

# MENTAL WELLNESS HANDBOOK & REFLECTION JOURNAL

# WELCOME

Thank you for downloading this Mental Wellness Handbook & Reflection Journal.

This guide empowers people with MS and chronic conditions to enhance their mental and emotional wellbeing through informational support and self-care techniques such as mindfulness practices, journaling and goal setting activities.

This guide is part of a wider series developed by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to empower people living with MS and other chronic conditions in the UAE. You can download the whole series by clicking the links below:

Nutrition Guide for MS & Autoimmune Conditions	↗
Explaining MS to Children Guide & Activity Book	↗

## ABOUT NMSS

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS), which operates under the Ministry of Community Empowerment in the UAE, is dedicated to bettering the lives of people with MS and their communities through education, advocacy, and contributing to global research for a cure. NMSS strives to raise awareness of MS, establish a comprehensive support system for the MS community in the UAE, and provide resources to those impacted by the condition.



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# INTRODUCTION

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) or any chronic condition can present unique challenges, impacting not just physical health but also emotional and mental well-being. This guidebook is designed to empower you on your journey, providing practical tools and strategies to help you manage these challenges and remind you that you are not alone.

## USE THIS HANDBOOK ON A DAILY BASIS

**Read the informational sections** to learn more about effective stress management techniques, gain insights into mental wellness and understand the vital roles played by both self-help and community support in managing your chronic condition.

**Engage with the interactive workbook sections** to receive practical, daily support on your mental wellness journey in the form of journaling activities, breathwork exercises, gratitude practices and more. You can print these activities out or use the fillable boxes included in this PDF.





This Mental Wellness Guide and Reflection Journal focuses on the psychological and emotional impact of living with a chronic condition.

If you need more information about your specific diagnosis, please consult the Links to Additional Resources section to find detailed medical information about a variety of chronic conditions and related symptoms.

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[Additional Resources](#)



If you come across a word or concept you don't understand, check out the Glossary of Important Terms for helpful definitions to support you on your mental wellness journey.

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[Glossary of Important Terms](#)



## IMPORTANT HEALTH NOTICE

This mental wellness handbook and reflection journal is intended for informational and self-help purposes, not as a substitute for professional mental wellness advice, diagnosis or treatment.

If you are experiencing thoughts of self-harm or any other mental health crisis, please seek immediate assistance from a qualified mental health professional or contact your local emergency services.



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### FINDING HELP IN THE UAE

Remember, you are not alone. Seeking help is a sign of strength, and you can find relevant, local mental healthcare services using the NMSS Directory.

[NMSS DIRECTORY](#)

## A NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

This mental wellness handbook is primarily designed for individuals living with MS and other chronic conditions. However, we recognize the vital role that caregivers play in the mental wellness journey and so, where appropriate, additional callout instructions for primary carers have been provided.



### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

This handbook contains valuable information that you can use to understand and support the person you are caring for.

We encourage you to explore the handbook alongside them and participate in the workbook activities (when appropriate).

Your involvement can strengthen your caregiving connection and contribute to an emotionally supportive environment.

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### NOTES

Don't forget to download the MS & Chronic Condition Primary Carers Playbook, another PDF resource developed by the UAE's National Multiple Sclerosis Society to provide practical tips, templates and informational support to both professional and family carers.

