



**Making Wellness a Part of Everyday Life:  
A Meeting-in-a-Box Toolkit for National MS Society  
Self-help Groups**

**January, 2016**

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# Wellness and Living Your Best Life with MS

## Background

Wellness-focused behaviors have been found to be effective in promoting overall health. In MS, dietary modifications (Vitamin D and salt intake), smoking cessation, exercise and stress management have been found to be beneficial or are under study to determine benefits for symptom management, disease management and quality of life. Findings from the 2016-2018 National MS Society’s Strategic Plan outreach and the Access to High Quality MS Healthcare Task Force affirm that people with MS desire better and more specific information about wellness and wellness-focused lifestyles, and are seeking more open and productive conversations with their healthcare providers on these topics.

As wellness and lifestyle continue to be a most popular topic, and evidence supporting the benefits of wellness for people with MS increases, it is clear that a comprehensive and consistent approach is needed to support people living with MS as they seek information and incorporate wellness approaches in daily life. While a wide range of wellness-oriented programs (e.g., mindfulness meditation, yoga, tai chi, smoking cessation, nutrition, etc.) are offered throughout the country, they are not coordinated through a Society-wide strategic focus; therefore they are inconsistent in availability, approach and impact assessment.

## Health vs. Wellness: Aren’t they the same thing?

Health is a dynamic ever-changing condition that affects an individual’s ability to function optimally.

Wellness is a lifelong, personalized process through which people make informed choices about their lifestyle behaviors and activities across multiple, interrelated dimensions in order to lead their best lives.

Wellness is attainable for everyone. It is achieved by each person living with MS within the context of his or her priorities, abilities and limitations.



## Dimensions of Wellness

The dimensions of wellness act and interact in ways that contribute to well-being. They are influenced by health and other factors and involve lifestyle behaviors and activities. It is important to note that the dimensions of wellness are interconnected and support each other.

Examples of wellness behaviors include:

| <b>Dimension of Wellness</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Physical</b>              | Making positive lifestyle choices about regular physical activity/exercise (such as walking, swimming, yoga) geared to one's abilities, healthy eating, weight control, MS care and primary care, and preventive health behaviors (including smoking cessation, limited alcohol use, and attention to personal safety). |
| <b>Emotional</b>             | Developing coping strategies to enhance problem solving, manage stress, foster a positive outlook, and develop resilience in the face of unpredictable changes, while paying attention to mood changes, including depression and anxiety that may require treatment.  |
| <b>Occupational</b>          | Engaging in meaningful and rewarding activities that promote a sense of purpose and accomplishment, including opportunities to contribute one's unique skills, talents and knowledge to others at home, at work or in the community.  |
| <b>Spiritual</b>             | Developing a world view that provides a sense of peace and harmony, and enables one to cope and adapt throughout life – with the ultimate goal of finding meaning and purpose, in the face of one's personal challenges.  |
| <b>Social</b>                | Developing positive, healthy relationships that nurture interconnectedness with family, friends and community, and promotes active engagement in a social network of meaningful and rewarding friendships and intimate relationships.   |
| <b>Intellectual</b>          | Engaging in mentally stimulating and challenging activities that lead to personal growth, enhanced creativity and new learning, while developing the ability to think objectively and independently.  |

## **Role of National MS Society Self-help Groups in Promoting Wellness**

The National MS Society is committed to connecting people to the information and resources they need to pursue their personal wellness goals. Self-help groups are a natural touch point to open up the conversation about wellness and its relationship to living one's best life.

As the Society develops wellness-oriented programs — independently or with organizational partners — we will explore methods to present information and help individuals take the next step to evolve their wellness practices. One piece of this effort is this meeting-in-a-box toolkit.

### **Using This Meeting-in-a-Box Toolkit**

The purpose of the toolkit is to provide you with a framework and suggestions on how to incorporate wellness discussions and activities into your meetings. This could be anything from setting aside 10-15 minutes at every meeting to practice a strategy under a particular dimension (maybe it is seated stretching as part of physical wellness or mindful meditation as a part of spiritual wellness), to inviting a guest speaker to present on a specific topic to facilitating a conversation on one or more of the wellness domains using the suggested discussion questions provided below.

