

Newly Diagnosed **MEETUP**

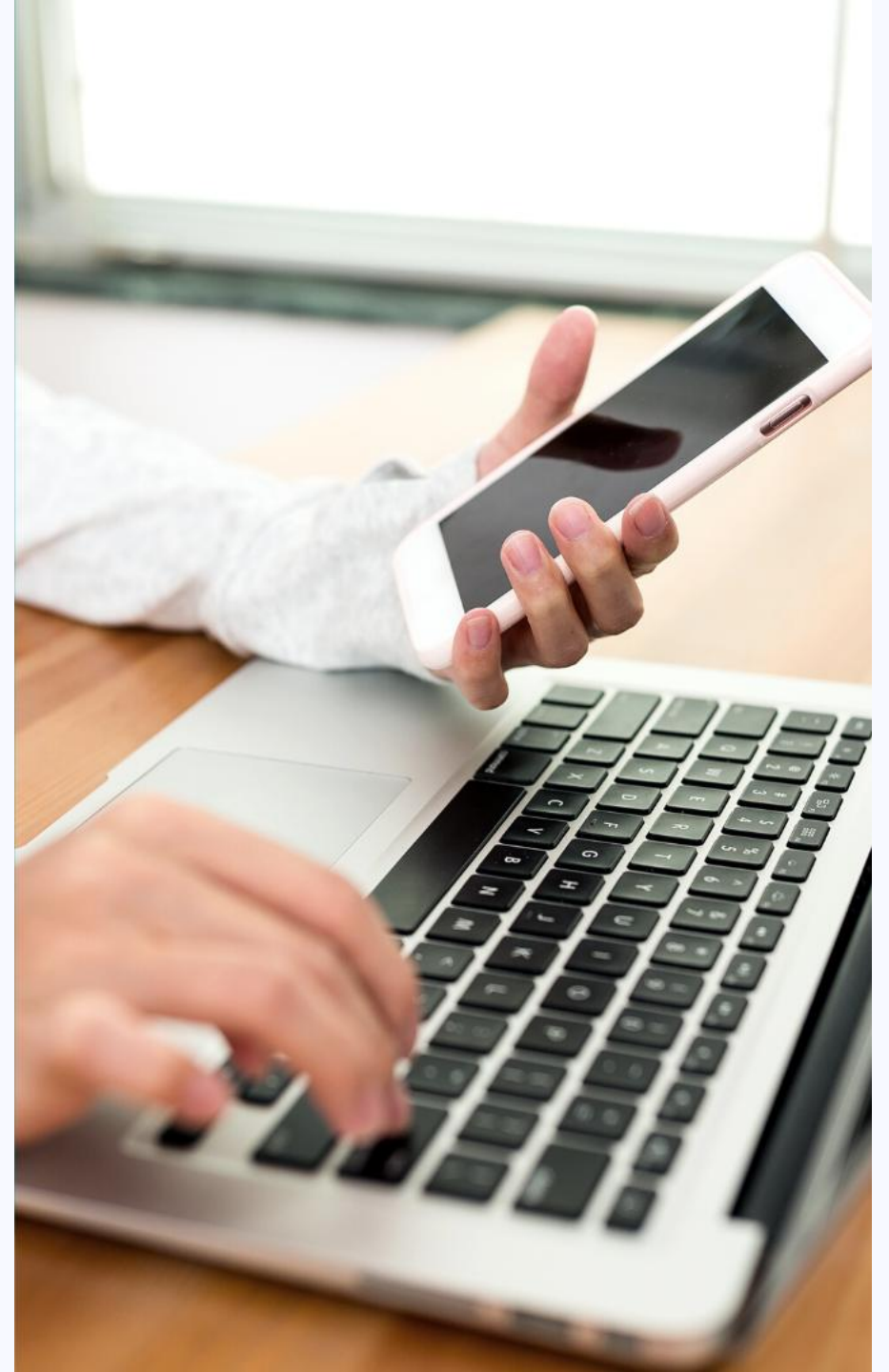
**Your Choices Matter:
Impacting Your Future with MS**