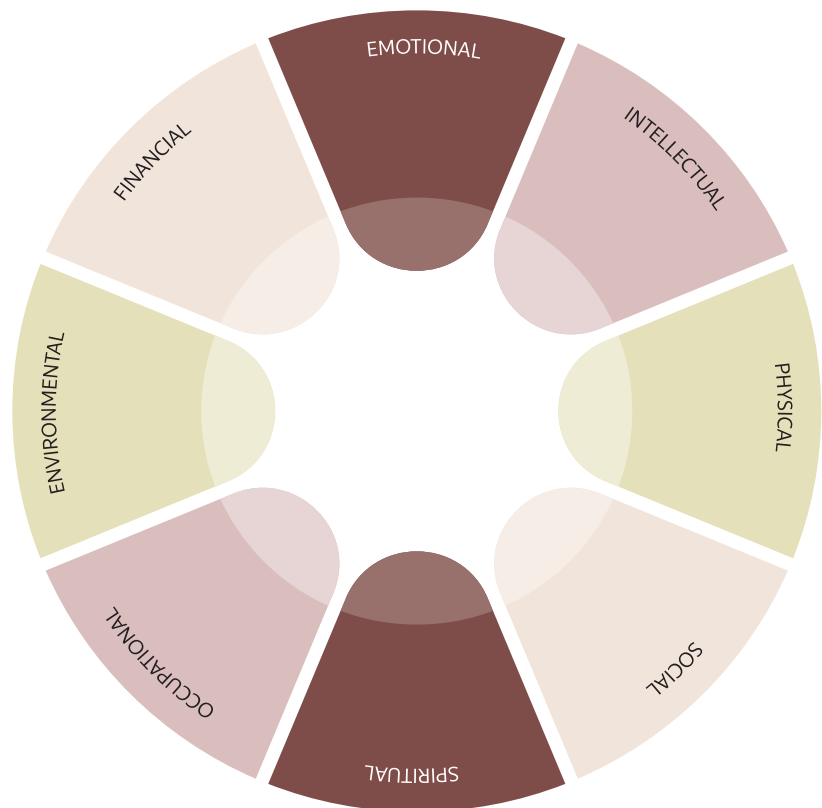
PRIMARY CARERS PLAYBOOK

# UNDERSTANDING MENTAL WELLNESS

A holistic approach to mental wellness recognizes that mental well-being is not isolated from other areas of your life. Paying attention to your physical health, cultivating meaningful relationships, finding purpose in your daily activities and creating an environment that supports your well-being are all important aspects to creating a strong foundation for mental wellness and resilience.

The Mental Wellness Wheel is a helpful visual tool that depicts the various dimensions of well-being that contribute to a balanced and fulfilling life. It typically consists of eight interconnected sections, each representing a key area of wellness.

- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Social
- Spiritual
- Occupational
- Environmental
- Financial



We encourage you to think about your mental and emotional health in this broad way, reflecting throughout this handbook on how you can bring these various elements of your life into emotional balance.

<b>EMOTIONAL</b>	Your ability to understand, manage and express your emotions in healthy ways.
<b>INTELLECTUAL</b>	Your desire to learn, grow and challenge your mind through creative and stimulating activities
<b>PHYSICAL</b>	Your physical health, including nutrition, exercise and sleep habits.
<b>SOCIAL</b>	Your connections with others, your sense of belonging and your ability to build and maintain healthy relationships.
<b>SPIRITUAL</b>	Your sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to something larger than yourself, which may involve religious beliefs or personal values.
<b>OCCUPATIONAL</b>	Your satisfaction and fulfillment in your work or daily activities.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>	Your connection to your surroundings and your impact on the natural world.
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	Your financial health, including your ability to manage your resources and feel safe and secure.

## COMMUNITY STORY #1

Read the following interview with Omar Alnokhatha, an MS ambassador living in the UAE, who shares some tips and inspiration from his personal mental wellness journey.

**How important is the role of mental wellness in managing the overall experience of living with MS?**

I strongly believe that mental wellness is the catalyst for well-being when facing any kind of challenge. Every deed, whether forming habits, making choices, or breaking negative cycles, is initiated by an inner motive. Motivation by its essence is governed in the mental realm of our existence, and so maintaining mental wellness is therefore essential in fostering resilience.

**What are some effective strategies for managing mental wellness issues like stress and anxiety in the context of MS?**

To manage stress and anxiety effectively, I've found that structuring my day with a calendar is invaluable. Scheduling time for meals, hydration, exercise and short breaks for breathing or meditation keeps me grounded. When unexpected stress arises, I set a 10-minute timer for deep breathing to regain calm, often followed by a walk in nature, which also helps reset my focus.

**How can family members and caregivers best support the mental well-being of someone with MS?**

I believe that the first thing is understanding. Dealing with the dynamics of physical and mental stability can be overwhelming, confusing and unsettling for people with MS. People with MS might miss an important family gathering, or other events that - according to social norms - you are expected to attend. So, creating a space of understanding and open conversation is essential. Encouraging walks in serene places and practicing breathing exercises together can further support well-being.

