



Mental Health and Multiple Sclerosis

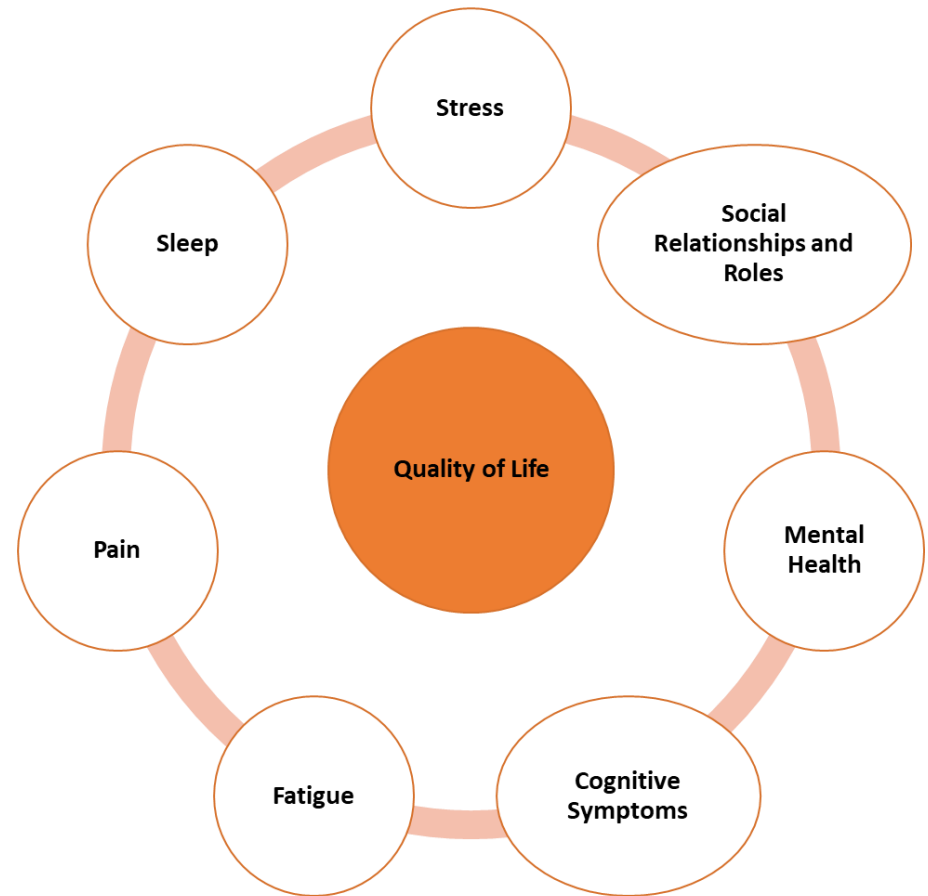
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Invisible Symptoms in MS

- Fatigue
- Cognitive/memory changes
- Sleep disruptions
- Pain
- Depression symptoms
- Anxiety symptoms



Mental Health in MS

Systematic review of 58 published studies with total sample size of 87,756 individuals with MS:

- 35% with clinically significant depression
- 34% with clinically significant anxiety

Boeschoten et al., 2017





Common Symptoms in Anxiety

SWEATING



CHEST PAIN OR DISCOMFORT

DIZZINESS



NAUSEA OR ABDOMINAL DISTRESS

ACCELERATED HEART RATE



CHILLS OR HEAT SENSATIONS

SENATION OF SMOTHERING



FEELING DIZZY, UNSTEADY OR FAINT

TREMBLING



FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL OR DYING



Common Symptoms in MS



| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| SWEATING | | | CHEST PAIN OR DISCOMFORT |
| DIZZINESS | | | NAUSEA OR ABDOMINAL DISTRESS |
| ACCELERATED HEART RATE | | | CHILLS OR HEAT SENSATIONS |
| SENSATION OF SMOTHERING | | | FEELING DIZZY, UNSTEADY OR FAINT |
| TREMBLING | | | FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL OR DYING |