We have provided you with suggested discussion questions by wellness domain, recommended resources and potential guest speakers — the tools needed to jumpstart the conversation in your group. There is no requirement that you bring in a guest speaker; as the group leader you can lead the discussion using the questions provided or ones you and your group members develop yourselves.

The expectation is that you would incorporate one wellness-focused discussion into any one meeting, not try to cover all the domains over the course of one meeting.

When using this toolkit with your group it is important to remember that as much as we wish all would totally accept all this information and use it, the stages of change are different and personal for an individual. These stages include:

1. Not ready yet
2. Thinking about it
3. Getting ready to make the change-preparation
4. Actually making the change - Taking action
5. Doing it and maintaining the changes

As the group leader, it is important to guide the conversation so that all feel included, despite where they are in moving towards potential change. A willingness to participate in the discussion is a great start!

Prior to your meeting it is recommended that you review the recommended resources and make arrangements to either make copies yourself or request copies from your chapter liaison. With sufficient lead time (6-8 weeks), your chapter liaison can assist you with ordering Society-produced brochures and publications. To request copies of the paper, Wellness for People with MS: What do we know about Diet, Exercise and Mood and what do we still need to learn? contact Kay Stewart at [kay.stewart@nmss.org](mailto:kay.stewart@nmss.org) or 303-698-6100, 15197.

If you should have any questions about implementing any part of this toolkit in your upcoming meetings, please contact your chapter liaison.

## **Suggested Strategies to Incorporate Wellness into Every Meeting**

Set aside time during each meeting to:

- Engage in moment of reflection, deep breathing or meditation
- Play relaxing music
- Tell a few jokes or share a funny story
- Ask group members to share:
  - One good thing that happened to them that day
  - One thing for which they are grateful
  - A new activity or food they tried since the last meeting

## **Meeting Topics in a Box**

Listed below are meeting topics with suggested discussion questions and guest speakers. Please feel free to pick and choose those topics that are of interest to your group.

At the end of this toolkit you will find a list of recommended resources. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and we encourage you and your group members to share resources you have found to be helpful in your own wellness journey.

## DISCUSSION TOPIC ONE: Let's Talk About Wellness

Goal: To expose group members to the general concept of wellness and engage in a discussion on the interconnectedness of the wellness domains.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- When I say wellness, what does that mean to you?
- What do you do to *take care* of yourself each day?
- How do you incorporate wellness already into your daily life?
- How do you think wellness differs from good health?
- How would you describe a body, mind and spiritual connection?
- How can you create and maintain balance in your life?
- How do you see how the different domains of wellness interact and connect to each other? For example, what is the relationship between physical and social wellness?
- What makes it difficult to change your thoughts and perceptions around wellness?
  - How can others help you see wellness in a different way?
  - How can you help others see wellness in a different way?

### Suggested Guest Speakers

- Life or Wellness coach
- Healthcare professional

Discussion Wrap-up: What local resources do you use or know of that others might find beneficial?

## DISCUSSION TOPIC TWO: Physical Wellness

Goal: To expose group members to the general concept of physical wellness and discuss strategies to implement this dimension in everyday life.

Definition: Making positive lifestyle choices about regular physical activity/exercise (such as walking, swimming, yoga) geared to one's abilities, healthy eating, weight control, MS care and primary care, and preventive health behaviors (including smoking cessation, limited alcohol use and attention to personal safety).

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- When I say physical wellness, what does that mean to you?
- Share a physical activity that you have taken up since your MS diagnosis.
- Have you had to modify a physical activity since your diagnosis?
  - If so, how?
  - Does the modification alter your sense of wellness?
- Do you currently work with a specialist to help you stay physically active? If so, who, and how do you work together?
- Describe some easy ways you incorporate healthy eating into your everyday life (nuts instead of candy, water or unsweetened drinks instead of soda, raw veggies instead of chips, etc.).
- How do you build and maintain a healthcare team (for both your MS and general care) that best meets your needs?
- How does your pharmacist fit into your healthcare team?
- How would you describe physical activity?
- What personal challenges do/have you faced incorporating new wellness activities or “healthy habits?”
- What benefits do you see of exercising and good healthy eating that can help manage MS symptoms?
- How can you engage your support network to help reinforce physical wellness?
- What makes it difficult to change your thoughts and perceptions around physical wellness?
  - How can others help you see physical wellness in a different way?
  - How can you help others see physical wellness in a different way?