“Awareness around mental wellness is improving in the UAE, especially with government initiatives aimed at breaking down stigmas.”



Omar Alnokhatha

**Are there specific cultural considerations or stigmas surrounding mental wellness in the UAE that might affect individuals with MS?**

Awareness around mental wellness is improving in the UAE, especially with government initiatives aimed at breaking down stigmas. For example, PureHealth has launched Sakina, a dedicated platform for mental wellness in line with Abu Dhabi's mental wellness strategy. This initiative is designed to empower positive mental wellness and ensure access to holistic care. Although cultural perceptions are evolving, there remains a need for individuals to take small steps toward embracing mental wellness support to experience it and to benefit their overall well-being.

**What advice would you give to someone with MS who is hesitant to seek professional help for their mental wellness?**

I'd encourage giving it a try and you will experience for yourself how essential it is, and how that first step will have a positive domino effect in all facets of your life.

# CHRONIC ILLNESS AND THE IMPACT ON MENTAL WELLNESS

Living with a chronic condition can trigger a range of emotions stemming from the challenges of living with the condition, and even - in some cases - as the direct result of nerve damage to the brain. Additionally, certain medications used to treat chronic conditions or related symptoms can also contribute to emotional changes.



It’s important to understand that shifts in your emotional state may not have a single, isolated cause. However, the strategies and suggestions offered in this section of the guidebook aim to empower you to better manage and navigate these emotions, helping you feel more in control of the shifting landscape.

Click on the titles to navigate  
directly to the following  
content sections:

Receiving Your Diagnosis	➤
Symptoms & Side Effects	➤
Coping with Change	➤
Medications & Mental Wellness	➤

## RECEIVING YOUR DIAGNOSIS

Receiving a diagnosis of a chronic condition can be a life-changing experience, often accompanied by a whirlwind of emotions and related questions.

These feelings, no matter how big or small, are all valid and part of the natural process of adjusting to a chronic condition. Don't judge yourself for experiencing them. Instead, allow yourself to reflect on these feelings and the thoughts that are associated with them. This is an important step as you begin your journey towards acceptance and adaptation.



## KEY TIPS

### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

If the person you are caring for has recently been diagnosed with MS or another chronic condition, it will be helpful for you to talk through the information contained in the Receiving Your Diagnosis section and lend your support for the activity on the next page.

#### Allow yourself to feel

Your ability to understand, manage and express your emotions in healthy ways.

#### Seek support

Talk to friends, family members or members of your healthcare team about your feelings. Connecting with others who understand your experience can be comforting and validating.

#### Be patient with yourself

Healing takes time. Don't rush the process of adjusting to the news. Make time and space to adapt at your own pace.

#### Gather information

Gaining knowledge about your condition can help you feel more in control and help you ask effective questions and make informed decisions about your treatment and care.

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Additional Resources



## WHAT AM I FEELING?

You might feel a range of complex and confusing emotions following the diagnosis of a chronic condition.

This interactive table shows some common feelings experienced by others in your situation. Place a checkmark next to the emotions that you have been experiencing. Then make journal notes about your feelings, concerns and hopes.

☐

### **SHOCK**

"I can't believe this is happening to me; it feels like a bad dream."

☐

### **DENIAL**

"This can't be true; someone has made a mistake."

☐

### **ANGER**

"Why is this happening to me?  
This isn't fair!"

☐

### **GRIEF**

"This is not the life I had planned for myself."

☐

### **FEAR**

"The future is so uncertain now,  
I'm scared of what's to come."

☐

### **GUILT**

"This is my fault; now I'm a burden to everyone."



#### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Encourage the person you are caring for to return to this activity at semi-regular intervals (two weeks, one month, two months, etc.) and update how they are feeling about their diagnosis. This can be a powerful exercise in seeing how some feelings can get better over time.

## COMMUNITY STORY #2

Watch the video below to hear from an MS ambassador, Abdulla Al Khamiri, talking about adapting to the challenges of living with MS.