Treatment for Depression and Anxiety

Two evidence-based treatment approaches*

- Medications
 - Prescribed by a medical doctor or NP - primary care, neurologist, psychiatrist
 - Examples: selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), benzodiazepines
- Talk therapy
 - Facilitated by a clinical psychologist or other licensed mental health provider
 - Examples: cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), behavioral activation, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)

* Best in combination



Evidence-Based Talk Therapy

- Focused on the present moment
- Time limited intervention
 - Typical CBT = 12-16 weeks
- Focused on building practical skills
- Goal-oriented problem solving



Strategies for Depression

- Depression causes us to withdraw from meaningful activity
- Behavioral Activation is a helpful treatment approach
- Building motivation through activity
- Reconnecting with the things that matter
- Strategizing around MS
- Emphasizing the importance of self-care



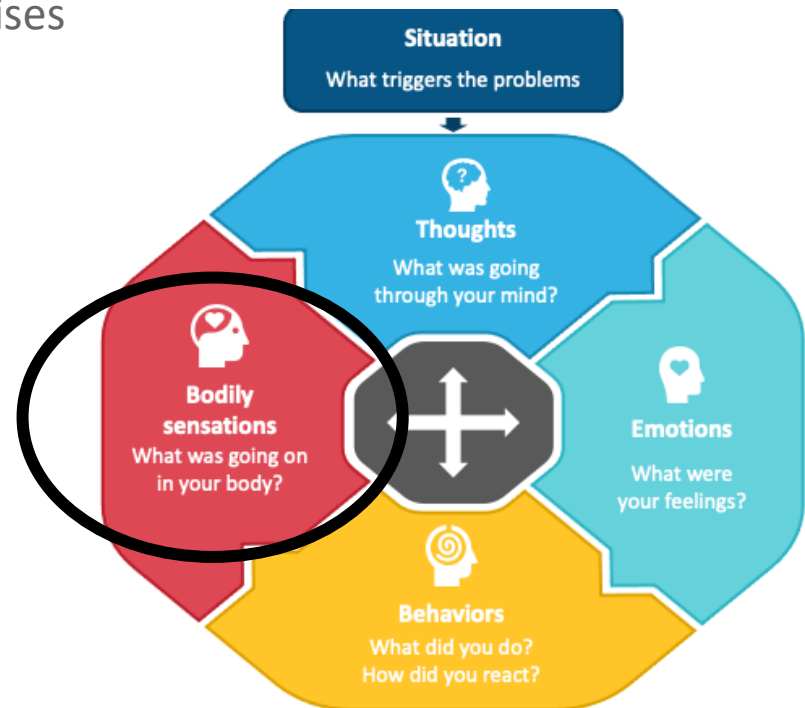
Strategies for Anxiety

Exploring things that bring calm and relaxation during moments of heightened stress

- Reaching out to a supportive person
- Listening to music, reading a book
- Walking, stretching, or other physical activity
- Meditation or deep breathing exercises

Example: “Box Breathing”

- Inhale for 4 seconds
- Hold for 4 seconds
- Exhale for 4 seconds
- Do nothing for 4 seconds
- Repeat



Suicidal Ideation

- Thoughts, wishes, and preoccupations with death and suicide
 - Thoughts about not wanting to be alive or being better off dead
 - Preparing to hurt oneself and/or forming a plan to do so
- Risk of suicide is 2 times higher in those with MS than general population (Pompili et al., 2012)

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

website: www.988lifeline.org

For an emergency, call 911



Helpful Resources

What to Expect from Mental Healthcare: A Guide for People with MS:

- [What to Expect from Mental Healthcare: A Guide for People with MS \(.pdf\) | National Multiple Sclerosis Society \(nationalmssociety.org\)](#)

Building an MS Toolkit:

- [My MSToolkit – A toolkit for those with MS](#)



Thank you!

Questions?