



WEBINAR   
WEDNESDAYS

# Staying Resilient Through MS Transitions

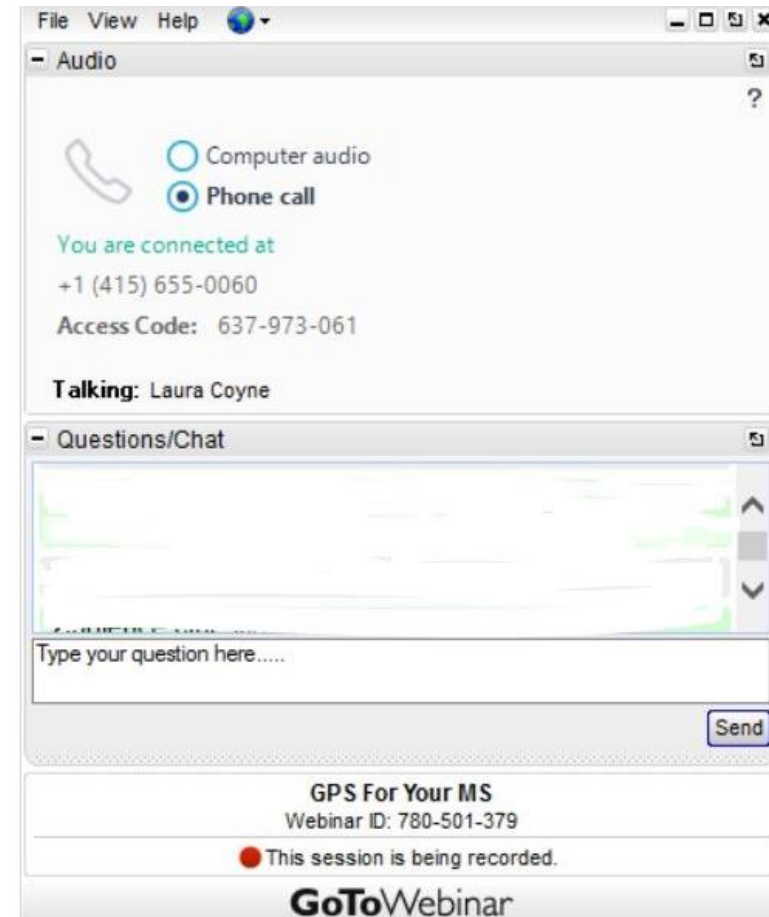
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# How to Ask Questions During the Webinar

Type in your questions using the  
**Questions/Chat box**



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# Learning Objectives

1

Recognize the unpredictable changes that occur in MS and other areas of life.

2

Learn how emotional and cognitive resilience is associated with better coping and lower distress.

3

Identify the factors associated with resilience in persons with MS and how resilience can be measured.

4

Offer resources to improve resilience, including goal setting.

# Life is unpredictable

- What can you be sure will happen *just as you planned* every day?
- How do you feel when things don't go as planned on your schedule?
  - In your mind...
  - In your body...
- What do you do to cope with change, challenges, and unpredictability?

# So many things we can't control (as much as we try)...

- Weather
- Traffic
- Health challenges
- Financial challenges
- Birth
- Death
- Getting a concert ticket or a seat at a restaurant
- Whether or not a store is out of something

# MS is unpredictable

- How will my symptoms be today?
- Will I wake up with a relapse?
- What if I run out of necessary medication?
- My last MRI was stable, what if I have “silent” lesions?
- Will I always be on this disease modifying therapy?
- What if my insurance changes and messes with my coverage?
- What if I have to stop working?
- What if my support partner gets sick?



**Do you ever feel like some  
people just seem to be able to  
handle *anything*  
that is thrown at them?  
Why is that?**

# *Resilience....*

**Hang on to your hat.  
Hang on to your hope.  
And wind the clock, for tomorrow is another day.  
E.B. White**

**Some days there won't be a song  
In your heart. Sing anyway.  
Emory Austin**

**I am not what happened to me.  
I am what I choose to become.  
Carl Jung**

# Resilience

- The ability to bounce back from difficult circumstances
- The ability to find hope, meaning, and motivation to go move forward in spite of obstacles
- It's part nature and part nurture
- Power of perception-positivity and optimism
- NOT about being happy all of the time

