

### MOOD

- People who are depressed/anxious/moody:
  - May have difficulty taking care of themselves and others
  - May lose time from work
  - May be very irritable and difficult to live with
  - May not think as clearly, process information as well, make sound decisions
- More than 50% experience major depression; *depression is also common in support partners*
- *Depression is a symptom of MS* as well as a reaction to life challenges
- Depression...
  - Can occur early in the disease course
  - Is under-diagnosed and under-treated
  - Makes other symptoms feel worse (cognition, pain, fatigue)
  - Can be life-threatening

### SYMPTOMS OF A MAJOR DEPRESSION

- ***Sadness or irritability***
- ***Loss of interest or pleasure in everyday activities***
- Significant changes in appetite/weight (up or down)
- Sleep disturbances – insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Agitation or slowing generalized
- Fatigue
- Problems with thinking, concentration, and/or decision-making
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Persistent thoughts of death or suicide

**Key Recommendation:** *People with MS should be screened for depression at least once yearly*

### COGNITION

- Cognitive changes:
  - Occur in 65% of people
  - Are unrelated to level of physical disability; may even occur before physical symptoms
  - Are a primary cause of early departure from the workforce
  - Generally progress slowly
  - Are exacerbated by stress, anxiety, and depression
  - Are best managed with cognitive rehabilitation, compensatory strategies, and exercise
- The cognitive functions most commonly affected are:
  - Information processing speed
  - Memory – learning and retaining new information
  - Attention – maintaining focus; multi-tasking
  - “Executive Functions” – planning, prioritizing, organizing, decision-making, judgement
- Cognitive symptoms are best diagnosed and treated by a *neuropsychologist, speech-language pathologist, or occupational therapist*

**Key Recommendation:** *People should receive a brief cognitive screening (5-minutes) at least once yearly, with more extensive testing if the screening is positive*