### Suggested Guest Speakers

- Wellness coach
- Nutritionist
- Cooking instructor
- Adaptive yoga instructor
- Adaptive sports instructor
- Image consultant
- Society staff or volunteers to discuss Walk MS
- Art therapist
- Physical Therapist/Exercise Physiologist
- Person with MS who is active in an adaptive sport

### Possible Group Activities

- Meet outside of the standard group meeting to participate in a group activity (i.e., walking, stretching)
- Incorporate a physical activity (Yoga, light stretching, dancing, etc.) into your standard group meeting
- Form a Walk MS Team as a self-help group
- Organize a pot-luck dinner for your self-help group with healthy dishes and trade recipes
- Develop a healthy recipe “book” to share among the group members
- Cooking demonstration
- Adaptive dance instruction
- Register for the online program, **14 Weeks to a Healthier You** (see Recommended Resources for more information)

Discussion Wrap-up: What local resources do you use or know of that others might find beneficial?

## DISCUSSION TOPIC THREE: Emotional Wellness

Goal: To expose group members to the general concept of emotional wellness and discuss strategies to implement this dimension in everyday life.

Definition: Developing coping strategies to enhance problem solving, manage stress, foster a positive outlook and develop resilience in the face of unpredictable changes while paying attention to mood changes, including depression and anxiety that may require treatment.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- When I say emotional wellness, what does that mean to you?
- What do you do to handle stress in your everyday life?
- Do you consider yourself a “half-full” or “half-empty” personality?
- What things do you draw from to bring you strength?
- How can you engage your support network to reinforce emotional wellness?
- What makes it difficult to change your thoughts and perceptions around emotional wellness?
  - How can others help you see emotional wellness in a different way?
  - How can you help others see emotional wellness in a different way?

### Suggested Guest Speakers

- Clergy person/representative from a spiritually-based community
- Mental health professional
- Pet therapy professionals
- Occupational Therapist (help discuss ways to reduce stress in life through re-organization)
- Person living with MS that has strong emotional story/journey to share

### Possible Group Activities

- Identify a negative situation that happened in the last week, and re-frame and discuss to explore the positive possibilities that may have resulted
- Write at least five affirmations on sticky notes and post them in the room; take home your sticky notes and post in a visible spot as a daily reminder
- Begin the Three Gratuities exercise (below) and check in on progress at your next meeting

Discussion Wrap-up: What local resources do you use or know of that others might find beneficial?

### **The Three Gratitude Exercise (adapted from The Happiness Advantage by Shawn Achor)**

One of the best ways to train yourself in thankfulness is through a very easy daily exercise called “The Three Gratitude”.

Here is how to do it: Each day, write down a new list of three specific things you are thankful for. You may want to make this a public practice (i.e., if you are a Facebook user share this on your wall, so that people know why you are doing this and can decide to encourage you and maybe even join you.)

Do this every day for three weeks to turn thankfulness into a habit. At the end of three weeks you will:

- 1) Have a powerful list of 63 things for which you are thankful
- 2) Have trained your brain to look for the positive
- 3) Be measurably more happy, productive and successful!

## DISCUSSION TOPIC FOUR: Occupational Wellness

Goal: To expose group members to the general concept of occupational wellness and discuss strategies to implement this dimension in everyday life.

