Mood and MS

What To Look For And What To Do

CAN DO MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS

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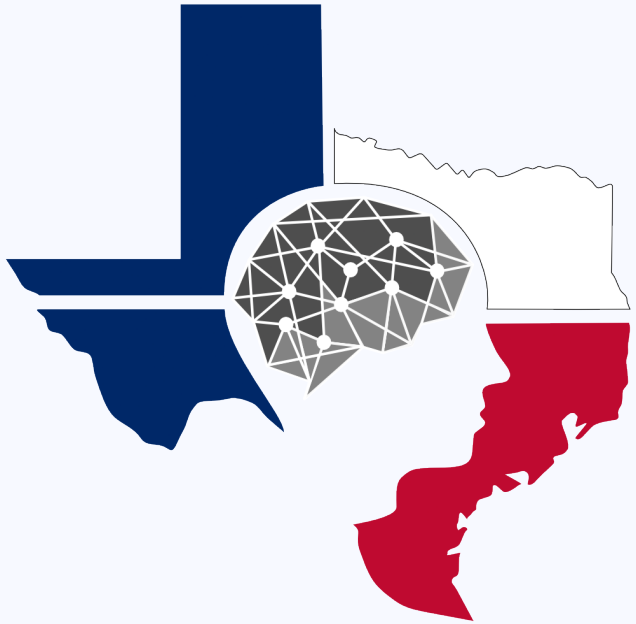

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Thursday, July 16
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Tuesday, July 21
YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED
Finding the Right Treatment

Tuesday, July 21
CARE PARTNER MEETUP
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YOUR SPEAKERS

Lauren Dreyer, LCSW-S

Social Worker

Austin, TX

Maggie Rodriguez, APRN-CNP

Nurse Practitioner

McAllen, TX

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize mood changes and what to look for
2. Explore practical strategies
3. Identify who can help

What is Mood

Definition from American Psychological Association Dictionary:

- any short-lived emotional state, usually of low intensity
- a disposition to respond emotionally in a particular way that may last for hours, days, or even weeks, perhaps at a low level and without the person knowing what prompted the state.

Definition from Cambridge Dictionary:

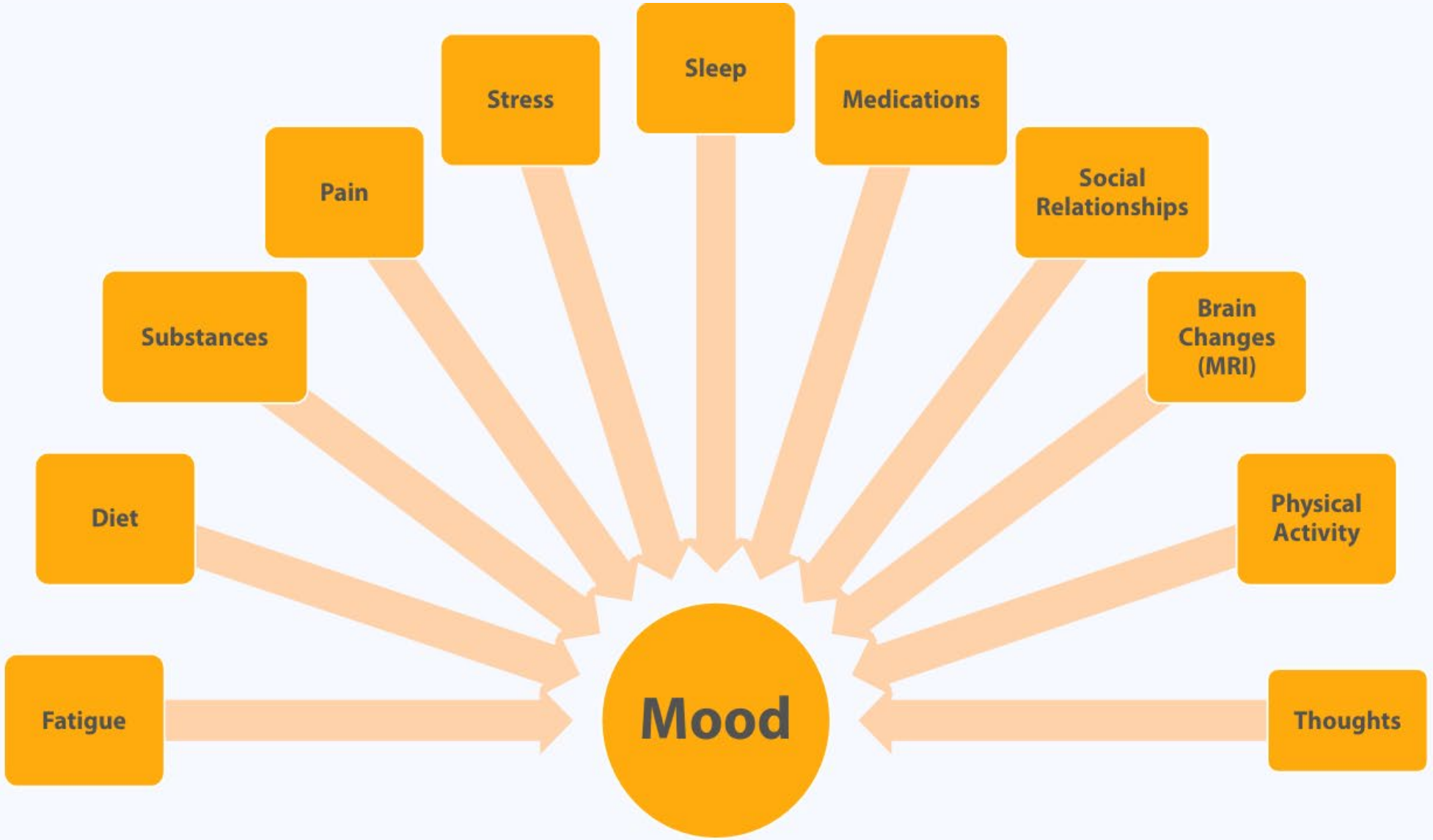
- The way you feel at a particular time

Drop it in the Chat

What is ONE WORD or Emoji to describe your MOOD today

Why Mood Matters

- Mood describes our emotional state
- Experiencing mood fluctuations is normal
- Emotional well-being is important to brain health
- Imbalances may indicate mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder
- Mood is impacted by biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors
- MS can impact your mood – physically, emotionally


Sleep
Stress
Medications
Pain
Social Relationships
Substances
Brain Changes (MRI)
Diet
Physical Activity
Fatigue
Mood
Thoughts

Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model

a holistic framework to understand whole-person well-being

- **Biological factors** - physical health, genetics, autonomic nervous system response
- **Psychological factors** – thoughts, emotions, behaviors/coping, and outlook
- **Social factors** – relationships, family dynamics, community
- **Spiritual factors** – beliefs, values, and meaning-making

Why Mood Changes Happen Biologically

Mood changes in MS may happen for several biological reasons rooted in the neurological and physiological effects of the disease.

- Lesions in Emotion-Regulating Brain Areas
- Inflammation and Mood Pathways
- Fatigue, Pain, and Sleep Disruption
- Cognitive Changes
- Medication Effects

Source: Feinstein et al., 2014; Marrie et al., 2015; Dantzer et al., 2008

Psychological Impact

MS is unpredictable, and that uncertainty can create significant psychological stress. Living with a chronic, relapsing condition affects how people see themselves and their future.

- Fear of Relapse
- Loss of Control
- Body Image & Confidence
- Fear of Disability Progression
- Worry About Being a Burden
- Adjustment to Diagnosis

Source: National Multiple Sclerosis Society, n.d.; Feinstein et al., 2014

Social Impact of Mood Changes

Mood symptoms and MS symptoms can significantly affect social life and relationships, often creating a cycle that is difficult to break

Possible Social Effects

- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Strained relationships with family and friends
- Difficulty working or attending school
- Financial stress
- Reduced participation in hobbies and activities
- Feeling misunderstood because symptoms are invisible

Source: Chiaravalloti & DeLuca, 2008; National Multiple Sclerosis Society, n.d.; Amato et al., 2006

Spiritual Impact

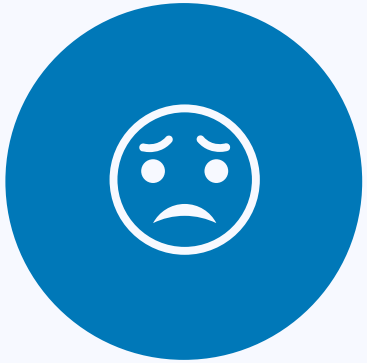
MS may affect a person's sense of meaning, purpose, hope, identity, and connection. Spiritual concerns are a real and important dimension of living with a chronic illness.

