

# The Realities of Mental Health With MS

**CAN DO**  
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**WEBINAR**   
WEDNESDAYS

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# MAY PROGRAMS

**Thursday, May 16**

## **JUMPSTART**

The Dynamic Duo: Mental  
Health and Cognition

**Wednesday, May 22**

## **MS MOVES**

**Friday, May 31**

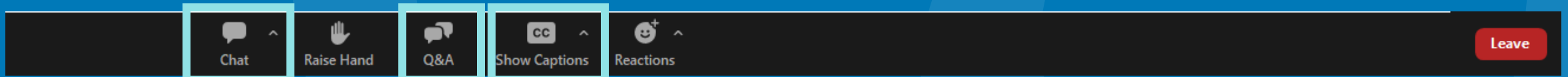
## **MORE ABOUT MS**



**CANDO-MS.ORG**

# How to Ask Questions During the Webinar

Type in your questions using  
the Questions Box



Provide comments and engage  
with the speakers and audience  
using the **Chat Box**

**NEW!** Closed captioning

# YOUR SPEAKERS



**Meghan Beier**  
**Psychologist**

Maryland



**Dawn Morgan**  
**Person Living with MS**

Washington DC

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES



- 1 Describe when to seek out the support of a mental health professional
- 2 Identify what type of mental health professional can support your needs
- 3 Gain confidence to end therapy, switch therapists, or seek a new type of therapy when needed

**Do I need a therapist?**





# POLLING QUESTION

**Have any of the following stigmas influenced your experience with mental health?**

- a) My gender has made it hard to seek treatment
- b) Racial or ethnic stigmas have caused my symptoms to be overlooked, ignored, or have made me hesitant to seek treatment
- c) Cultural stigmas within my community have created isolation, shame, or have influenced my decision about treatment
- d) Other – Write in the chat!



# Do I need a therapist?

- Some unpleasant emotions are normal
- They can be helpful signals or messages
- Avoidance of unpleasant emotions can often cause its own set of problem



# Do I Need a Therapist?



A few questions to ask yourself:

- Have you been feeling sad most of the day nearly everyday for 2 weeks or more?
- Have you felt apathetic (i.e., numb, unable to enjoy, less interested in things you usually enjoy) most of the day nearly everyday for 2 weeks or more?
- Are you unable to control worry or anxiety?
- Do you have thoughts of suicide or harming yourself?
- Are emotional symptoms interfering with your hobbies, relationships, vocation, or responsibilities?

**What kind of therapist do I  
need?**



# What kind of therapist do I need?

Primary challenge	Type of provider
MS diagnosis or changes in symptoms	Health, Rehabilitation, or Neuro Psychologist
Emotional and practical support around finding resources	Social worker ( they also do psychotherapy)
History of trauma	Psychologist, Counselor, or Therapist trained in trauma informed therapy or evidence-based treatment (e.g. PE, EMDR, CPT, and more)
Relationship issues or challenges with kids	Marriage and Family Therapist, Someone trained in family systems
Phobia, OCD, or panic attacks	Anxiety Disorders Specialist – e.g. someone trained in Exposure Response Treatment

# Getting started



- **Check in with yourself before beginning the process & evaluate your needs**
- **What are you looking for?**
  - Goals for treatment
  - Type of professional
  - What do you want from your therapist? (e.g., someone directive, provide insight)
- **Where do I find someone?**
  - Referrals from friends or medical team
  - National MS Society
  - What else?

**What is it like to see a  
therapist?**





**Write it in  
the Chat!**

**What do you fear about  
mental health treatment?**

Write your answers in the chat!

# What is it like to see a therapist?



- Complete forms and assessments (e.g., depression screening)
- The first session will review your history, assess symptoms, and identify your main goals
- Some variability based on type of therapy
  - Very structured (e.g., trauma treatments)
  - Experiential (e.g., MBSR)
  - Focus on self-discovery – explore history and relationships



**Is this (still) working for me?**



# Is This (Still) Working for Me?



- In the first 1-3 sessions assess if this therapist is a good fit
- Therapists have different areas of expertise, just like physicians
- During therapy check in with yourself
  - Are you making progress?
  - Have you met your goals?
  - Has this treatment run its course?
  - Do you need something different?
- It's OK to stop therapy or change therapists!

**Q+A**



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# MS Travel and Leisure

Tools, Tips, and Adaptations

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