **Questions Box**



Provide comments and engage with the speakers and audience using the **Chat Box**



Megan Weigel

DNP, ARNP-C, MSCN

- Nurse practitioner
- Baptist Neurology
- Jacksonville, FL



Matt Sacco, PhD

- Psychologist
- Cleveland Clinic
- Independence, Ohio



Polling Question 1

Do you think you have more...

- a) Healthy habits
- b) Unhealthy habits

The background of the image is a light blue surface covered with numerous small, light-colored wooden blocks. Each block has a dark grey question mark printed on its top face. The blocks are scattered across the entire frame, creating a pattern of question marks.

Chat question

What are some of your healthy habits?



Polling Question 2

Meditation only counts if you do it for at least 15 minutes a day

- a) True
- b) False



Polling Question 3

If you're not exercising like you were before you had MS, then there are no health benefits

- a) True
- b) False



Polling Question 4

Setting achievable goals and working towards them in small steps encourages success

- a) True
- b) False

Learning Objectives

1

What are habits and how do they develop?

2

What are modifiable co-morbid health conditions and why do they matter?

3

How do you create and maintain healthy habits?

What are habits?

Healthy Habits

Routines that are practiced regularly

- Some habits we may be aware of and we do knowingly
 - Brushing teeth
 - Using seatbelt
 - Smoking
- Others we may do unknowingly until it is brought to our attention
 - Picking nails
 - Cracking knuckles
- Can be created/started or stopped with conscious intention and effort
- The more it is done, the “better” you get at it as it becomes more subconscious

How can I start or change a habit?

Unintentional Habits

Example: Eating Habits

- Easiest to talk about but harder to change
- We make food selections based on availability
 - What you grew up with
 - What is available in your area
 - Access to knowledge about different food
- It becomes more difficult as you become more limited or as you become more autonomous
- Once an unhealthy habit is recognized, then you are tasked with changing it and it can feel very effortful to do something different
- Sometimes you develop a habit to make one thing easier but it ends up harming something else
 - Someone tries to eat healthy frozen dinners but ends up with high blood pressure because of sodium

Developing Intentional Habits

- Research suggests it takes 18 to 254 days to develop a habit
 - Average is 66 days
- First identify the habit or change you want to make
- Setting a SMART goal can be very helpful



Developing Intentional Habits

It's not simply willpower

- Enjoyable or pleasurable behaviors lead to the release of dopamine
- Dopamine strengthens the habit and desire to repeat it





Polling Question 5

Have you ever tried to start or stop a habit?

- a) yes
- b) no



Polling Question 6

Which co-morbid health conditions affect you?

- a) Diabetes
- b) High blood pressure
- c) Obesity
- d) Heart disease
- e) More than one of the above
- f) None of the above

Co-morbid health conditions

And why they matter

NARCOMS has identified the most common “other conditions” in MS

Most common **In General**

- Depression
- Anxiety
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Chronic Lung Disease

Most common **Autoimmune Diseases**

- Thyroid disease,
- Psoriasis

More common **Than Previously Thought**

- CVA
- Heart Disease
- Congestive Heart Failure
- IBD/IBS
- Arthritis
- Seizures
- Sleep disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- Alcoholism

Co-morbid health conditions

And why they matter

- They can worsen the course of MS
 - In fact, vascular comorbidity occurring at any time in the disease course results in a progression of EDSS of 6 by approximately 6 years sooner
 - Shorter telomere length is associated with progressive MS; these conditions shorten telomeres
- But hey! They provide us with an additional opportunity to be empowered to make changes to improve lifestyle and health!

How do you *create* healthy habits?

Awareness is the first step

Identifying something that needs to change

- What do you wish to change?
- What do others often suggest you change?
 - Sometimes loved ones can help provide data and perspective

Set a goal(s)

- Goals can help us continue a behavior when motivation starts to diminish
- SMART goal setting

Make it intentional and public

How do you *maintain* healthy habits?



How do you *maintain* healthy habits?

1

Intentional Goal Setting

- It's easier to keep succeeding when we allow ourselves opportunities to succeed
- SMART goals allow us to take smaller steps that lead us to larger goals successfully

2

What is your why?