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How do you respond to this story from the MS community?  
Make notes in the space below.

# SYMPTOMS & EMOTIONAL SIDE EFFECTS

Chronic conditions like MS often bring about physical symptoms like pain, fatigue and mobility limitations. However, the impact of these symptoms extends beyond the physical, often leading to emotional and psychological effects.

Remember that these emotional responses are normal and understandable reactions to the challenges of living with a chronic condition.

The table on the following page shows some common chronic condition symptoms you may be experiencing.

Place a checkmark next to the symptoms that you have been experiencing and rate the severity of the symptoms on a scale from 1-10 for your records. Then make journal notes about one thing you can do to help relieve or alleviate the symptom or concern. These could be big or small actions, such as joining a seated yoga class or asking a loved one to spend some time with you over the weekend.

## NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

We recommend that you collaborate with the person you are caring for on this activity. This will provide you with a good high-level view of how they are managing the various physical and emotional symptoms of their condition, and it can be helpful for them to discuss ideas for how to improve or alleviate their symptoms.

# SYMPTOMS & MOOD TRACKER

Use this table to keep track of your symptoms and make journal notes about your ideas for how to improve how you are feeling. Remember the Mental Wellness Wheel and think holistically about your experience of your chronic condition.

**PAIN**  
Persistent pain and discomfort can lead to feelings of frustration, irritability and even hopelessness.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

**FATIGUE**  
Feeling exhausted makes it difficult to summon the motivation to be physically or mentally active.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

**MOBILITY LIMITATIONS**  
Restrictions on movement and independence can trigger a sense of loss and sadness.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

**SPEECH & COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES**  
Struggling to express yourself and connect with others can lead to feelings of frustration, isolation and anxiety.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

**UNCONTROLLABLE EMOTIONS**  
Symptoms such as emotional lability can sometimes relate to how you are feeling, but sometimes the emotional display may not reflect how you feel inside.

1

2

3

4

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6

7

8

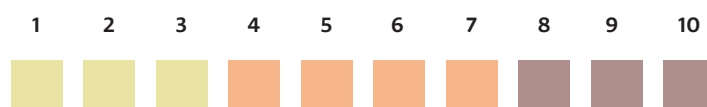
9

10

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## UNCERTAINTY

The unpredictable nature of many chronic conditions can create anxiety and uncertainty about the future.



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## IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

The stress of managing a chronic condition can strain relationships with family, friends and colleagues.



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## SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Chronic conditions can sometimes lead to social withdrawal and feelings of isolation.



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## SELF-IMAGE

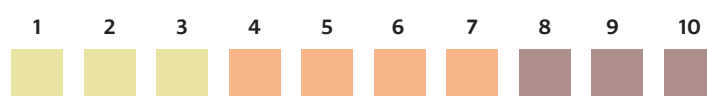
Changes in mental or physical abilities can affect self-esteem and understanding of self.



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## FINANCIAL CONCERNS

The cost of medical treatments can lead to financial stress and a loss of safety/security.



## COPING WITH CHANGE

While change is a natural part of life, it can be particularly challenging when dealing with the complexities of a chronic condition. Unexpected changes and disruptions can impact various aspects of your life, from your daily routines to your long-term plans - and, most importantly, how you are feeling about everything that is going on.

By proactively acknowledging potential areas of change and developing coping strategies, you can build resilience and navigate these transitions with greater ease.

### **Prioritize self-compassion**

- It is important to be kind and understanding towards yourself during times of change.
- Avoid self-criticism or judgment and instead focus on practicing self-care activities that promote emotional well-being.

