

# Webinar Series



## Employment

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

*Presented by:*

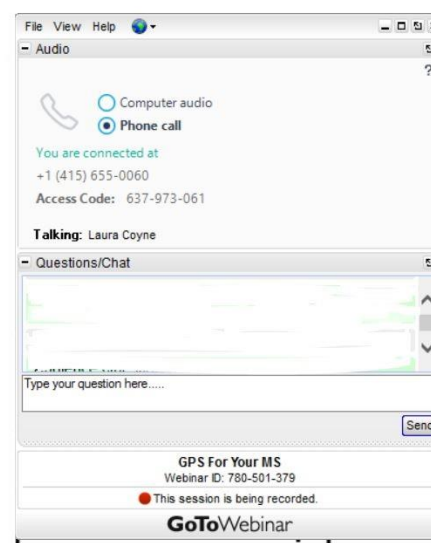
SANOFI GENZYME 

Genentech



# How to Ask Questions During the Webinar:

- Type in your questions using the **Questions/Chat** box
- If box is closed, click **+** to expand



**Go-To-Webinar Attendee Support Line:  
(877) 582-7011**

# Rosalind Kalb, PhD



**Psychologist**  
West Bath, ME

# Steve Nissen, M.S., CRC



**National MS Society**  
Washington, DC



# Polling Questions in Lobby

To give us an idea who is on the webinar with us tonight, please let us know if you are:

- a) Person with MS
- b) Support Partner
- c) Both Partners Together
- d) Other

Which of the following symptoms have impacted your work performance?

- a) Fatigue
- b) Mood
- c) Cognition
- d) None of the above
- e) All of the above

Has your employment been affected by COVID-19?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe



# A Word About COVID-19 and Employment

- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and CARES Act
  - Paid sick leave
  - Paid/expanded Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
  - Pandemic Unemployment Insurance
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has not been impacted in regard to requesting reasonable accommodations
- Health insurance considerations – COBRA, special enrollment period (SEP)
- Implications on Social Security benefits

# A Word About COVID-19 and Employment

- Connect to an MS Navigator<sup>®</sup>, 1-800-344-4867
- <https://www.nationalmssociety.org/COVID19>
- <https://www.cando-ms.org/coronavirus>
- National MS Society *Ask the Expert* weekly webinar, <https://www.nationalmssociety.org/MSExpert>
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN), <https://askjan.org/topics/COVID-19.cfm>, 1-800-526-7234
- U.S. Department of Labor, <https://www.dol.gov/coronavirus>
- State unemployment offices, <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/find-unemployment-benefits.aspx>
- Social Security Administration, <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>



# Webinar Learning Objectives

- Understand the factors that compromise employment.
- Explore your rights in the workplace.
- Learn about the process involved in disclosure and requesting accommodations.
- Learn strategies for communicating with your co-workers about MS and your accommodations.

# Fatigue Vignette: Maria – a 52 yo graphic designer

- Significant commute getting into office – 1 ½ hours each way
- Falling asleep at desk and during meetings
- Finding it difficult to concentrate, especially later in the day
- Job tasks falling through the cracks and making mistakes
- Impacting life outside of work as well

# What we know about fatigue in MS

- Fatigue is the most common symptom of MS (75-83%), and reported by many to be the most disabling
- Fatigue in MS has many sources:
  - *Primary fatigue (lassitude)* – is thought to result from demyelination in the central nervous system
  - *Secondary fatigue*
    - Disrupted sleep
    - Depression
    - Deconditioning
    - Medication side effects

# Cognitive Vignette: Samuel – a 42yo data analyst

- Is easily distracted by people walking by desk
- When multiple projects assigned, cannot multi-task and has difficulty prioritizing where to start and what to focus on
- After interacting with colleagues in casual conversations, cannot recall what was discussed or what his follow-up was to be
- Missing deadlines

# What we know about cognition in MS

- At least 65 percent of people with MS experience cognitive changes
  - Slowed information processing, impaired learning and memory, problems with attention and concentration, impaired 'executive functions' (planning, prioritizing, problem-solving, decision-making)
- Relationship to other disease factors
  - Unrelated to level of physical disability – can begin before the diagnosis
  - Most common in progressive disease
  - Generally progresses slowly

# What we know about cognition in MS, cont'd

- **Assessment**

- Screening at diagnosis and yearly thereafter is recommended by the National MS Society
- More extensive evaluation when screening is positive
- Full neuropsychology battery is essential for any person applying for Social Security Disability on the basis of cognitive symptoms