Definition: Engaging in meaningful and rewarding activities that promote a sense of purpose and accomplishment, including opportunities to contribute one's unique skills, talents and knowledge to others at home, at work or in the community. This dimension of wellness recognizes the importance of satisfaction, enrichment and meaning through activities – either paid or volunteer.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- When I say occupational wellness, what does that mean to you?
- In your work or volunteer experience, what gives or gave you the most meaning or sense of accomplishment?
- For those who are still working, how has the MS impacted you? Have you had to make career changes or do things differently in the workplace because of your MS?
- What are some strategies you have utilized that have allowed you remain employed?
- For those who have transitioned out of the workforce, how do or did you manage that change?
- How can you engage your support network to reinforce occupational wellness?
- Who in our group volunteers? Where and how? What do you get out of the experience?
- What are ways to volunteer with the National MS Society or other community-based organizations?
- What hobbies do you enjoy?
  - Have you had to modify any of your hobbies as a result of your MS?
  - If so, how did you modify them while still providing enjoyment?
- What makes it difficult to change your thoughts and perceptions around occupational wellness?
  - How can others help you see occupational wellness in a different way?
  - How can you help others see occupational wellness in a different way?

### Suggested Guest Speakers

- Chapter event liaison/staff or volunteer Walk MS coordinator
- Society Volunteer Coordinator
- State/county Workforce Center staff
- Staff from a local volunteer agency/bureau
- Vocational rehabilitation specialist or state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency staff member
- Career coach

### Possible Group Activities

- Volunteer as a group at Walk MS, other Society activity or non-Society community event

Discussion Wrap-up: What local resources do you use or know of that others might find beneficial?

## DISCUSSION TOPIC FIVE: Spiritual Wellness

Goal: To expose group members to the general concept of spiritual wellness and discuss strategies to implement this dimension in everyday life.

Definition: Developing a world view that provides a sense of peace and harmony, and enables one to cope and adapt throughout life - with the ultimate goal of finding meaning and purpose, in the face of one's personal challenges.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- When I say spiritual wellness, what does that mean to you?
- Do you feel the world is peaceful or chaotic?
- From what do you derive meaning and a sense of purpose in your life?
- In times of personal struggle, where/how do you find strength to cope and, ultimately, move forward? Share a personal example.
- How can simple random acts of kindness impact your life and community?
- What do you think of the concept of paying it forward?
- How can you engage your support network help reinforce spiritual wellness?
- What makes it difficult to change your thoughts and perceptions around spiritual wellness?
  - How can others help you see spiritual wellness in a different way?
  - How can you help your support network to see spiritual wellness in a different way?

### Suggested Guest Speakers

- Meditation or Qigong practitioners
- Practitioners of aromatherapy
- Leader in a spiritual or religious community

### Possible Group Activities

- Listen to a relaxation or guided imagery recording
- Do a deep breathing exercise
- Take a five-minute moment of reflection
- Engage in a mindfulness practice
- Yoga

Discussion Wrap-up: What local resources do you use or know of that others might find beneficial?

**Sample Deep Breathing Exercise:**

Breathing techniques can emotionally calm and clear mind. Press right nostril closed with thumb. Exhale and inhale through the left nostril, then press left nostril closed with ring finger as you release thumb and breathe out through right nostril. Inhale through right nostril, then close it; open the left nostril to exhale. Continue alternating, breathing out and in on each side. Stick with it for 5 minutes and look to making it part of your daily routine. (From Prevention, December 2015)

**5-minute Mindfulness Exercise:**

- First set a timer for five minutes.
- Ask group members to get into a comfortable seated position
- Have them close their eyes or cast them slightly downward and breathe naturally
- If thoughts “wander,” encourage group members to say “thinking” softly in their heads, then gently return one’s attention to their breath
- When the timer goes off, ask group members to notice how they feel. Encourage them to carry that feeling the rest of the day.

(Adapted from an article which appeared in Prevention, September 2015)

## DISCUSSION TOPIC SIX: Social Wellness

Goal: To expose group members to the general concept of social wellness and discuss strategies to implement this dimension in everyday life.

Definition: Developing positive, healthy relationships that nurture interconnectedness with family, friends and community, and promote active engagement in a social network of meaningful and rewarding friendships and intimate relationships.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- When I say social wellness, what does that mean to you?
- Tell the group about your best friend and what you like about them.
- What kinds of things do you do with your friends and family?
- Do you find meaning in spending time with your family and friends? How?
- Do you consider yourself a friend to others? How would you describe a friend?
- How do you feel when you've spent time with a friend?
- What do you get out of being a member of a self-help group?
- How can you engage your support network to reinforce social wellness?
- How, if at all, has your social network changed since your diagnosis? How did you manage the changes?
- What out of the box ways can you use to create a social network?
- What makes it difficult to change your thoughts and perceptions around social wellness?
  - How can others help you see social wellness in a different way?
  - How can you help your support network see social wellness in a different way?

