



WEBINAR 
WEDNESDAYS

How To Be Your Sexual Self with MS

SPONSORED BY:



How to Ask Questions During the Webinar

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



A screenshot of the GoToWebinar software interface. At the top, there is a menu bar with 'File', 'View', and 'Help'. Below this, there are two main sections. The first section is titled 'Audio' and contains a telephone icon, two radio buttons for 'Computer audio' and 'Phone call' (the latter is selected), and text indicating the user is connected at a specific phone number and access code. The second section is titled 'Questions/Chat' and features a scrollable area for messages, a text input field with the placeholder 'Type your question here.....', and a 'Send' button. At the bottom of the interface, there is a status bar with the text 'GPS For Your MS', 'Webinar ID: 780-501-379', a red recording indicator, and the 'GoToWebinar' logo.



November Programs

JUMPSTART - Nov 3
Get Started with a Healthy Sex Life

Featured Seminar – Nov 9 & 10
MS Disrupted

Your Questions Answered - Nov 15
Sex and MS



Roz Kalb, PhD

- Psychologist
- West Bath, ME



Shannon Schneider, MS OTR/L

- Occupational Therapist
- Atlanta, GA

Learning Objectives

1

Learn the interrelationship between communication, intimacy, and sexuality

2

Become familiar with the ways that MS can impact sexual feelings and functioning

3

Learn about the treatments available for sexual challenges

4

Get tips for starting difficult conversations with partners and healthcare providers



What role does our sexuality play in our lives?

- A way of enjoying our physical selves alone or with someone else
- A means of expressing love, connection, closeness
- A way to have fun, individually or with someone else
- A path to relaxation and calm
- A wonderful – but non-essential component of intimacy
 - If and when sexual expression changes due to aging, disability, the intimate connection can *lessen, stay the same, or grow* – the choice is yours!

YES – Your MS Self & Your Sexual Self Can Cooperate

STEP 1 Understand the facts about MS and the sexual response

STEP 2 Get to know your own body

STEP 3 If you have a partner, share what you've learned

STEP 4 Advocate for yourself with your healthcare team; if they aren't interested in your sexuality, find another provider

STEP 5 Be willing to do things differently, try new things, and *give yourself grace*

STEP 6 Keep a hold on your sense of humor



Polling Question

Have your healthcare providers ever asked you about sexuality and intimacy?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I'd faint if they did



Polling Question

Which aspect of your sexuality/sexual feelings has changed the most?

- a) Interest
- b) Arousal
- c) Comfort
- d) Enjoyment
- e) Orgasm



Polling Question

Where do you get information/support about these changes?

- a) Partner
- b) Healthcare professional
- c) Friend or family member
- d) Internet
- e) Nobody



Polling Question

What forms of intimacy do you find satisfying?

- a) Sexual Activity
- b) Talking
- c) Touching
- d) Cuddling
- e) None



Polling Question

Have you spent time getting more familiar with your own body (what feels good and what doesn't)?

- a) Yes
- b) No



Polling Question

What is your age?

- a) 20-40
- b) 41-50
- c) 51-65
- d) 66-75
- e) Over 75

What do we know about MS and Sexual Function?

- Sexual changes are a very common symptom of MS (but keep in mind that challenges are also common in the general population)
- The changes fall into three categories:

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes caused by disease-related damage in the central nervous system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes related to symptoms of MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes related to our cultural and societal attitudes about age, sexuality, disability, beauty

Sexual function is also impacted by aging/menopause, co-morbid health conditions, smoking, alcohol, medications, and diet.

	WOMEN	MEN
PRIMARY CHANGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced interest • Changes in sensation • Reduced vaginal lubrication • Changes in orgasm or inability to reach orgasm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in sensation • Inability to achieve/maintain an erection • Changes in orgasm or inability to reach orgasm
SECONDARY CHANGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of MS symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue, pain, spasticity, bladder/bowel changes, depression, cognitive changes • Impact of Medications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bladder medications, antidepressants, BP medications, among others 	
TERTIARY CHANGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings/Attitudes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I don't like my body anymore so why would anyone else?" • "I'm turned off by illness/disability" • Role changes in your relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It's hard to feel sexual as a "disabled person or as a support partner" • "I'm concerned about hurting or fatiguing my partner" • "It's the old way or NO WAY" 	

Tips for Reviving Your Sexual Self

- Think about what has changed (interest, feelings, sensation, responses) and what might be getting in the way (Primary, Secondary, Tertiary issues)
- Educate yourself (and your partner)
- Consult your MS provider and PCP and ask for a referral if necessary
- Do a Body Mapping Exercise with yourself (and share information with your partner)
- Be ready to be flexible, creative, and adventurous

BTW – this applies to normal aging as well as MS!



