

WEBINAR & TELELEARNING SERIES



The Sandwich Generation: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

November 14, 2017

Presented by:



Genentech | Novartis | Teva Pharmaceuticals | Acorda Therapeutics | Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals

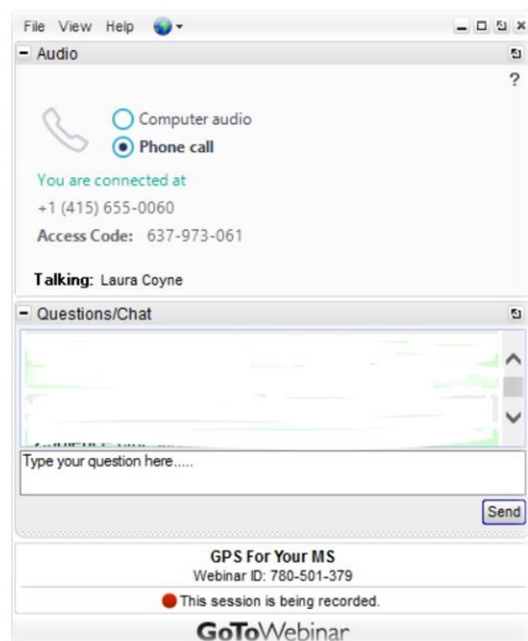


**National
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Learning Objectives

- Recognize the stresses associated with being a member of the “sandwich generation”
- Acknowledge how MS adds to the stress of caring for oneself while caring for others
- Learn strategies to prioritize needs, establish boundaries and identify and utilize resources
- Understand the importance of clear and open communication and effective teamwork

Polling Question #1

How many people do you take care of in addition to yourself?

- 1
- 2-4
- 5-7
- More than 7

What do we know about the “sandwich generation?”

- Over 2.2 million Americans care for children and aging parents/in-laws in addition to themselves.
- People with MS and support partners are often members of the sandwich generation.
- Providing support for others affects people in multiple ways:
 - Feelings of accomplishment, pride, satisfaction, closeness
 - Increased stress, fatigue and other physical symptoms, relationship challenges and higher rates of depression, sleep problems, absenteeism

As if that weren't complicated enough...

- MS is:
 - A chronic, unpredictable illness
 - Often invisible to others
 - Expensive
 - Time- and energy-consuming
- MS makes everyday activities more challenging
- People with MS may question their capacity due to problems with mobility, energy, cognition and/or mood
- Support partners may feel overwhelmed by multiple roles at home and work
- Assistance – whether asking for it, offering it, or receiving it – is complicated

Polling Question #2

What is your greatest challenge as a member of the sandwich generation?

- Not enough time and/or energy
- Too many people need me
- Feeling stressed and overwhelmed
- Difficulty saying “no”
- Helping people from a distance

Kelly

Kelly is married with three children, aging parents with increasing health issues, and a husband who travels for work

- MS for 12 years, with increasing mobility problems, fatigue and depression
- Retired on disability
- House in chaos, lots of fast food, missing kids' activities and struggling to keep up with everyone's needs
- Parents living an hour away
- Kelly feels alone, guilt-ridden and overwhelmed.

Charlie

A 49-year-old engineer whose wife has secondary progressive MS and uses a wheelchair for mobility

- Two teenage children and two sets of aging parents
- Increasing responsibilities at home, at work and with both sets of parents
- No time for self-care, relaxation or time with friends
- Stressed out, resentful, lonely, short-fused
- High blood pressure, recent weight gain
- Financial concerns now and for the future

First Steps for Kelly and Charlie

- Write down your schedule for the past week
 - Think about who/what filled your time
 - Think about what/who didn't get enough time
- How many hours of your day were committed to other people? To yourself?
- How many activities were “have to's” vs. “want to's”?
- How many activities supported your priorities? The priorities of others?
- Did you allot adequate time to your wellness needs?

Attending to Your Own Needs

- Are your wellness needs being met?



Self-care isn't selfish; Self-care is self-sustaining

Recommendations for Kelly and Charlie

- Make time for self-care – physical, emotional, social and recreational
 - See a primary care provider for overall health management
 - Consult a mental health professional to help with mood, concerns, priority-setting
 - Consult a physical therapist for exercise plan and mobility concerns
 - Consult an occupational therapist for organizational tips
 - Consider meeting with a financial planner
 - Have some fun

Recommendations, cont'd

- Communicate needs and feelings
 - Talk with your partner
 - Schedule a family meeting
- Acknowledge your limits and communicate them to others
 - Recognize that you can't be all things to all people
 - Decide what you're willing and able to do for others (boundary-setting)
 - Practice saying "no"
 - Investigate other resources

Recommendations, cont'd

- Investigate family and community resources
 - Talk with extended family
 - Consider your children a resource
 - Consider faith-based organizations
 - Call the National MS Society – 1-800-344-4867
- Think about which needs and priorities you can realistically address on your own and which require help from others

Why is asking for help so difficult?

- Do you feel that:
 - “it’s all on you”
 - asking for help is a sign of weakness
 - others won’t be willing to help
 - others won’t do as good a job as you do or the way you want it done
 - no one can care for your loved ones as well as you can
 - asking for help is a slippery slope to losing control

Polling Question #3

In the past month, how many times have you asked for help?

- 0
- 1-2
- More than 3

Tips for Asking for Help

- Decide what you want and need help with.
- Be specific with your requests.
- Plan ahead and give people notice.
- Remember something done differently is better than not done.
- People want to help but need direction.
- Give people useful feedback.

As a member of the sandwich generation...

- Remember to
 - Take time for the things that give your life meaning and joy and contribute to your feelings of self-worth
 - Keep your oxygen tank filled and your mask ready
 - Be as open to receiving as you are to giving
 - Acknowledge and address your feelings before they spiral out of control
 - Ask for help when you need it

Resources to Consider

- Can Do MS Webinars and Articles
 - Communication
 - Healthcare team
 - Mood
 - Cognition
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society
 - Wellness Discussion Guide for People with MS and Their Healthcare Providers
(www.nationalmssociety.org/wellnessguide)
 - Hiring Help at Home: The Basic Facts
 - Taming Stress in Multiple Sclerosis
 - MS Navigator Service (1-800-344-4867; ContactUsNMSS.org)
 - Information, referrals, support
 - Free financial planning consultation

Questions/Comments



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