### Suggested Guest Speakers

- Mental health professional
- Social media professional (to discuss online means of connection)

### Possible Group Activities

- Meet informally outside of the self-help group for coffee or a meal
- Attend a non-MS Society sponsored social event as a group or as individuals

Discussion Wrap-up: What local resources do you use or know of that others might find beneficial?

## DISCUSSION TOPIC SEVEN: Intellectual Wellness

Goal: To expose group members to the general concept of intellectual wellness and discuss strategies to implement this dimension in everyday life.

Definition: Engaging in mentally stimulating and challenging activities that lead to personal growth, enhanced creativity and new learning, while developing the ability to think objectively and independently.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- When I say intellectual wellness, what does that mean to you?
- Do you consider yourself a lifelong learner? What learning activities or personal interests do you pursue or engage in? Are these interests and activities you enjoy sharing with others?
- Do you enjoy reading? Attending educational programs?
  - Why do you enjoy these activities?
- Have you mentored or tutored someone on a topic you're interested in?
  - What was the benefit to you and the person you were working with?
- What types of activities do you consider to “feed your mind” or use your brain?
- How can you engage your support network to reinforce intellectual wellness?
- What makes it difficult to change your thoughts and perceptions around intellectual wellness?
  - How can others help you see intellectual wellness in a different way?
  - How can you help your support network see intellectual wellness in a different way?

### Suggested Guest Speakers

- Librarian
- Adult/continuing education staff from a local college or university
- Staff or volunteers from a local museum or cultural center
- Speech/Language Pathologist
- Art therapist

### Possible Group Activities:

- Visit <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Find-Support/Connect-with-Peers-One-on-One/For-Connection-Program-Volunteers> and select other meeting-in-a-box toolkits your group would like to use at a future meeting
- Participate in one of the telelearning/webinar programs offered by Can Do MS and the MS Society and discuss at your next meeting ([nationalMSSociety.org/telelearning](http://nationalMSSociety.org/telelearning))
- Attend a lecture or education program (related to MS or not), perhaps offered at a local college or library
- Plan and host an educational or MS awareness event as part of your self-help group (contact your chapter liaison and request a copy of the Community Connections Volunteer Handbook)
- Visit a local museum or cultural site
- Form a book club
- Attend a play or musical
- Discuss your favorite book, and why it is your favorite. Do the same with movies or recorded music.
- Invite an art therapist to a future meeting to facilitate an art project (or you may want to try a paint your own studio)

Discussion Wrap-up: What local resources do you use or know of that others might find beneficial?

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### GENERAL

**Web-based** (if a link doesn't work, copy and paste the link to your browser)

National MS Society — The Society's mission is to empower people affected by MS to live their best lives as we stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost and end MS forever. Our vision is A World Free of MS. 800-344-4867  
[www.nationalMSSociety.org](http://www.nationalMSSociety.org)

Can Do Multiple Sclerosis — Can Do Multiple Sclerosis is a national nonprofit organization that provides innovative lifestyle empowerment programs for people living with MS and their support partners to transform and improve their quality of life. [www.mscando.org](http://www.mscando.org)

Living Well with MS

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Living-Well-With-MS/Health-Wellness>

You CAN!

