



WEBINAR   
WEDNESDAYS

# Mood and Mental Health

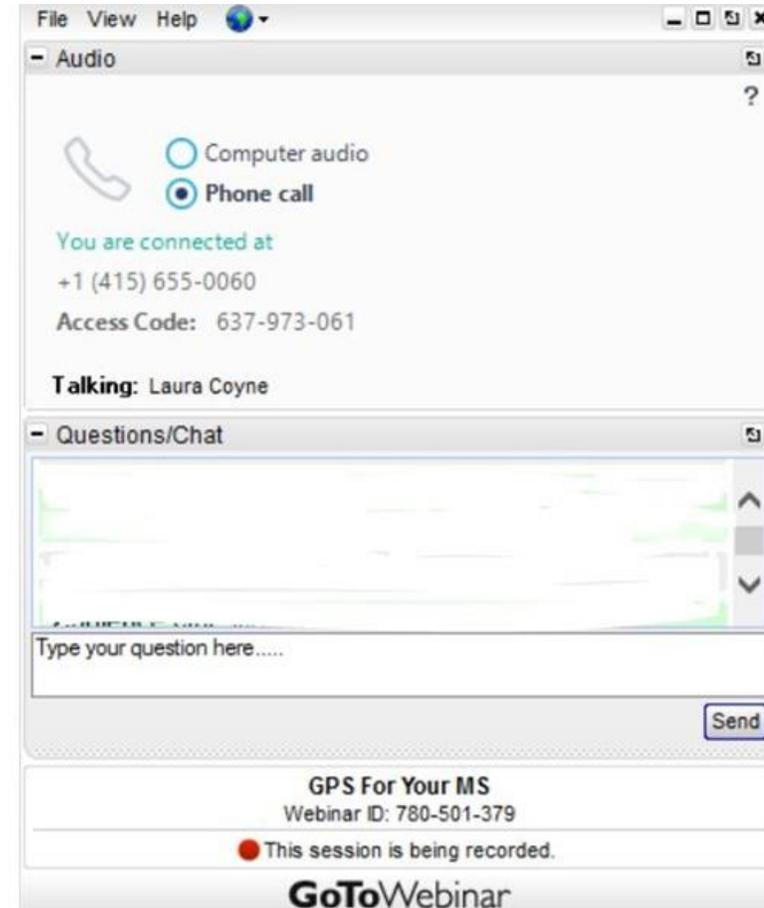
## How to Deal with Feeling Different

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# How to Ask Questions During the Webinar

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





# FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

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Webinar – May 4  
*Mood and Mental Health: How to Deal with Feeling Different*

JUMPSTART – May 12  
*Mood and Mental Health: Get Started with Feeling More Like Yourself*

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED – May 17  
*Mood and Mental Health*



# Meghan Beier, PhD

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- Clinical Psychologist
- Glen Arm, MD



## Pilar Poal, PhD

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- Clinical Psychologist
- Wayne, PA

# Interactive Poll

What mood changes do you experience most frequently in connection to your MS?

Grief

Contentment

Anxiety

Irritability

Depression

Other  
(write your answer  
in the chat)

# Learning Objectives



Recognizing mood changes  
(healthy grieving, anxiety, depression)



Understanding the importance of routine screening



Learning mood management strategies  
(talk therapy, medication, physical activity)



# Sarah - 47yo, Lives with RRMS

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- **Sarah started off having a bad day.**
- She didn't **sleep well** last night due to **the UTI** that started yesterday. The UTI plus bad sleep is leaving her **feeling tired, fatigued, and frustrated about needing to see the doctor AGAIN.**
- However, by the end of the day she is feeling a bit better. Her wife helped call the doctor and was able to pick up the antibiotic prescription. This gave Sarah time for a nap and extra rest.