CAN DO
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

For TECH SUPPORT Call



P: 1-800-367-3101



YOUR COACHES



Lisa Doggett
**Family and Lifestyle
Medicine Physician**

Texas



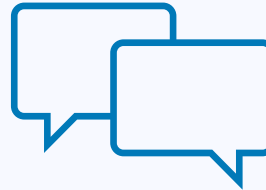
Meghan Beier
Neuropsychologist

Maryland

Our Plan For Today



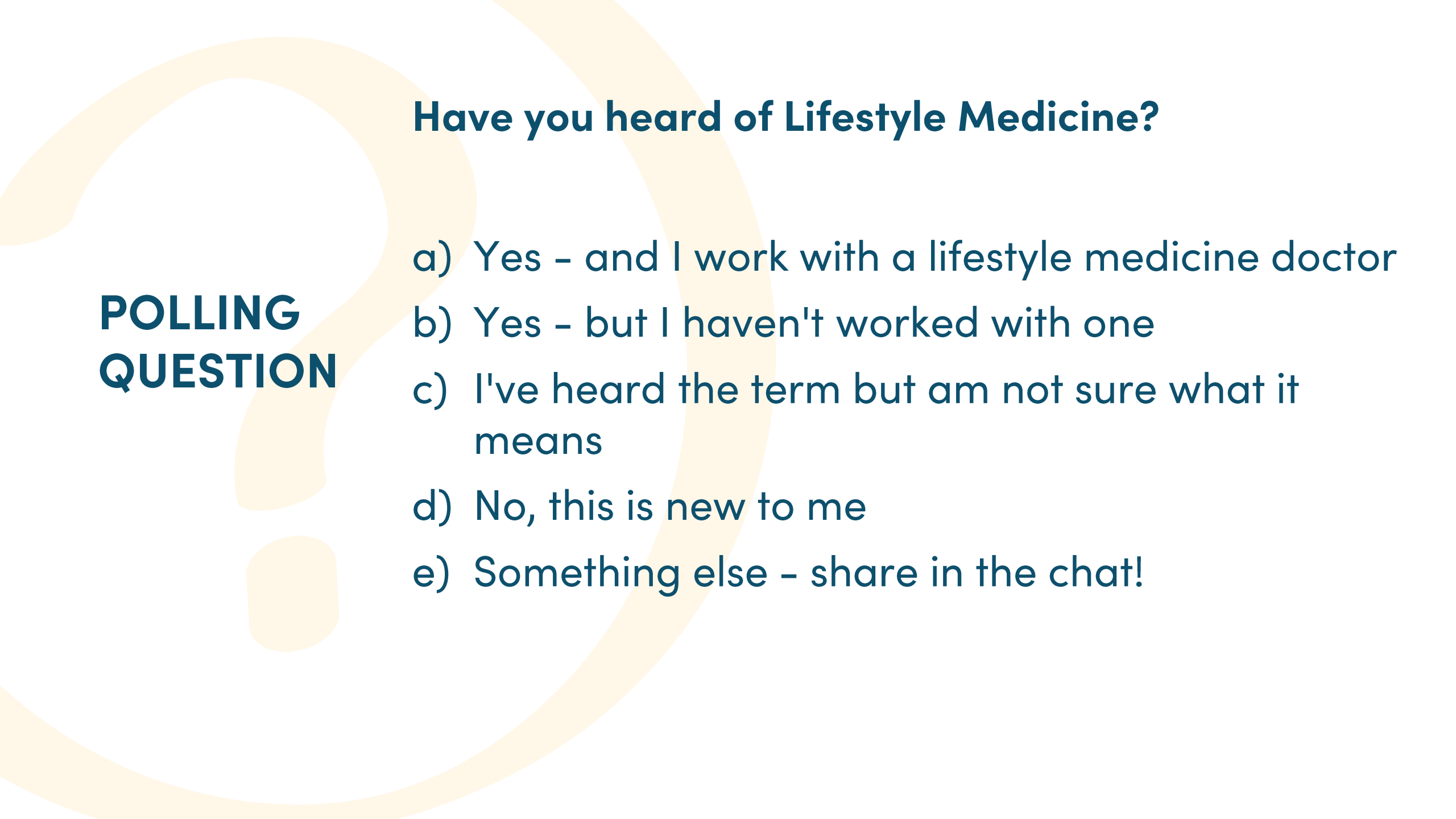
**Introductions and Topic
Background from Our Coaches**



Group Conversations

Lisa's Story





POLLING QUESTION

Have you heard of Lifestyle Medicine?