- **Treatment options**

- To date, no medication has been shown to be effective
- Cognitive rehabilitation is essential
  - Compensatory strategies to enhance function at home and work

# Mood Vignette: Naomi – a 37yo teacher

- Instead of looking forward to work, Naomi feels disconnected
- Increasingly irritated by her students and colleagues
- Unusually tired and lethargic during the workday
- Calls in sick more frequently
- Finding it harder to set goals for her class or care about the results

# What we know about mood in MS

- More than 50% of people will experience major depression
- In MS, depression has multiple causes (neurologic, immune, psychosocial)
- Depression makes other symptoms worse (cognition, pain, fatigue...)
- Depression can appear as irritability and moodiness
- Depression can be life-threatening
- Anxiety is equally common
- Mood changes are under-diagnosed and under-treated in people with *MS and support partners*



# What do we know about mood changes, cont'd

- **Screening recommendations**

- Screening is recommended at the time of diagnosis and periodically thereafter
- Free, confidential, online screening is available at [www.screening.mhanational.org](http://www.screening.mhanational.org)

- **Treatment options**

- Talk therapy (cognitive behavior therapy)
- Medication
- Exercise



a three-legged stool



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# Polling Question

Have you ever gone through the process of requesting a reasonable accommodation?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Considering it now

## Handout Instructions

- Think proactively about your MS
- Use this form to help guide you though some decisions to consider
- Ask trusted people in your life for their objective input and observations
- Complete relevant sections
- Revisit when/if necessary: job changes, MS changes



### Analyzing the Effects of MS on Work

Take a few minutes now to think about the impact of MS on your work. Use the chart provided on the next page to write down your thoughts.

**Step 1.** In the first column, list your symptoms of MS.

**Step 2.** Rate the impact of each symptom on your work using this scale:

Rating	Description
0	No impact on work
1	Minimal impact on work, occurs rarely
2	Minimal impact on work, occurs occasionally
3	Minimal impact on work, occurs regularly
4	Some impact on work, occurs rarely
5	Some impact on work, occurs occasionally
6	Some impact on work, occurs regularly
7	Significant impact on work, occurs rarely
8	Significant impact on work, occurs occasionally
9	Significant impact on work, occurs regularly



# Reasonable Accommodations

According to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN):

“A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things usually are done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.”

“Examples of reasonable accommodations include making existing facilities accessible; job restructuring; part-time or modified work schedules; acquiring or modifying equipment; changing tests, training materials, or policies; providing qualified readers or interpreters; and reassignment to a vacant position.”

# Reasonable Accommodations

- Purpose is to allow an otherwise qualified person to enter or to continue in employment by removing or reducing significant disability-related work limitations
- Employers only have to accommodate known disabilities
- Type of and need for accommodation may change over time as symptoms change or when person experiences an exacerbation
- No two situations are the same
- Accommodations increase productivity

# Reasonable Accommodations

- Many creative ways to accommodate some of the most complex of MS symptoms
- Accommodations are possible for invisible symptoms, especially fatigue and cognitive
- Role of flexible work schedule – telecommuting, altered hours
- Arrangement of workspace by task frequency and priority (e.g., access to frequently visited areas of office such as restroom, printer, copier, front door, general use areas)
- Computer technology, other forms of assistive technology, proper ergonomic workstation set-up

# Reasonable Accommodations

## Fatigue

- Flexible work arrangement/hours
- More frequent or longer breaks
- Rest area and rest period
- Telework
- Energy conservation activities

## Cognition

- Eliminate distractions
- Calendar/day planner
- Organize work area and use memory aids
- Project focused
- Use written job instructions
- Telework

## Mood

- Flexible work arrangement/hours (e.g., no lunch duty)
- Request time off
- Request an assistant in the classroom

# To Tell or Not to Tell: Disclosure

- Major concern for many individuals living with MS
- Personal decision to make; invisible symptoms can add additional stress and challenges
- Issues can arise when MS starts to interfere with work or when looking for a new job
- May need to disclose to obtain an accommodation or short-term disability leave



# Tips to Keep in Mind

- Have back-up plans
- Don't get defensive
- Be flexible – “win-win”
- Do your homework
- There are resources to help
  - National MS Society (NMSS)
  - Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
  - Fair Employment Practice Agencies (FEPA)
  - U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

