



Possible Conversation Starters:

MOOD AND COGNITION

Conversations with Your Support Partner

- “I’ve been feeling pretty down and irritable lately. Please understand that it’s not about you. I think I need to speak to my healthcare provider about my mood and see what she recommends.”
- “I know I’ve been pretty forgetful and distracted lately. I have some ideas about how you and the kids could help me with that. Could we cut down on distractions while we’re talking – maybe turn off the TV and talk one at a time for important conversations? And also, a family calendar where we all track our activities would help me remember what’s going on so I don’t have to keep asking.”
- “I know you think I’m not paying attention or don’t think what you’re saying is important. But I’m just having trouble remembering because of my MS. Let’s take the time to slow down our conversations a bit and make sure that I’ve heard everything you said. That will help me remember.”

Conversations with Your Partner with MS

- “You’ve seemed pretty distant and down the past few weeks – not at all like your usual self. Do you think it would be a good idea to talk with your healthcare provider about your mood? I’d be happy to go with you if that would help. I really miss the old you!”
- “I used to be the disorganized one in this family, but you seem to be having a lot more trouble remembering and keeping up with things. I could put up a family calendar for us to track our activities and find a consistent place for glasses, car keys, the TV remote, and stuff like that. And I can stop saying things to you on the fly if that would help. Are there other things we could do that would make it easier for you?”

Conversations with Your Healthcare Provider

- “I know that mood changes and problems with memory and thinking are really common in MS. I’d like to get screened so I at least have a baseline measure of how I’m doing. If either or both screenings are positive, I’d like a referral to someone who can do an in-depth assessment and let me know what the treatment options are.”
- “I’m just not feeling like myself lately. I used to be happy and upbeat and now I just feel defeated, down, and irritable. Can you refer me to someone who can help me figure out what’s going on?”
- “I’ve begun to feel lost during meetings at work and I’m not completing my assignments as efficiently as I used to. Could you refer me to someone who can evaluate my cognition and offer some strategies to deal with this? I really want and need to keep working, so I need to fix this before my manager fixes it for me!”