

Although each person's experiences are different, it may be helpful to talk to someone who has learnt to cope with MS. Your MS nurse or doctor may be able to put you in touch with someone locally. If not, you can talk to people, find out about support groups or just get some more information through the list of contact organisations below:

www.msactivesource.co.uk

www.msactivesource.ie

www.msdecisions.org.uk

The following organisations are also available to help:

Multiple Sclerosis Society
www.mssociety.org.uk
Helpline: 0808 800 8000
email: helpline@mssociety.org.uk

Multiple Sclerosis Trust
www.mstrust.org.uk
Tel: 01462 476700
email: info@mstrust.org.uk

Irish Multiple Sclerosis Society
www.ms-society.ie
Helpline: 1850 233233
email: mshelpline@ms-society.ie



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Thinking about emotions and how the mind works



Supporting you
each step of the way

Questions you may have about MS and the mind

■ Why am I feeling emotional?

MS can on occasion cause mood swings, where you feel up and down emotionally. There may be times, particularly after diagnosis, when your emotions switch from one moment to another. Feeling suddenly sad, then angry and frustrated the next. This can happen at different times, for different reasons and is perfectly normal.

It could be that you find yourself crying at times you wouldn't usually, say during a sad film. If you find these feelings disruptive or upsetting talk to your MS nurse or doctor. They can suggest ways to deal with them.

■ Why am I feeling depressed?

Many people experience depression (feelings of sadness and hopelessness) at some point in their life, whether they have MS or not. We can all feel down but sometimes this mood can become more intense and long lasting, making day-to-day life harder to cope with. How often you feel like this, and how much it affects you, varies from person to person.

Physical changes in the brain, caused by MS, can trigger depression. This aside, the changes to your life a diagnosis of MS may bring can be difficult to adjust to. Understandably this can be emotional and may affect your mood.

If you ever feel like this, be reassured that depression is a medically recognised condition and there are effective ways of treating it and learning to handle it. Don't be afraid to talk to your doctor or MS nurse about any changes to your mood.

■ Why can't I concentrate?

How you take in information and process it is described as cognition. In other words, the way you become aware of things through your senses (smell, sight, sound, touch, taste). It also includes your ability to concentrate on tasks, problem-solve, and make decisions, as well as your memory.

Sometimes, changes to the brain caused by MS can slow down and disrupt these processes. You might notice you become more forgetful or find it difficult to concentrate on more than one task at a time. The extent of these symptoms can vary. They are usually mild, although at times they can make tasks at work and home more difficult.

Not everyone with MS will experience these problems, but if you do, ask your MS nurse or doctor for advice about how to cope with them.