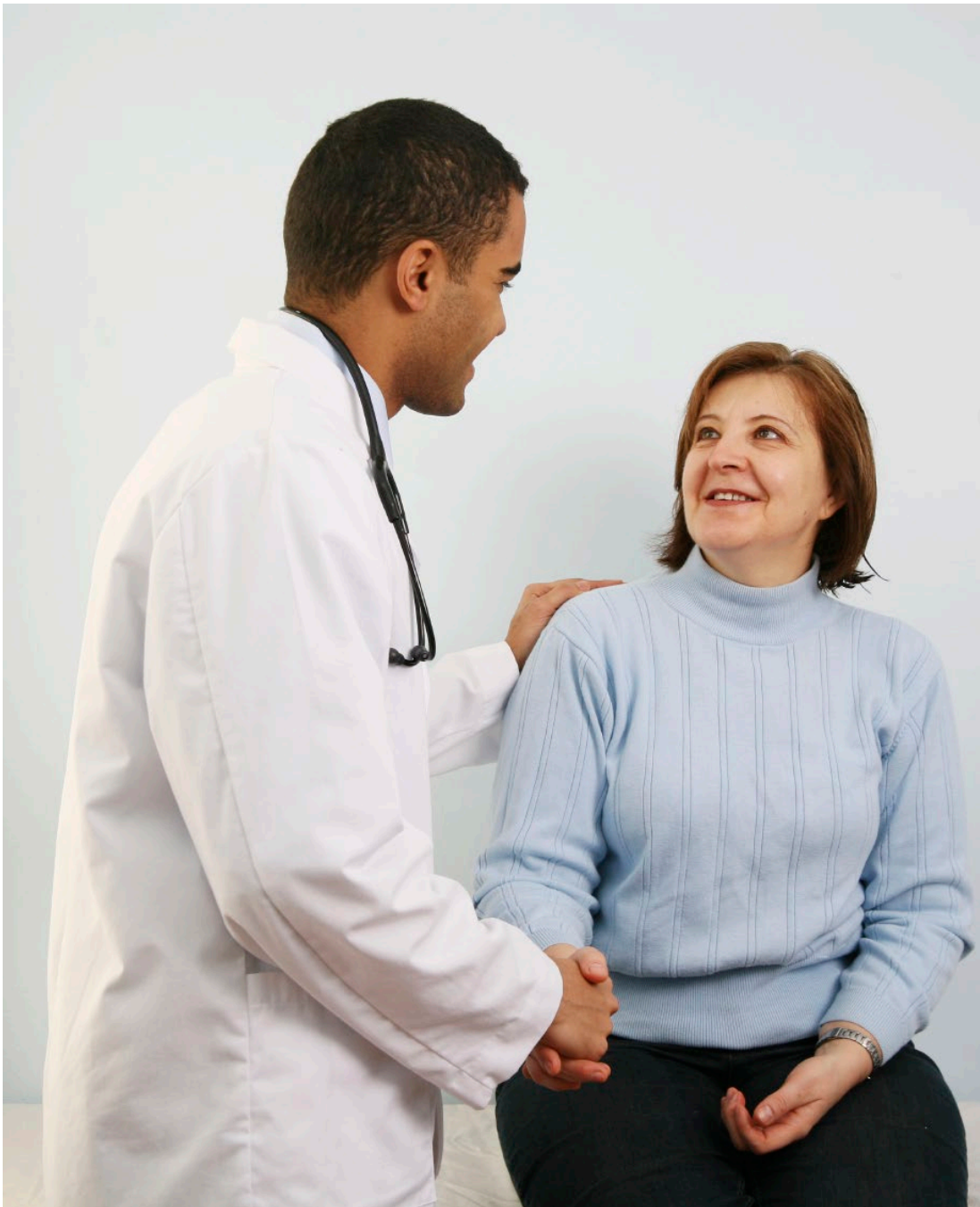
- I told my son I would be healthier by his birthday
- I'd like to be able to reduce my pain medication, and I know losing weight would help me do that
- I'm tired of feeling anxious at work
- I've always wanted to start a blog

3

What Keeps Your Motivated?

In other words, what kind of help do you need to be successful?

- Positive affirmations
- Enlisting a buddy
- Routine



Jenny was weighed at her annual neurologist appointment and was told she had gained nearly 40 pounds over the last year. Due to several MS relapses, she had found exercise very difficult and had become increasingly sedentary. She does not have a scale at home, and although she had thought at times she might be gaining weight due to her clothes not fitting, she often brushed it aside due to difficulties she had putting clothes on at times due to MS symptoms.

- **What elements of habit formation do you recognize?**
 - Subconscious
 - Conscious
- **How might Jenny go about creating new healthier habits?**

Key Takeaways

- Creating healthy habits improves mental and physical health
- Awareness, identifying priorities, and acknowledging the type of help we need help us create meaningful goals
- Invest time in making SMART goals to increase your success!
- Changing and sustaining habit change can be difficult, give yourself some grace!



Q & A





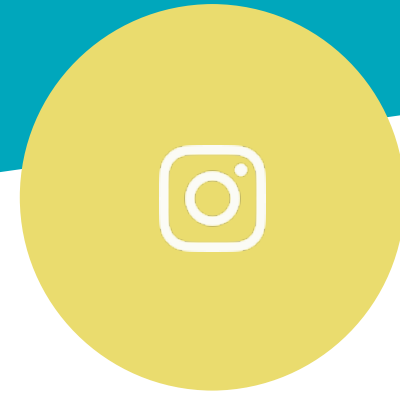
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