Spiritual concerns may include:

- Questioning "Why me?"
- Feeling disconnected from faith or community
- Anger, guilt, or loss of meaning
- Searching for hope and purpose

Source: Koenig, 2012; National Multiple Sclerosis Society, n.d

Common Mood and Emotional Changes in MS



Depression & Anxiety

Irritability & Anger

Grief & Adjustment

Pseudobulbar Affect

Depression in MS

Depression is one of the most common mood symptoms in people with MS and can occur at any point in the disease course.

Research suggests that approximately 50% of people with MS will experience depression at some point during their lifetime—significantly higher than in the general population.

Depression may include:

- Persistent sadness
- Loss of interest in activities
- Low motivation
- Sleep and/or appetite changes
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness
- Trouble concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Anxiety in MS

Anxiety is also common in MS and may be related to uncertainty about symptoms, relapses, MRI results, treatment decisions, work, family responsibilities, or the future.

Anxiety affects approximately 20–40% of people with MS.

Anxiety may include:

- Excessive worry
- Panic attacks
- Racing thoughts
- Restlessness
- Muscle tension
- Sleep problems
- Avoidance of activities

Irritability, Anger, and Mood Swings

Irritability and mood swings can happen in MS. These symptoms may be connected to fatigue, pain, poor sleep, stress, cognitive overload, medication side effects, or neurological changes.

Common Contributors:

- Fatigue
- Pain
- Poor Sleep
- Stress
- Cognitive changes
- Steroid treatment

Grief and Adjustment

Grief is a normal response to diagnosis and life changes caused by MS. People may grieve changes in their body, independence, work roles, relationships, energy, and identity.

Stages of grief can include:

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Psuedobulbar Affect

Pseudobulbar affect, or PBA, involves sudden episodes of laughing or crying that may be out of proportion to the situation or not match how the person feels inside.

Examples:

- Crying without sadness
- Inappropriate laughter
- Sudden and difficult to stop

Estimated to occur in 10% of people with MS.

Risk Factors for Mood Symptoms in MS

Certain factors may increase the likelihood of experiencing mood symptoms in MS. Awareness of these risk factors can support earlier identification and intervention.

Risk Factors for Mood Symptoms in MS

Person History

- Previous depression or anxiety
- Family history of mood disorders
- Substance use

Social and Environmental

- Low social support
- High stress
- Financial or employment problems

Disease-Related

- Recent diagnosis
- Recent relapse
- Increasing disability
- Symptoms including fatigue, pain, sleep problems, cognitive changes

Medication-Related

- Side effects from steroids or other treatments

Source: Marrie et al., 2015; Boeschoten et al., 2017; Feinstein et al., 2014

What You Can Do

Monitor Your Mood

- How often are you experiencing specific feelings?
- How long do they last?
- How intense are they?
- How much do they interfere with your life?

Routine Screening during visits with your medical provider(s)

- Bring it up if you are not asked about it

What You Can Do

Medical strategies - regularly see providers, follow treatment plan, psychiatry

Lifestyle strategies – physical activity/exercise, diet, sleep hygiene, smoking cessation, address substance misuse

Psychological strategies – mindfulness and stress management, hobbies, gratitude practice, psychotherapy

Social strategies – support groups, community engagement, boundaries

Spiritual strategies – faith communities, chaplain, prayer, meditation, reflect on personal values and meaning

What You Can Do

- Breathing exercises
- Physical exercise
- Manage your energy
- Change your temperature
- Grounding techniques
- Gratitude practice
- Mindfulness practice
- Spend time in nature
- Social connection
- Spiritual care
- Diet & Nutrition
- Volunteer
- Cognitive strategies

Who Can Help?

Medical Team

- Neurologist
- Primary care provider
- Psychiatrist
- MS nurse
- Pharmacist

Rehabilitation Team

- Physical therapist
- Occupational therapist
- Speech Language therapist

Mental Health Providers

- Psychologist or therapist
- Social worker
- Chaplain or spiritual care provider

Community Support

- Family and caregivers
- MS support groups

Source: National Multiple Sclerosis Society, n.d.; Multiple Sclerosis Association of America, n.d.

Key Takeaways

- Mood Changes Are Common
- Depression Affects Up To 50%
- Anxiety Affects 20-40%
- Multiple Contributing Factors
- Mood Symptoms ARE Treatable

Resources

- Support Groups
- Exercise
- MS Friends
- Nutrition
- Symptom Trackers
- Meditation apps
- My MS Toolkit
- Mental health support
- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Q+A

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