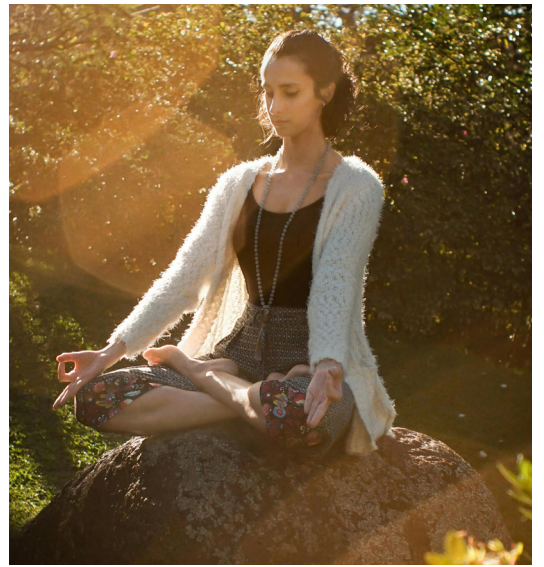
### **Embrace flexibility**

- Chronic conditions often come with unpredictable changes and setbacks.
- Embracing a flexible mindset allows you to adapt to new circumstances and adjust your expectations with less emotional stress.

### **Seek support**

- Do not hesitate to reach out to others for help and understanding.
- Connecting with friends, family or support groups can provide valuable emotional and practical assistance.

NMSS DIRECTORY



#### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

This is another great opportunity for a collaborative activity. As a primary caregiver, you are in a good position to provide insight and perspective on areas of change. Work together with the person you are caring for to proactively prepare for change and adapt accordingly.



# COPING WITH CHANGE

The interactive table below includes some common areas of life that may be affected by a chronic condition. Take some time to reflect on each area and write down any specific changes or disruptions you’ve experienced or anticipate experiencing. Then brainstorm ways you can prepare for or manage these changes to minimize their impact on your well-being.

AREA OF CHANGE	WHAT’S DIFFERENT?	WHAT WILL I DO?
<b>Physical Health</b> Changes in physical abilities, energy levels and overall health		
<b>Daily Routine</b> Adjustments to work schedules, social activities and everyday routines		
<b>Relationships</b> Shifts in dynamics with family, friends and colleagues		
<b>Future Plans &amp; Goals</b> Adapting long-term aspirations and dreams in light of your condition		



AREA OF CHANGE	WHAT'S DIFFERENT?	WHAT WILL I DO?
Fill your Own:		
Fill your Own:		
Fill your Own:		
Fill your Own:		

## MEDICATIONS & MENTAL WELLNESS

It's important to recognize that certain treatments and medications used to manage MS or its symptoms can influence mood and behavior. This connection highlights the interplay between physical and emotional health in the context of chronic conditions.

Understanding the potential emotional impact of medications empowers you to proactively address any challenges that may arise. Remember, open communication with your healthcare team is vital. By discussing your concerns and experiences, you can work together to find the most suitable treatment plan that supports both your physical and emotional well-being.



### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

This activity provides a simple way for you to take an active role in monitoring how the person you are caring for is responding to their prescribed treatments. Keeping a record of the medications they have been given is fundamental responsibility and will be necessary in the event of any changes to their treatment plan or healthcare team.

### IMPORTANT HEALTH NOTICE

The resource on the following page is provided for you to gain insight into your treatment journey and frame your emotional responses to your prescribed medications.

Keep this information for your records and to share with your healthcare team. Do not stop or change your prescribed medication without consulting with your healthcare team.

# MEDICATION & SIDE EFFECTS TRACKER

The table below shows some common kinds of long-term medications for chronic conditions such as MS, as well as possible side effects. The final column in the table is for you to journal about your reactions to these medicines. How do they make you feel? How do they impact your mood?

TYPE OF MEDICATION	POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS	WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?
<b>Medications for pain</b> My prescribed medication:	May cause mood changes, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbances or emotional blunting.	
<b>Medications for fatigue</b> My prescribed medication:	May cause insomnia, anxiety or headaches	
<b>Medications for spasticity (muscle relaxants)</b> My prescribed medication:	May cause temporary mood and behavior changes (especially if suddenly stopped).	
<b>Medications for bladder or bowel problems</b> My prescribed medication:	May cause dry mouth, constipation, or blurred vision.	
<b>Steroids (to treat relapses)</b> My prescribed medication:	May cause mood swings, depression, hyperactivity, poor concentration or anxiety.	
<b>Disease-Modifying Therapies (DMTs)</b> My prescribed medication:	May cause low mood (and even depression) in some cases.	

