



Cognition and MS:

Education, Resources, & Self-Advocacy

Educating and advocating for yourself with your healthcare team are important in your MS journey.

What Are My Concerns & Needs?

- Know the cognitive problems typical in MS. Do you identify with any? How do they interfere?
- Gather information from yourself, family, significant others, and your healthcare team.
- Read articles. Attend seminars and programs specific to MS Care, such as those by:

[Can Do MS](#)

[National MS Society](#)

How Do I Communicate What I Need?

You may want to initiate the discussion about your specific cognitive concerns with your healthcare team. Bring written examples of how they are interfering with your daily life, e.g.,

- "I can't remember what others tell me."
- "I get lost in conversation and can't think of the words I want to say."
- "It takes me extra time to think through things"
- "I have to ask for help to solve problems, make decisions, or handle my finances."
- "It's hard to focus my attention and multi-task now."
- "I have trouble planning, starting and finishing my everyday tasks."

Whom Do I Ask To See When I Notice Cognitive Challenges?

It depends. Request referrals to those who can further address your specific concerns and needs. There are 3 professions that address cognition in different, yet overlapping ways.

*Neuropsychologists or Rehabilitation Psychologists: Can perform targeted, in-depth evaluations that may aid in understanding brain-health-behavior relationships, cognitive-emotional status, & educational-vocational planning/accommodations. Required when applying for Social Security Disability.

*Speech-Language Pathologists: Can evaluate cognitive-language-communication skills, but then they also provide follow-up cognitive rehabilitation to treat the problem areas identified.

*Occupational Therapists: Can also provide cognitive evaluation and treatment, as it relates to improving function during activities of daily living.

****Seek those with MS expertise or at least experience with adult neurological patient care**.**

How Do I Advocate For Myself?

- 1) Ask for baseline cognitive evaluation, and annual screening for comparison, as indicated.
 - 2) Don't stop with an evaluation. Ask for an interpretation of the problems identified, and then for follow-up cognitive rehabilitation, to learn strategies for improving function.
-