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Library-Education-Programs/You-CAN!!>

Live Fully, Live Well: A Wellness Program for People with MS and Their Support Partners

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Library-Education-Programs/Live-Fully,-Live-Well>

### **Brochures and Publications**

Wellness Discussion Guide for People with MS and Their Healthcare Providers: Integrating Lifestyle and Complementary Strategies into MS Care (.pdf)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Wellness-Discussion-Guide-for-ppl-wMS-and-HCPs.pdf>

MS & Wellness: Living Well with Multiple Sclerosis (.pdf)

[http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Documents/Living-Well-with-MS-MS-and-Wellness\\_Final-Single-Pages.pdf](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Documents/Living-Well-with-MS-MS-and-Wellness_Final-Single-Pages.pdf)

All Health and Wellness-related brochures

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Library-Education-Programs/Brochures/Staying-Well>

### **Educational Videos**

Health and Wellness

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Library-Education-Programs/Educational-Videos/Healthy-Living>

## PHYSICAL WELLNESS

**Web-based** (if a link doesn't work, copy and paste the link to your browser)

Exercise

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Living-Well-With-MS/Health-Wellness/Exercise>

Diet and Nutrition

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Living-Well-With-MS/Health-Wellness/Diet-Nutrition>

Walk MS

[www.Walkms.org](http://www.Walkms.org)

Developing a Healthcare Team

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Treating-MS/Comprehensive-Care/Deveoping-a-health-care-team>

The MS Trust's (United Kingdom) series of exercise videos for people with MS can be done in a seated or standing position to address balance, endurance, strength and flexibility.

<https://www.mstrust.org.uk/a-z/exercise>

14 Weeks to a Healthier You is a free, personalized, web-based physical activity and nutrition program targeted to people with mobility limitations, chronic health conditions and physical disabilities. Created by National Center for Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD), the program can help you get moving and make healthy nutrition choices.

<http://www.nchpad.org/14weeks/index.php>

### **Brochures and Publications**

MS & Wellness: Living Well with Multiple Sclerosis (.pdf)

[http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Documents/Living-Well-with-MS-MS-and-Wellness\\_Final-Single-Pages.pdf](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Documents/Living-Well-with-MS-MS-and-Wellness_Final-Single-Pages.pdf)

Diet and Multiple Sclerosis by Pavan Bhargava, MD

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Documents/Diet-and-Multiple-Sclerosis-Bhargava-06-26-15.pdf>

Exercise as Part of Everyday Life (.pdf)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Exercise-as-Part-of-Everyday-Life.pdf>

Wellness for People with MS: What do we know about Diet, Exercise and Mood and what do we still need to learn? (.pdf)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/WellnessMSSocietyforPeoplewMS.pdf>

Stretching for People with MS (.pdf)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Stretching-for-People-with-MS-An-Illustrated-Manual.pdf>

Food for Thought: Nutrition and MS (.pdf)

[http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Food-for-Thought—MS-and-Nutrition\\_1503.pdf](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Food-for-Thought—MS-and-Nutrition_1503.pdf)

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults with Multiple Sclerosis can help adults with mild to moderate disability, resulting from relapsing or progressive forms of MS, to improve their fitness. (.pdf)

[http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/specialpops/CSEP\\_MS\\_PAGuidelines\\_adults\\_en.pdf](http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/specialpops/CSEP_MS_PAGuidelines_adults_en.pdf)

## **EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

**Web-based** (if a link doesn't work, copy and paste the link to your browser)

Emotional Health

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Living-Well-With-MS/Health-Wellness/Emotional-Health>

### **Brochures and Publications**

Multiple Sclerosis and Your Emotions (.pdf)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Emotions.pdf>

Depression in Multiple Sclerosis: What We Know, What We Need To Learn, and What We Can Do Today (.pdf)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/DepressionInMS.pdf>

Taming Stress (.pdf)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Taming-Stress.pdf>

Depression and MS

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Depression.pdf>

Everyday Matters: Living Your Best Life with MS participant workbook  
(contact your chapter liaison to request copies)

## **OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS**

**Web-based** (if a link doesn't work, copy and paste the link to your browser)

Volunteer Your Time

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Get-Involved/Volunteer>

Volunteer Match

[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

Employment and MS

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Employment>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

<http://askjan.org>

O\*NET OnLine

<https://www.onetonline.org>

### **Brochures and Publications**

Working with MS: Living Well with Multiple Sclerosis (.pdf)

[http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Documents/Living-Well-with-MS-Working-with-MS\\_Final-Single-Pages.pdf](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Documents/Living-Well-with-MS-Working-with-MS_Final-Single-Pages.pdf)

Employment Matters: Managing MS in the Workplace (to locate the toolkit and video scroll to the bottom of the webpage)