## COMMUNITY STORY #3

Read the following interview with Rayan Daboul, an MS ambassador living in the UAE, who talks about the importance of prioritizing mental wellness in the context of living with MS.

**How important is the role of mental wellness in managing the overall experience of living with MS?**

The role of mental wellness is extremely essential in managing the overall experience of living with MS. MS can be a shocking life-changing experience at first that requires a lot of adaptation, and that can take a toll on one's mental wellness.

**What are some effective strategies for managing mental wellness issues like stress and anxiety in the context of MS?**

Managing stress and anxiety with MS has been a journey. Therapy has helped me feel understood and find practical ways to cope, which has been incredibly grounding. I've also found that hobbies make a big difference—learning piano has been a great escape for me. Getting lost in music, even just practicing, brings moments of calm and joy. Little things like this remind me there's more to life than MS. Finding what brings you peace can truly make a difference.

**How can family members and caregivers best support the mental well-being of someone with MS?**

Family members and caregivers can make a world of difference by being patient and understanding about the changes MS brings. Living with MS can be unpredictable and exhausting, so having loved ones who listen without judgment, show patience and offer steady support truly helps. Sometimes, just knowing someone is there, ready to understand and adapt along with us, makes us feel less alone and more resilient.

“Sometimes, just knowing someone is there, ready to understand and adapt along with us, makes us feel less alone and more resilient.”



Rayan Daboul

**Are there specific cultural considerations or stigmas surrounding mental wellness in the UAE that might affect individuals with MS?**

There can be a stigma around seeking therapy, with many viewing it as unnecessary or even shameful. This makes it challenging for those of us with MS, as mental wellness support is crucial in coping with the condition. Overcoming this mindset is key because taking care of our mental wellness is just as important as managing the physical aspects of MS.

**What advice would you give to someone with MS who is hesitant to seek professional help for their mental wellness?**

To anyone with MS who feels hesitant about seeking mental wellness support, I'd say don't underestimate how much it can help. I was nervous, too, but therapy has been a safe space where I can be open about my struggles, learn to cope and feel truly understood. MS affects more than just our bodies, and getting support for our minds can make a world of difference.

# SELF-HELP & LIFESTYLE STRATEGIES

Living with a chronic condition presents unique challenges that can significantly impact mental well-being. While professional medical care is an essential component for managing physical symptoms, self-help and lifestyle strategies play a crucial role in building emotional resilience, managing stress and maintaining a positive outlook.

By developing healthy mental habits and everyday coping mechanisms in your daily life, you can achieve a greater sense of control over how you're feeling and reduce the emotional impact of your chronic condition.



**Click on the titles to navigate directly to the following content sections:**

How Am I Today?	<a href="#">↗</a>
Nutrition & Dietary Choices	<a href="#">↗</a>
What Makes Me Happy?	<a href="#">↗</a>
Basic Breathwork Routine	<a href="#">↗</a>
Basic Stretching Routine	<a href="#">↗</a>
Reconnecting with Your Values	<a href="#">↗</a>
Learn Something New	<a href="#">↗</a>
Gratitude Practice	<a href="#">↗</a>

# HOW AM I TODAY?

This interactive table is meant to be used every day to track your feelings throughout the week. Start each day by capturing your thoughts, emotions, concerns or hopes. Some helpful adjectives have been provided for you in the borders of the page. At the end of the week, take a screenshot or make a copy of this journal page for your records.

<b>SUNDAY</b>	Happy Disappointed Playful Energetic
<b>MONDAY</b>	Angry Anxious Curious Stressed
<b>TUESDAY</b>	Loved Content Strong Grateful
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	Jealous Scared Joyful Empowered
<b>THURSDAY</b>	Overwhelmed Discouraged Proud Sad
<b>FRIDAY</b>	Restless Hopeful Peaceful Motivated
<b>SATURDAY</b>	Exhausted Frustrated Enthusiastic

## NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

This journal activity can be used as a daily check-in to encourage emotional self-awareness. It can also function as a tool for tracking moods and emotions over periods of weeks and months. This can be valuable as you settle into the routines and rhythms of your role as a primary caregiver.