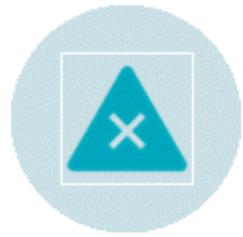
# We All Experience “Bad” Days

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- It is normal, even healthy, to occasionally experience uncomfortable emotions.
- Challenging emotions become problematic when they:
  - Stick around most of the day for weeks or months
  - Interfere with our relationships
  - Interfere with necessary activities (e.g., housework) or enjoyed activities (e.g., hobbies)
  - Feel out of our control



# Common Emotions Associated with MS



IRRITABILITY



FRUSTRATION



SADNESS



GRIEF



WORRY



# Mood Changes in MS

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- Differentiating between normal emotions and mood changes that require treatment
- “Invisible” Symptoms
- Frequently underreported, underdiagnosed and undertreated
- Depression
- Anxiety

# Eli – 62yo, Lives with Progressive MS

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- Ever since Eli left his job his mood has been declining. He started off feeling **angry** and **irritable** at his employer for encouraging him to **retire early**.
- Due to increased **financial pressures** his planned dreams (travel, hiking trips) for retirement years are slipping away. He feels like he **let his family down**.
- These days he just feels like staying in bed. He doesn't even care about the ending of his favorite TV series. **Life just feels hard**.



# Depression Symptoms

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- Feeling down most of the day, nearly every day
- Irritability
- Loss of enjoyment and interest in activities
- Sleep disturbance
- Appetite change
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Thoughts of death or suicide



# Depression Causes

## **Psychosocial**

- Reaction to MS
- Coping and Adjustment Challenges

## **Neurologic**

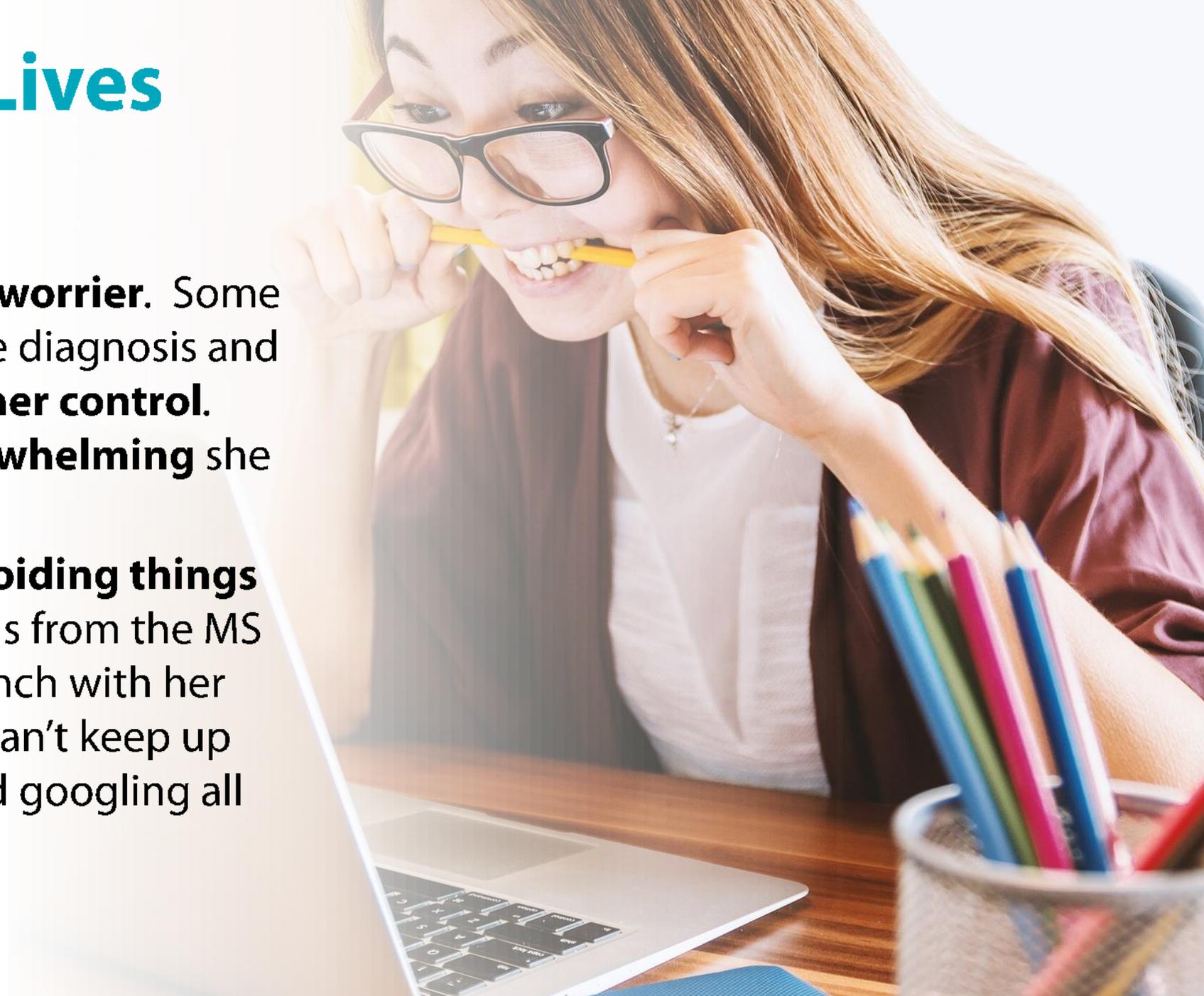
- Depression as symptom of MS: changes in brain structures (lesions)
- Brain volume and brain networks (connectivity)