- a) Yes – and I work with a lifestyle medicine doctor
- b) Yes – but I haven't worked with one
- c) I've heard the term but am not sure what it means
- d) No, this is new to me
- e) Something else – share in the chat!

What is Lifestyle Medicine?

A medical specialty
focused on prevention,
treatment, and reversal
of chronic disease
through healthy lifestyle



Lifestyle Medicine

Does not replace your DMT or traditional medical care

Can help address up to 80% of chronic conditions

Lowers risk of cancer and dementia

Can help address common MS symptoms like:

- Pain
- Sleep
- Fatigue
- Depression



Why Lifestyle Medicine Matters for People with MS

Comorbidities are more common in MS (e.g., high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, chronic pain, and more)



Comorbidities can lead to:

- Higher rates of hospitalization
- Accelerated MS disability progression



Good News: many of these conditions can be prevented and/or treated with a healthy lifestyle



★ **Physical Activity**

Guideline:

- **150 min/week moderate-intensity or**
- **75 min/week vigorous activity, plus**
2x/week resistance training

ANY activity is better than none

Helps reduce:

- **Risk of long-term disability**
- **Other chronic diseases**
- **MS symptoms such as fatigue, sleep, pain, mood cognitive symptoms**

Heat sensitivity? Foot drop? Adapt

- **shorter sessions**
- **pool exercise**
- **fans**
- **cold water**
- **work with a PT if you need a customized plan.**

Nutrition



There is no single "MS diet"

What IS supported: a whole-food, plant-forward eating pattern:

- vegetables
- fruits
- whole grains
- legumes
- nuts
- seed
- limited ultraprocessed foods

NARCOMS research: a healthy overall lifestyle was associated with:

- 30% lower risk of fatigue
- 40% less pain
- 20% lower risk of severe disability

If you only remember 3 things:

- *Avoid ultraprocessed meats*
- *Drink mostly water*
- *Eat a fruit or vegetable with every meal*

Group Discussion

The internet and social media are full of advice about what people with MS should eat, do, or avoid. What have you found helpful? What's been unhelpful?



Sleep

Goal: 7-9 hours per night

- **Sleep quality affects fatigue, cognition, mood, fall risk, and more**
- **Look for underlying causes (sleep apnea, pain, anxiety)**
- **Avoid sleeping pills as a first intervention**

Basic sleep hygiene:

- **regular schedule**
- **cool/dark/quiet room**
- **limit caffeine and alcohol**
- **bed for sleep only**

Try CBT for Insomnia (CBT-I) or working with a sleep medicine clinic if you need more support



