



WEBINAR 
WEDNESDAYS

Stress Management in MS

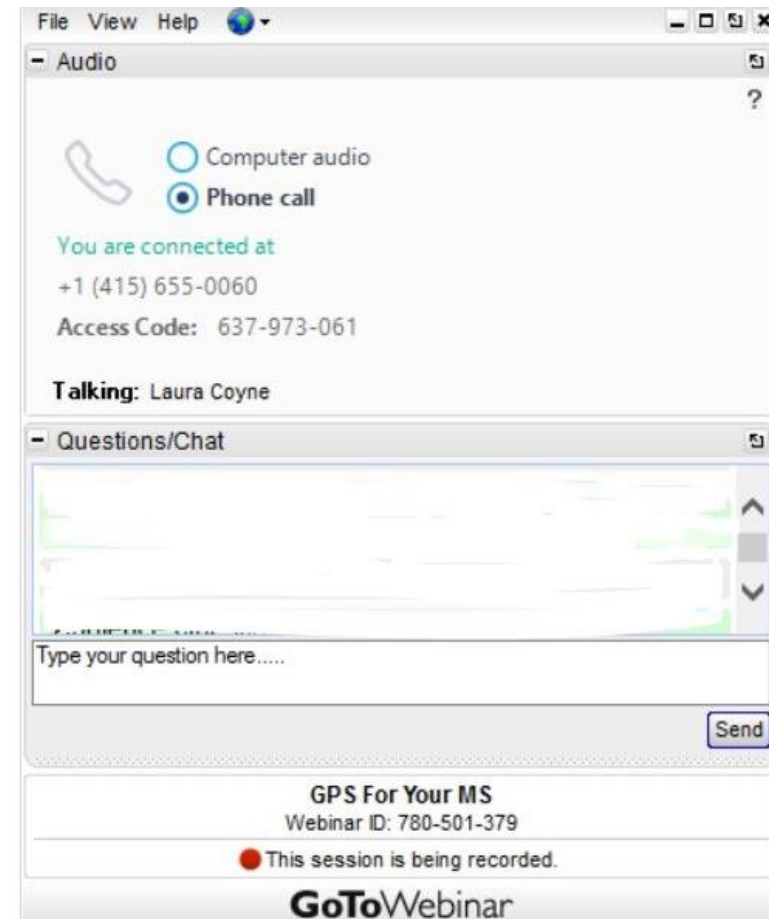
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How to Ask Questions During the Webinar

Type in your questions using the
Questions/Chat box





NOVEMBER PROGRAMS

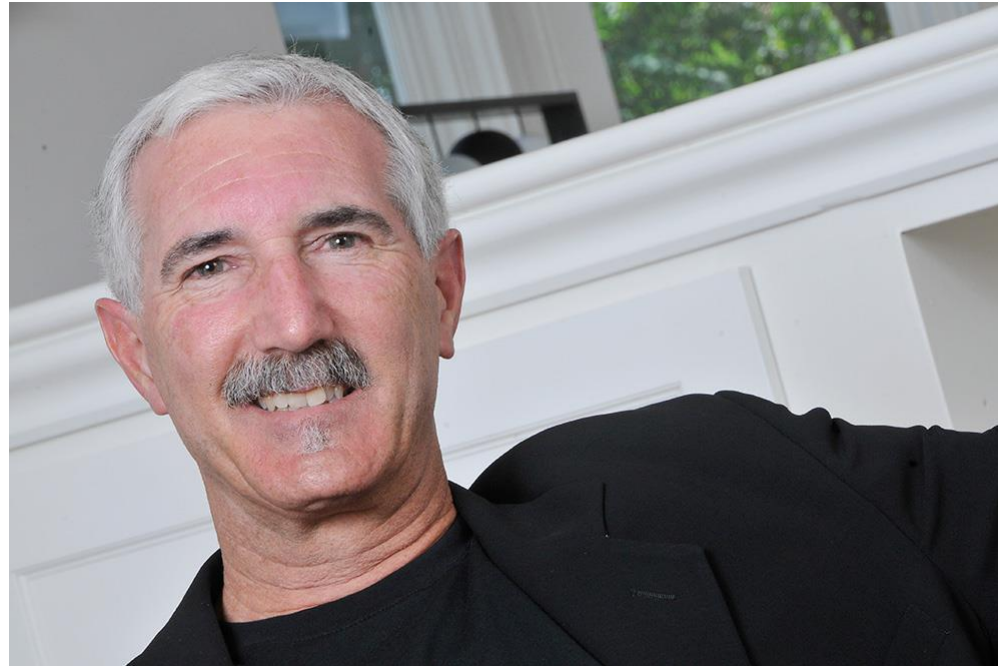
JUMPSTART – Nov 6
Communicating Together