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Employment>

The Win-Win Approach to Reasonable Accommodations

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Win-Win-Approach-to-Reasonable-Accommodations-Enhancing-Productivity-on-Your-Job.pdf>

## SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

**Web-based** (if a link doesn't work, copy and paste the link to your browser)

Breath Based Relaxation presented by Dr. Kirti Carter, MD, MPH with the International Association of Human Values (webcast)

[http://msm.mediasite.com/mediasite/Play/161af4e7432e431b8019ed809c42ad8f1d?utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=19647018&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9cZre28NfarBTIEo1cc5buJbKcyRxZXGxZRhpSwPp6652SDw6QKy\\_y2H1HUa3QMka5eTe9ftHIXs4xSjg90wHQ7g5wRg&hsmi=19647018](http://msm.mediasite.com/mediasite/Play/161af4e7432e431b8019ed809c42ad8f1d?utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=19647018&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9cZre28NfarBTIEo1cc5buJbKcyRxZXGxZRhpSwPp6652SDw6QKy_y2H1HUa3QMka5eTe9ftHIXs4xSjg90wHQ7g5wRg&hsmi=19647018)

Guided Meditation presented by Dr. Kirti Carter, MD, MPH with the International Association of Human Values (webcast)

[http://msm.mediasite.com/mediasite/Play/84e04a970cbf46598cc13edd6b2f70531d?utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=19647018&hsenc=p2ANqtz--MUS0KhxTITBucNUHppS3bxuB3Ao66ksEatV\\_huaxCg-PswX9ZGuj2KeXfCUeISZc8P3eM-tUUEHgsGcZ4GdxFMkZFdg&hsmi=19647018](http://msm.mediasite.com/mediasite/Play/84e04a970cbf46598cc13edd6b2f70531d?utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=19647018&hsenc=p2ANqtz--MUS0KhxTITBucNUHppS3bxuB3Ao66ksEatV_huaxCg-PswX9ZGuj2KeXfCUeISZc8P3eM-tUUEHgsGcZ4GdxFMkZFdg&hsmi=19647018)

Mindfulness Meditation from the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center  
<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

How to Practice Mindfulness Meditation by Karen Kissel Wegela Ph.D

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-courage-be-present/201001/how-practice-mindfulness-meditation>

Improve Your Health with Gratitude

<http://www.rodalewellness.com/health/gratitude-and-health>

What's in Your Spirituality Toolbox?

<http://www.rodalewellness.com/mind-spirit/whats-your-spirituality-toolbox>

## Appendix

### How to Create More Life Balance without Getting Overwhelmed By Sarah Clodius, Co-Active Coach

When looking at the desire for change and growth in one's life, it can be easy to take on unwanted stress and anxiety when figuring out a path to focus on. When we take on that stress it can overpower our will to change, and the result can be more of the same bad habits and just plain old giving up.

One of the ways to combat this vicious cycle is to take a mental inventory of major life components on paper and rate your level of satisfaction in each one. After you have done this, pick just one or two areas to give your focus to and create personal commitments and goals in those areas.

For example...Let's say your desire is to create more life balance because you've realized your personal relationships are suffering because of giving all of your time and energy to your career. Or maybe it's your health that has also begun to suffer for the same reason. Pick one or two areas that are calling your energy and begin by asking the following three questions:

- 1) What does the current climate look like in this life area?
- 2) If I had to rate my level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10 in this life area, what numerical value would I give it?
- 3) How would it look and feel like to be fully alive and fulfilled in this area?

The answers to these questions will point your focus in the right direction to gaining deeper insight and creating a plan of action for life balance, personal growth, and making changes that will last. It seems really simple right? The trick is to not let your mind begin flooding with too many options to follow or excuses as why you can't make these changes. The first step to making lasting change is having a clear awareness of 'what' needs to change. Then you can bring your focus to the 'how' of making those changes.

**Note:** A key first step in the goal setting process is to commit your steps in writing - what is your goal, action to take, material or physical needs, possible barriers and solutions could make the process easier. You may want to use the S.M.A.R.T acronym as a place to start. SMART goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Timely