Stress Management

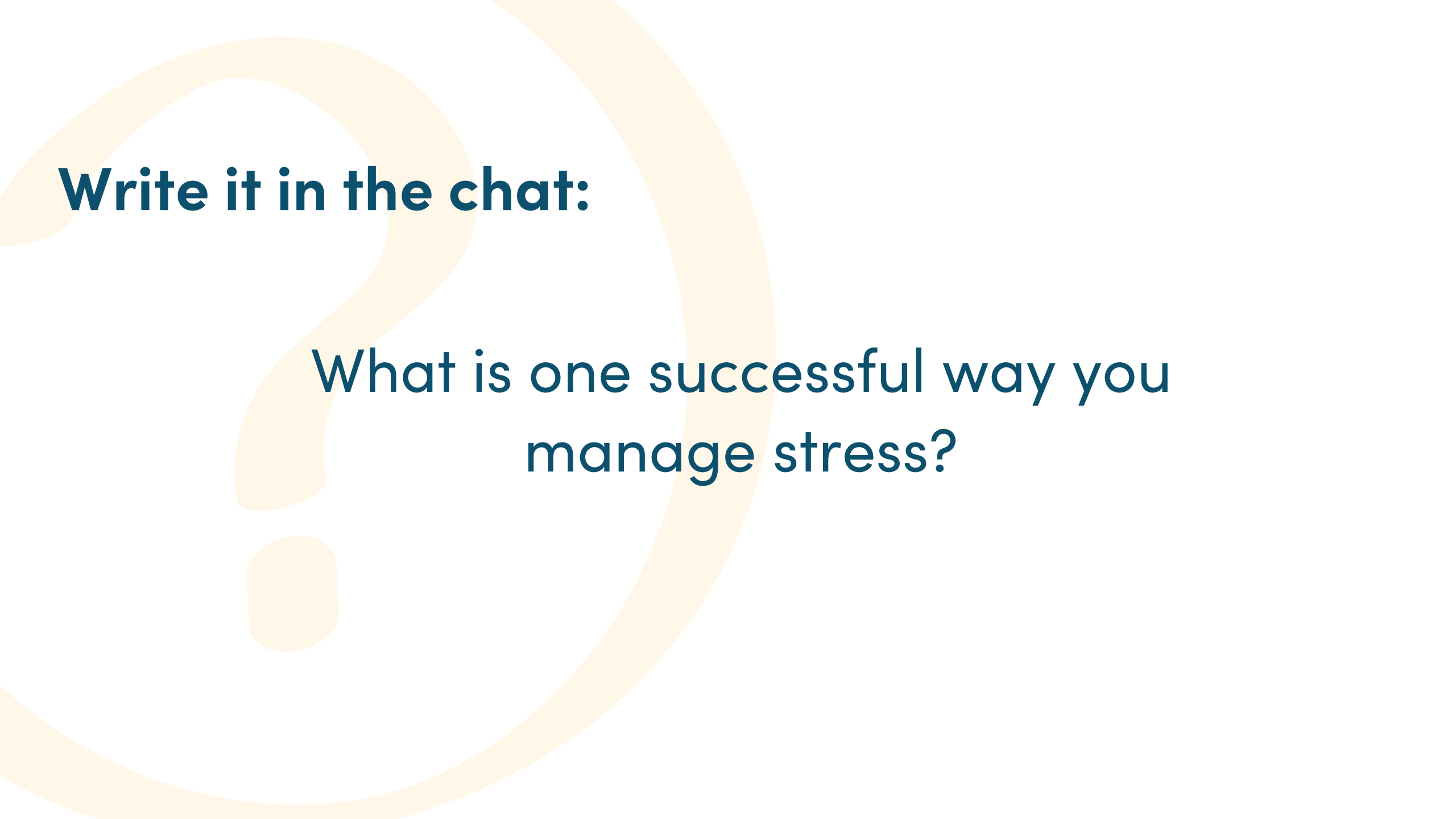
Stress is Normal & Inevitable, but we can learn to manage it more effectively

- unpredictable symptoms
- heat intolerance
- fatigue
- impact on employment or household roles & responsibilities
- impact on loved ones

Chronic uncontrolled stress contributes to anxiety, depression, and immune dysfunction

Strategies:

- exercise
- hobbies
- gratitude practices
- journaling
- mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)
- counseling (consider CBT, ACT, or DBT skills)



Write it in the chat:

What is one successful way you
manage stress?



Reduce or Avoid Risky Substances

Tobacco is linked to MS progression

- quitting at any age can slow disability to match never-smokers



Alcohol in even small amounts may increase risk of dementia and cancer



When smoking marijuana consider risks and interactions with MS medications

If you want help quitting, seek support from your doctor, a counselor, or support group



Social Connection



- Isolation is associated with higher risk of stress, heart disease, dementia, mental health problems, and early death
- Positive social relationships improve physical, mental, and emotional health
- Community matters!

Ways to build community:

- reach out to old friends
- volunteer
- take a class
- join a book club
- join a support group
- support someone else
- look for online groups or classes
- meetup groups like this one!





Write it in the chat:

**What's one way you've found community
or connection since your diagnosis?**

(It could be a group, an app, a friend, an event, a random
conversation in a waiting room)

Take Home Message: You Can Make a Difference



- The research shows that what you do matters for your MS and for your overall health
- You don't have to be perfect.
- You don't have to do all of this.
- Small, consistent changes compound over time.

Let's Set a Realistic Goal

- Pick **ONE** pillar. Make **ONE** specific, achievable goal.
- **SMART goals:**
 - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- **Example:**
 - Starting tomorrow, for one month, I'll swap out one soda for a glass of water



Group Discussion

Of the 6 pillars we just discussed, which one feels the most important OR doable for you right now?



Group Discussion

If you've made a change since your diagnosis that's stuck, tell us about it. What made it possible? What got in the way if it didn't stick?"





THANK YOU
FOR JOINING US!



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