COACHING – Nov 10
Supporting Ourselves and Each Other

COACHING – Nov 16
Your Questions, Answered: Stress

JUMPSTART – Nov 18
Preparing For The Holidays

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Learning Objectives

1

Define the interrelationship between stress and MS

2

Identify your personal stressors and those unique to support partners

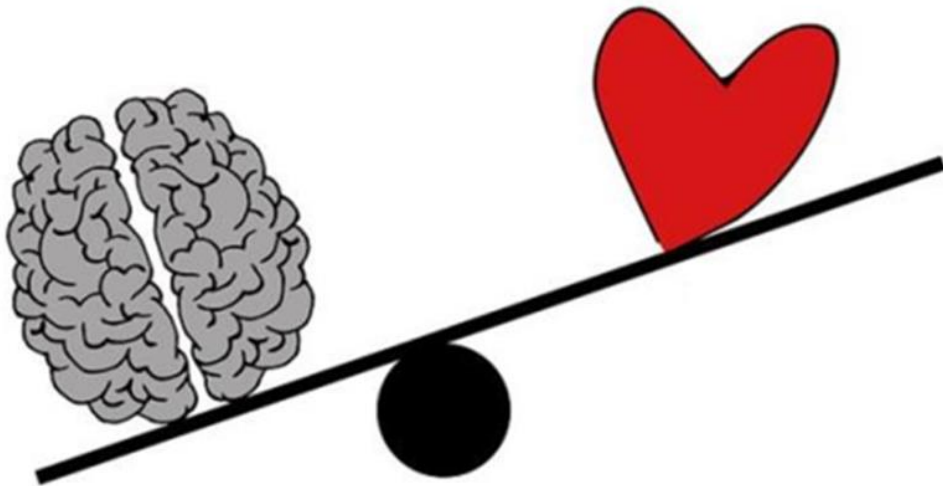
3

Discuss how individual and shared physical activity can reduce stress

Stress & MS

A group of people are seated in a room with bright yellow walls and large windows. They are all raising their hands in the air, suggesting a group exercise or a participatory activity. The room has a light-colored wooden floor and white radiators. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

Our Stress Response



Activating the primary **threat** and **reward** circuitry takes 1/5th of a second (we respond before we think 80 – 100 x faster)

Hambley, C. (2020). CONNECT©: A brain-friendly model for leaders and organizations. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 72(3), 168–197

Stress and MS

- 121 patients with MS followed for 48 weeks (MRI scans every 8 weeks)
- Measures of stressful life events were used to predict gadolinium-enhancing (Gd+) and T2 lesions on MRI scans 29-62 days later
- **Negative stress** = threat type of issues, challenges and concerns
- Positive stressful events predicted reduced risk for subsequent Gd+ lesions and **negative events** predicted **new and enlarged** lesions



Three Paths in the Face of Stress, Adversity & Challenge



Harm

Trauma: Tragic events (e.g., school shootings, chronic stress of long-term care giving, sexual abuse) can leave a "long trail" of psychological scars including *post-traumatic stress* (Mazzei & Jordan, 2019)

In two studies, people who experienced childhood adversity have a *blunted physiological response* (cardiac reactivity), which is associated with inflammation and poorer health (Bourassa, et al. (2021)

Loss: Catastrophic events can have a deep, lasting & emotional impact such as lingering pain of a child's death (Li et al., 2005)

Three Paths in the Face of Stress, Adversity & Challenge

- **Stability of Subjective Well-Being:** Most people recover from romantic breakups, job loss (Gilbert et al., 1998)
- **Coping with Disabilities:** After suffering disabilities or illness and about 2 out of 3 people regain near-normal life satisfaction (Giesser et al., 2013)
- **Hardiness of Trauma Survivors:** About 25% experience a “recovery trajectory” from brief bouts of PTSD, stress, or depression (Bonanno, 2012)