# Don't Do It Alone



## **National MS Society**

<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/>

## **National MS Society Employment Information Website**

<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/employment>

## **National MS Society MS Navigator®**

Phone: 1-800-344-4867

7:00 am – 5:00 pm MT (M – F)

Email: [ContactUsNMSS@nmss.org](mailto:ContactUsNMSS@nmss.org)

Social Media/Web Chat

# Useful Resources

## National MS Society Brochures


Information  
for Employers



**MS**  
National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

KAREN  
DIAGNOSED IN 2007

The Win-Win  
Approach to Reasonable  
Accommodations



**MS**  
National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

Working with MS  
INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES  
LIVING WITH MS




**MS**  
National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

ELLECIA  
DIAGNOSED IN 2011

Applying for Social Security  
Disability Benefits

A Guidebook for People with MS and their Healthcare Providers  
For more information, visit [nationalMSSociety.org/SSDGuide](http://nationalMSSociety.org/SSDGuide).



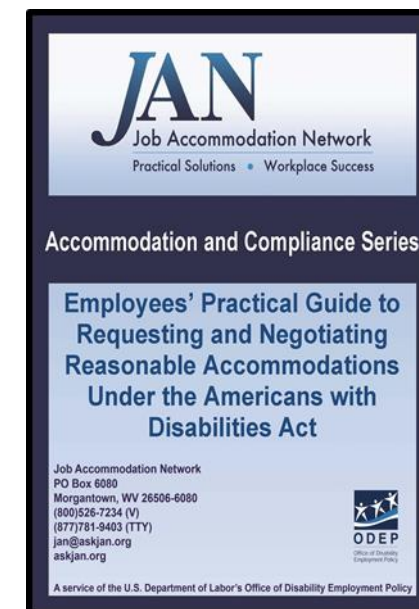
**MS**  
National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

CARLOS  
DIAGNOSED IN 2001

# Job Accommodation Network (JAN)



- <https://askjan.org/>
- 1-800-526-7234
- Accommodation and Compliance: Multiple Sclerosis - <https://askjan.org/disabilities/Multiple-Sclerosis.cfm>
- Employees' Practical Guide to Requesting and Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations Under the Americans with Disabilities Act - <https://askjan.org/publications/individuals/employee-guide.cfm>
- How to Request an Accommodation: Accommodation Form Letter - <https://askjan.org/media/accommrequestltr.cfm>



# A Final Note: Work is Central in our Lives

- Central to our personal identity
  - *“I am a teacher...a nurse...homemaker... repair person”*
- Source of personal growth and fulfillment
  - Self-esteem
  - Satisfaction/accomplishment
  - Intellectual stimulation
  - Enjoyment
  - Professional relationships
- Financial support for ourselves & families
- Benefits, e.g. health insurance

Q & A



# Programs



## IN-PERSON

**CAN DO®** (Four Day)

**TAKE CHARGE®** (Two Day)

**JUMPSTART®** (One Day)



## ONLINE

**Webinar Series** (Monthly)

**Can Do On Demand**

**Ask the Can Do Team** (Q&A)

**Library Articles**

# National MS Society Resources



ANGELA  
MS NAVIGATOR

**Connect**  
When and Where You  
Need Us

The National MS Society exists because there are people with MS. **Our vision is a world free of MS.** Everything we do is focused so that people affected by MS can live their best lives as we stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost and end MS forever.



DAWNIA  
DIAGNOSED IN 2006

**MS Navigator<sup>®</sup>**

Your Trusted Partner  
to navigate the challenges of  
life with multiple sclerosis





# DONATE

If you've found this webinar to be valuable, please consider donating to:

**Can Do MS**

**[www.cando-ms.org/donate](http://www.cando-ms.org/donate)**

Or to our supporting partner:

**NMSS**

**[www.nationalmssociety.org/donate](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/donate)**

**Please Complete Surveys**



# KICK MS

[CanDo-MS.org/KickMS](https://CanDo-MS.org/KickMS)



# MS Path 2 Care

An initiative to empower people affected by MS to be active partners in their healthcare experience.

Visit [www.MSPath2Care.com](http://www.MSPath2Care.com) to learn more about the importance of shared decision making in MS care, and to hear important tips directly from people living with MS, their support partners, and MS specialists.

MS Path 2 Care is brought to you in partnership with:



# Webinar Series



## Symptom Management: Motor Components

**Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

*Presented by:*

**SANOFI GENZYME** 

**Genentech**

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