# Factors Identified with Resilience in MS Research

- **Psychological**

- Self-efficacy
- Optimism
- Internal locus of control
- Depressive symptoms
- Anxious symptoms
- Problem solving
- Cognitive Flexibility
- Reduced depressive and anxious symptoms

- **Social**

- Belonging to support groups
- Strong social connections
- Family Relationships
- Spirituality

- **Physical**

- Better fine and gross motor function
- MS symptoms

# Research is for..researchers?

- **Measuring resilience can help**
  - Identify protective factors that are often associated with more adaptive functioning and better overall health (psychological, emotional and physical)
    - Optimism
    - Internal locus of control
    - Engagement in physical activity
    - Support from family and friends
    - Spirituality
  - Conversely, can help identify areas of vulnerability and can be developed further

# Multiple Sclerosis Resilience Scale (MSRS)

- **25 items assessing MS challenges:**
  - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Cognitive
  - Social
  - Spiritual
  - Behavioral responses
- **Identify protective factors that:**
  - Enhance coping
  - Promote general resilience
  - Contribute to greater quality of life

# Self Assessment

- **What areas do you feel particularly strong in?**

- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Social
- Spiritual
- Behavioral

- **What are areas that might be in need of growth?**

- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Social
- Spiritual
- Behavioral

**What kind of goals might you be able to set to enhance/do more of what you are doing well?**

**What kind of goals might you be able to set to grow in some areas of need?**

# Emotional and Cognitive Resilience

- Ability to adapt to stressful events without it affecting our internal motivation
  - “Bend but don’t break” vs. “I am broken and moving forward with the pieces”
- Resilience can be learned by recognizing your strengths and building on those
- Our thoughts and feelings influence our actions
- Acknowledging stress and learning to cope more effectively with it
- Open to changes and flexible while adapting to new situations
- Accepting that our reactions to stress can make a great deal of difference
- Building compassion and empathy for self



# ABCDE...how to help ourselves

- **Activating Event**
  - Told that you would no longer be able to safely ride a bicycle
- **Beliefs about Event**
  - “I love riding, I’ll never be able to enjoy that time with my family again.”
  - “It keeps me healthy, now what am I suppose to do?”
- **Consequences - Emotional**
  - Anger, resentment, sadness, frustration, etc.
- **Disputing or challenging Beliefs**
  - “Maybe I could get a tricycle and I could still ride?”
  - “I wonder what other things I could do to stay active and spend time with my family?”
  - “This might be a change, but I’m not going to let it stop me from doing something I love.”
- **Effective new beliefs/emotions**
  - “I’m feeling a bit more optimistic”-new emotional response!
  - Still frustrated, angry, resentful, sad, etc...but maybe less so?

# How to Build Resilience

- **Build relationship connections**
- **Wellness**
  - Mindfulness
  - Physical activity
  - Avoid coping with drugs and alcohol
- **Purpose**
  - Helping others
  - Self exploration and discovery
  - Goal setting
- **Healthy thinking**
  - Keep things in perspective
  - Accepting changes
  - Hopeful outlook
  - Learn from past
- **Seeking help**
  - Professional
  - Informal

# Tell Me More...

- **See a stressful event as a problem to solve instead of a threat**
  - You have noticed more fatigue for 2-3 days
    - You can a) wonder if you will have to stop working OR 2) call your provider for an appointment and make a plan
- **Focus on things you CAN control**
  - Keep it simple
    - You can control what you want to have for breakfast
    - You can control whether or not you say yes to an activity that you like (or don't!)
- **Keep a record of things that have helped you in the past**
  - Ex: medicines, exercises/stretches, providers, motivational quotes

# Tell Me More...

- **Keep a list of personality strengths, skills, beliefs; support people; resources that help you**
  - Ask your loved ones to help
- **Maintain strong social connections**
  - Attend virtual programming, keep up with friends/family
- **Practice gratitude**
  - A daily gratitude journal is an easy place to start
- **Nurture positive emotions...but allow yourself to feel the negative ones, too**
  - Breathe in positive feelings, breathe out negative ones