Three Paths in the Face of Stress, Adversity & Challenge



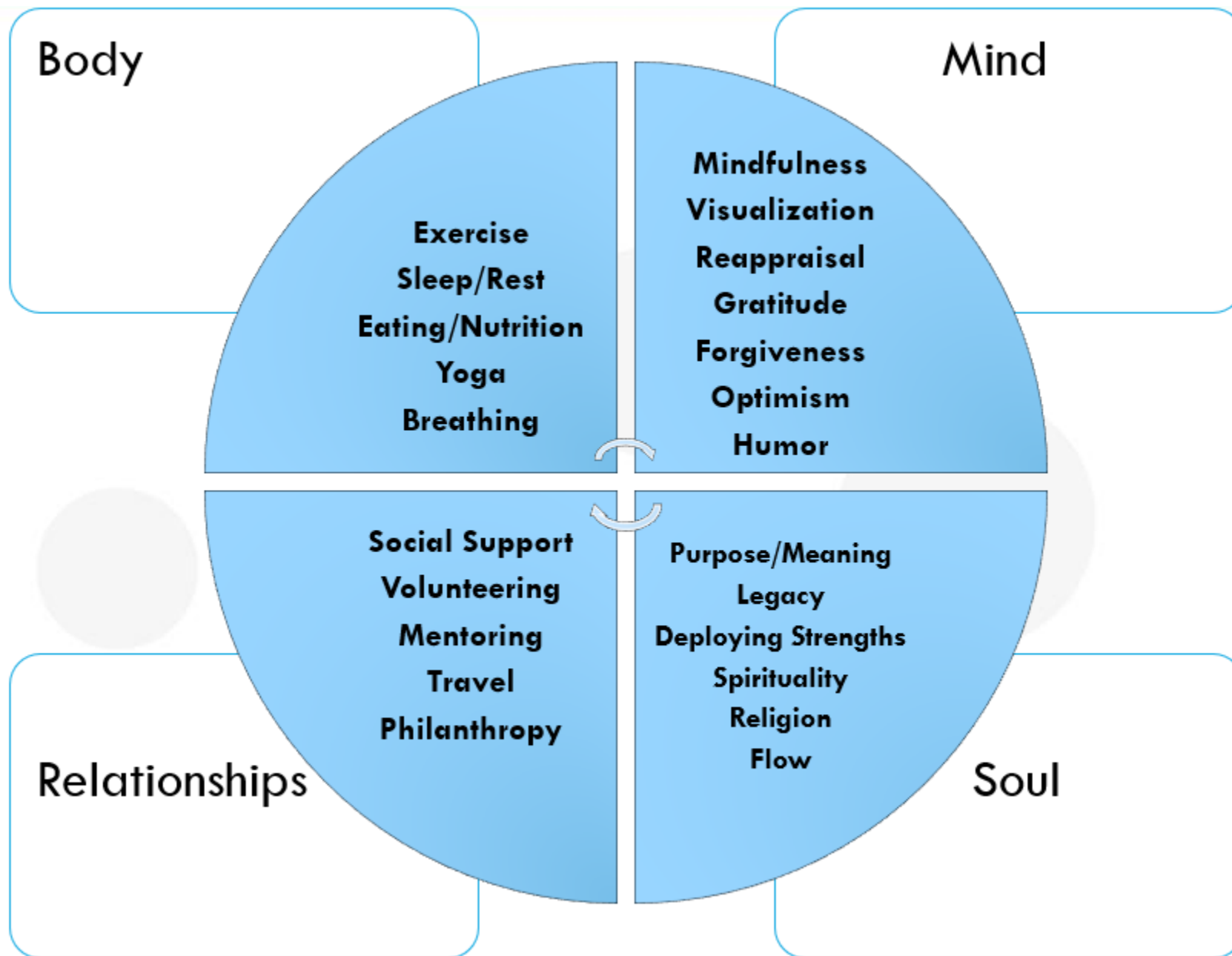
Growth

- **Challenges Strengthen Coping Skills:** *Moderate levels of hardship boosts mental toughness (Seery, 2012)*
- **Cancer Survivors Gain New Perspective:** A brush with death leaves many survivors with altered priorities, richer spirituality, stronger relationships and appreciation of each day (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004)