MS Team Members that Can Help

MS Team Member	How They Can Help
Neurologist/NP/PA	Information; Referrals; Treatment
Primary Care Physician	Information; Referrals; Treatment
Urologist	Bladder Management; Male Sexual Problems
Physical Therapist	Exercises; Stretching; Positioning; Pelvic Floor PT
Occupational Therapist	Energy Conservation; Tools & Tricks; Positioning
Mental Health Professional	Feelings; Attitudes; Relationship Issues; Communication Strategies
Speech/Language Pathologist	Cognitive Training – Attention & Concentration
Pharmacist	Medication Side Effects/Interactions

The most helpful provider is generally the person you feel most comfortable talking to

Occupational Therapy

- **What is an Occupational Therapist (OT)?**
 - Healthcare professionals skilled at analyzing and adapting activities to improve satisfaction and independence in daily activities
- **Why is sexuality/intimacy on the OT's radar?**
 - Access to intimacy, sexual participation (solo or partnered), and sexual identity are a part of a person's overall holistic health.
- **What is the OT's role in helping to break down barriers to sexual challenges?**
 - Addressing decreased mobility, altered sensation, pain, overheating, fatigue, bowel and/or bladder dysfunction





Tips & Tricks

- Planning in advance for the first few times will help ensure a positive experience
 - Plan around a time when pain and/or spasticity medications are most effective
- Use your communication skills – no one can read your mind!
- Understand your body (e.g., Body Mapping Exercise)
 - Changes in sensation, mobility changes, pain, spasticity
 - Experiment on yourself to see what is enjoyable



Tips & Tricks

- Engage all your senses
 - Explore your erogenous zones– you have more than you think!
 - Very useful especially if sensation in genital region has changed
 - Light touch vs. deep sensation
 - Consider oral, manual, and mechanical stimulation
 - Smell and taste also play a role
- Consider managing bowel and bladder ahead of time
 - Females- manage bladder again when complete
 - Double voiding



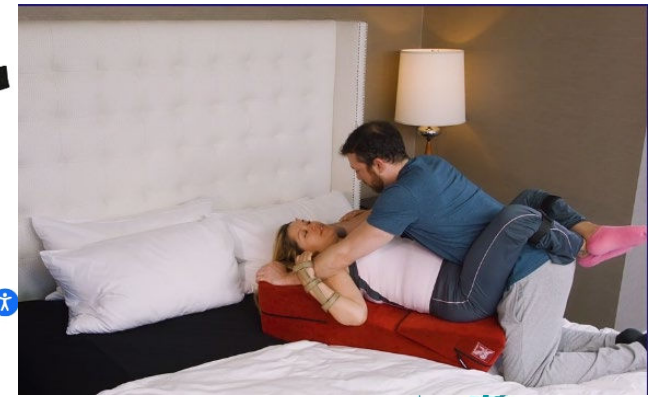
Tips & Tricks

- Energy conservation: try morning rather than evening if possible
- Yoga- stretching, flexibility, alternate positions
- Adaptive equipment-straps/harness, pillows, cooling devices
 - You can adapt your devices if hand function is limited
- Sex toys, vibrators, sexy videos are all fair game!
- Pelvic floor therapist
 - For males and females- assesses sensation and muscle function of pelvic floor muscles
 - Helpful if pain is present during sex
- Make it fun – laugh and use humor to lighten the mood

Intimate Rider, Liberator Wedge, Hoyer lift, Straps



Plus Size Doggie
Style Strap



Resources - Websites

- Sex Aide website with a section addressing disability
 - www.sportsheets.com
- Home - Sexuality and Disability
 - <https://sexualityanddisability.org>
- Intimate Rider - The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability: For All of Us Who Live with Disabilities, Chronic Pain, and Illness (book)
 - www.intimaterider.com
- Clitoral Vacuum Suction Device
 - <https://www.eros-therapy.com/>
- Videos, tips, and other educational resources for women with spinal cord injury
 - <https://www.myshepherdconnection.org/sci/women>
- Sex toys and other essentials
 - <https://www.justmindful.com/>

Resources - Downloads

We have 3 different documents that can be found under the 'handouts' section of your webinar dashboard that you can download.