# Tell Me More...

- **Adopt a mindfulness or relaxation technique**
  - It doesn't have to be hard. Start with 5 deep breaths that are longer and slower than your normal breaths.
- **Plan for the future**
  - See "GPS for MS" programs
- **Find a sense of meaning and purpose**
  - Turn to your faith or spirituality
  - Turn to service, help others
  - Learn something new
- **Learn to tell your story differently**
  - Use the ABCDEs

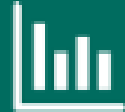
# SMART Goals

S



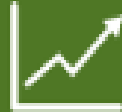
Specific

M



Measurable

A



Attainable

R



Relevant

T



Time Based

# A SMART Goal for Resilience

- **S:** I will practice daily gratitude
- **M:** I will write down 3 things I am grateful for each day
- **A:** I can do this in the morning instead of surfing the internet
- **R:** Gratitude helps me feel resilient
- **T:** I will spend 5 minutes doing this each day

# A SMART Goal for Resilience

- **S:** I will move my body 6 days out of the week
- **M:** I will stretch or exercise for 20 minutes, 6 days a week
- **A:** I like to watch the news in the morning, and I can do my stretches/exercise while I watch the news. Morning is my best time of day.
- **R:** I usually have more energy after I move my body
- **T:** 20 minutes, 6 times a week



# Q & A



# March is *MS Awareness Month*



## MARCH PROGRAMS

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**JUMPSTART – March 13**  
*Embracing Transitions in Your Life*

**COACHING – March 17**  
*Finding Your New You: Redefining Yourself in Times of Transition*

**JUMPSTART – March 25**  
*Bouncing Back & Moving Forward*

**COACHING – March 30**  
*Building Resilience to Overcome Setbacks*

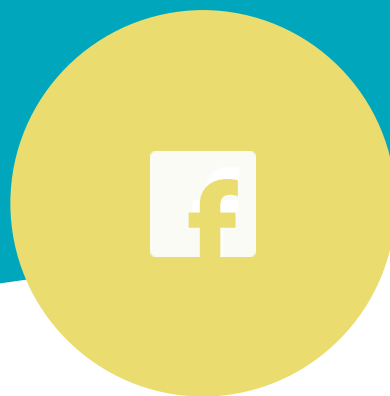


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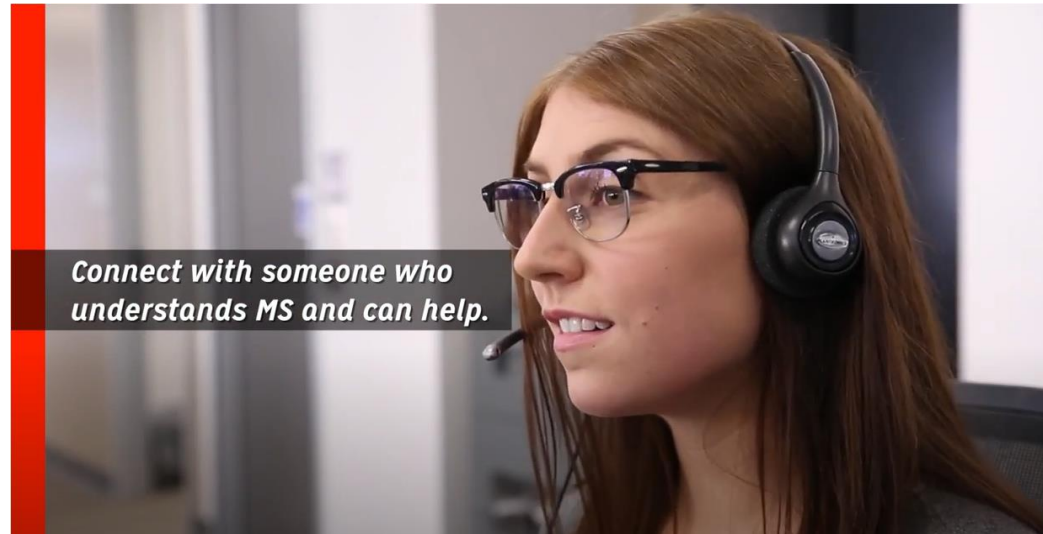
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**Connect**  
When and Where You  
Need Us

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.



**National  
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*Connect with someone who  
understands MS and can help.*



WEBINAR   
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# Making Decisions Together

Wednesday, April 7 at 8pm ET

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