Our Own Post-Traumatic Growth Research

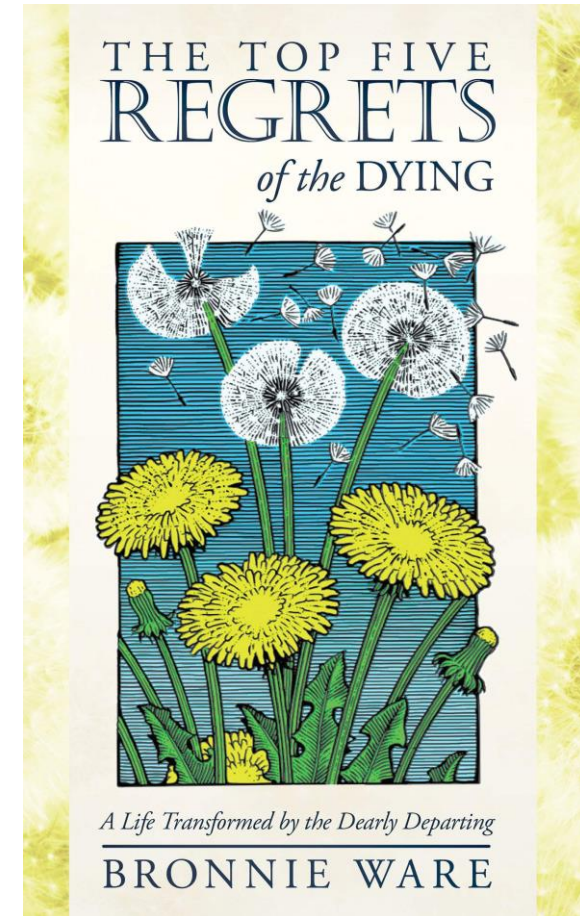


- **12-Week Living Well with MS Program** (Giesser et al., 2013)
- **Components:** Stress Management; Symptom Management; Eating/Nutrition; Exercise & Spirituality
- Results: Significant change from pre-post compared to waiting list control with greatest effect sizes for:
 - Confidence in Managing & Knowledge about MS
 - Current Health Status
 - Perceived Stress
 - Psychological Well-being
 - Sleep
 - Exercise Activity
 - Spirituality Index



5 Most Common Regrets in Life

- I wish I pursued my dreams and aspirations, and not the life others expected of me
- I wish I didn't work so hard
- I wish I had the courage to express my feelings and speak my mind
- I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends
- I wish I had let myself be happier
- Ware, B. (2012). The Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing. Hay House



A group of people are seated in a room with bright yellow walls and large windows. They are all raising their hands in the air, suggesting a physical activity or exercise class. The text "Get Moving" is overlaid in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Get Moving

The Power of Exercise and Physical Activity in Managing Stress

Building Resilience: Physical Activity/Exercise



- Research strongly supports a clear association between chronic exercise, cardiovascular health, immunity, and longevity (Sellami et al, 2018; Nieman & Wentz, 2019)
- Strong evidence supports an inverse **dose-response relationship** between physical activity levels and mortality (e.g., walking for 30 minutes a day can lower mortality risk by 17%; Dietz et al., 2019)
- A meta-analysis of 29 studies links the role of exercise with an increase in BDNF (Szuhany et al., 2014). BDNF is associated with **learning, memory and thinking** (Voss et al., 2013; Gomez-Padilla, 2008)

Importance of Exercise

- Research supports physical activity/exercise lifts mood
- Overall healthier self
- Flexibility – find a mode of exercise that YOU love!



What modes of exercise are out there?

- Aerobics
- Aquatic
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Pilates
- Strength training
- Zumba
- Ballroom dancing



Reducing Anxiety

- Exercise to elevate your endorphins
 - Parasympathetic vs Sympathetic
- Choose a mode that works for you
 - Research indicates flexibility with your type
- Exercise is not a cure for anxiety
 - For mild or moderate depression
 - Pairs nicely with another mode of management, if needed
- Active people are less depressed than inactive people

Building Resilience: Outdoors

- Exposure to nature (**in person or via video**) is associated with increased happiness, positive affect, meaning/purpose and **decreases in mental distress** (Science Advances, Vol 5, 2019)
- **Two-hours a week** (either at one time or spread out over) is associated with *significant greater health* and well-being (Scientific Reports, Vol. 9, 2019)



Get Outdoors!

- Looking for an outdoor or nature experience for the weekend?
- “Yonder.com”
- Great for people with MS and support partners! Outdoor exposure is linked to improvement in overall mental and physical health!



Outdoor Options are Endless!

- Hiking
- Kayaking
- Skiing
- Horseback riding
- Picnics
- Reading outdoors
- Walks





What Actions Will You Take Today?

Q & A

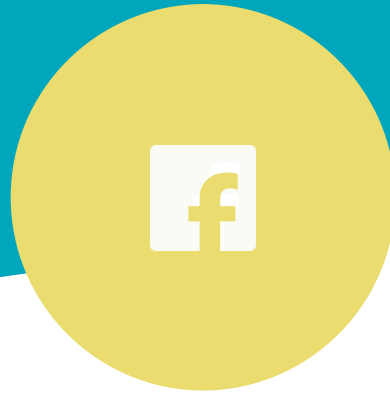




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WEBINAR 
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Emerging Wellness Research: Key Takeaways and Ideas for You

Wednesday, December 1 at 8pm ET

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