## **Side Effect of Medications**

- (i.e. steroids, interferon, other DMTs)

# Annika, 34yo, Lives with RRMS

- Annika has always been a **worrier**. Some days she worries about the diagnosis and her future. It feels **out of her control**. Other days it feels so **overwhelming** she feels defeated.
- She oscillates between **avoiding things** that trigger her (e.g., emails from the MS Society, or going out to lunch with her friends. She feels like she can't keep up with the conversation) and googling all her fears. **It's exhausting**.



# Anxiety

- Symptoms: nervousness, difficulty controlling worry, irritability, sleep disturbance, difficulty concentrating, fatigue
- Prevalence – affects an estimated 35% of People with MS
- Overlap with depression is high
- May include feeling overwhelmed, avoidance behaviors
- Unpredictability of MS symptoms and uncertainty of disease course contribution to increased worries

# Screening for Mood Changes

- When to seek help for mood changes
- Self-monitoring of your mood (How often do you experience specific feelings? How long do they last? How severe are the feelings? How much do they interfere with your life?)
- Self-Report Questionnaires – usefulness and limitations
- Routine Screening during visits with your physician – Bring it up if you are not asked about it

# Interactive Poll

What is your "go to" strategy for lifting your mood or de-stressing?

Exercise

Meditation

Psychologist or  
Therapist

Other  
(write you answer  
in the chat)

# Managing Emotions

## Healthy Habits

- Exercise
- Sleep
- Healthy Diet
- Engaging in hobbies
- Spending time with friends and family

## Home Strategies

- Books
- Meditation Apps
- Mental Health Apps/Websites
- Virtual peer support groups
- Online education like NMSS, Can Do

## Professional Support

- PCP / Neurologist
- Psychologist / Therapist
- Therapist led support group
- Psychiatrist

# When to Seek Help

- If you have tried the healthy habits or home strategies and are still feeling anxious or low
- OR if your emotional symptoms:
  - are hurting your relationships
  - are getting in the way of the things you want to do, or need to accomplish
  - feel out of control
- If you have thoughts about hurting yourself or suicide

# How to Find Help

- Keep in mind, not every therapist treats every mood symptom
- **Online Directories:** American Psychological Association, HelpPRO, Psychology Today, Find Empathy
- NMSS Navigators or “Finding Doctors & Resources”
- Contact your insurance provider
- Ask for a referral from your medical team

# Key Takeaways

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- There are normal fluctuations in our emotions.
- There are ways to manage mood at home and with a professional



# Q&A

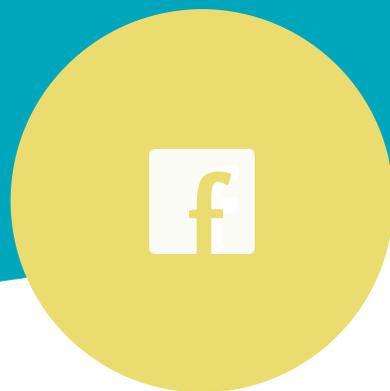




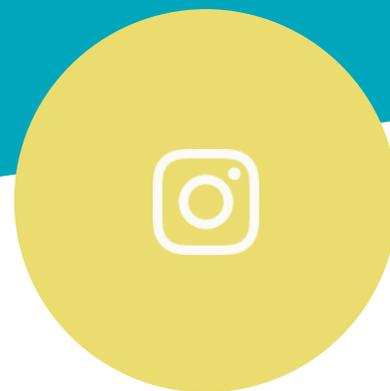
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# Bowel and Bladder:

## How to Find Confidence and Control

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