- This presentation deck!
- Intimacy and Sexuality Brochure – National MS Society
- Pleasure ABLE Sexual Device Manual for Persons with Disabilities

Q & A





Connect With Us



Twitter
[@CanDoMS](#)

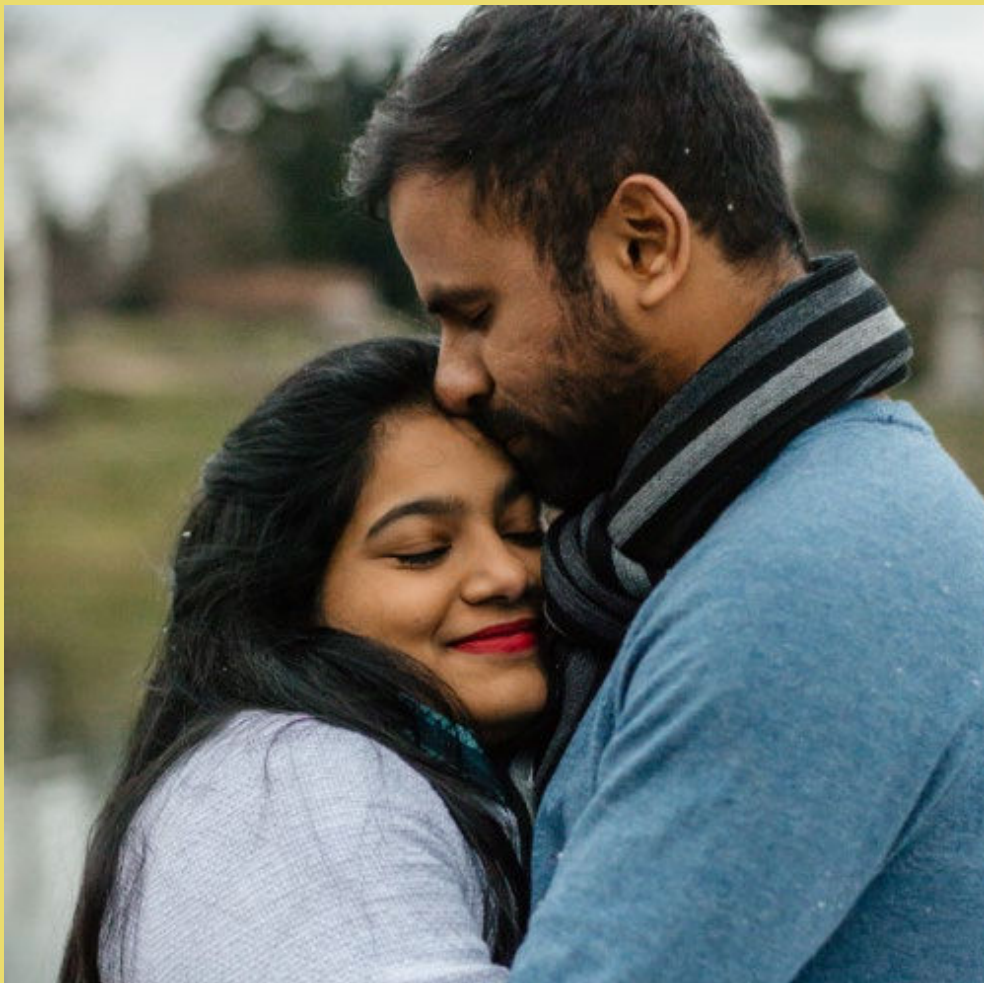


Facebook
[@CanDoMultipleSclerosis](#)



Instagram
[@CanDoMultipleSclerosis](#)





November Programs

JUMPSTART - Nov 3
Get Started with a Healthy Sex Life

Your Questions Answered - Nov 15
Sex and MS



WEBINAR 
WEDNESDAYS

How To Bounce Back When Life Brings You Down

Wednesday, December 7 at 8pm ET

SPONSORED BY:



The preceding program is copyrighted by Can Do Multiple Sclerosis. It is provided for your personal educational and referential use only. Any repurposing or dissemination of its content requires the consent by Can Do Multiple Sclerosis.

© Can Do Multiple Sclerosis