## NUTRITION & DIETARY CHOICES

Managing a chronic condition often requires you to follow certain dietary recommendations to promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Food plays a crucial role in supporting your immune system, reducing inflammation and promoting overall well-being.

### What is the relationship between gut health and MS?

A healthy gut microbiome helps maintain a balanced immune response and regulate inflammation. An imbalance in your gut bacteria is known as dysbiosis. Dysbiosis can contribute to inflammation, potentially exacerbating autoimmune conditions like MS.



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### NOTES

Download the NMSS Nutrition Guide for MS & Autoimmune Disease Awareness to learn more about gut health in the context of managing MS. Get access to recipes and nutrition tips to help you manage your symptoms.

[NMSS NUTRITION GUIDE](#)

# WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY?

Place a checkmark against all the things on this page that make you happy.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with loved ones | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping others                | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experiencing nature           | <input type="checkbox"/> Delicious food        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning something new        | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a good book   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music            | <input type="checkbox"/> A warm bath or shower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pets                          | <input type="checkbox"/> A massage             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Expressing gratitude  |

Reflect on ONE of your choices and in the box at the bottom of the page, write a practical idea for how you will experience this happiness over the course of the coming week.

## NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Ask the person you are caring for to show you their ideas for how to experience happiness this week. Help them make it happen! Encourage them to return to this activity every week and challenge themselves to experience something new each time.

Return to this page anytime and challenge yourself to experience a different kind of happiness! (This activity also appears in the Appendix of Reusable Activities section of the workbook.)

## BASIC BREATHWORK ROUTINE

Breathwork offers a simple yet powerful tool to help manage challenging emotions like stress and anxiety. By practicing focused breathing techniques, you can calm your nervous system, reduce stress levels and promote feelings of relaxation and well-being. Try the following basic activity to get you started.

**Find a quiet space where you will be undisturbed.**

- First, inhale through your nose for a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 7.
- Now exhale through your mouth for a count of 8.
- Repeat this routine two or more times to experience its calming effect.



### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Looking for some more breathwork routines?

If the person you are caring for is looking for more breathwork tips, watch the following video from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

[BREATHWORK VIDEO](#)

## BASIC STRETCHING ROUTINE

Living with a chronic condition often involves managing pain, stiffness and fatigue. Regular stretching can play a vital role in improving flexibility, reducing muscle tension and promoting overall physical and mental well-being.

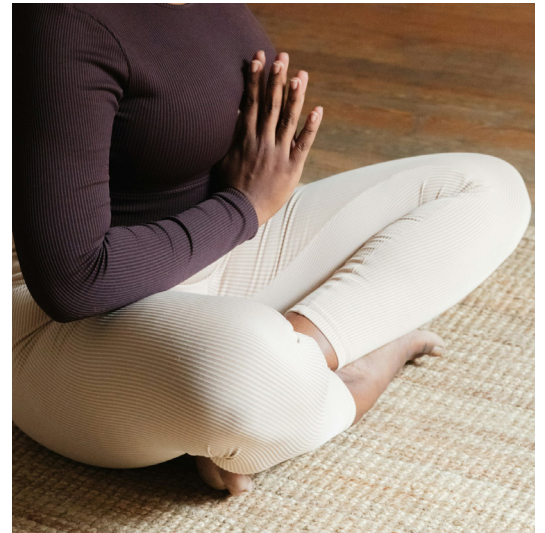
By incorporating the gentle stretching routine presented on the following page into your daily life, you can improve your mood by managing the challenges of your chronic condition with greater ease.

### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Is the person you are caring for looking for more ways to be physically active?

Check out the following seated yoga practice from NMSS and stand by to monitor their movements and provide coaching. Encourage them to listen to their bodies and stop immediately at the first sign of pain.

YOGA VIDEO



### IMPORTANT HEALTH NOTICE

Before starting any new exercise routine, it's important to consult with your healthcare provider, especially if you have a chronic condition. Remember to listen to your body and avoid any movements that cause pain.

For links to more MS stretching exercises, remember to consult the Additional Resources section of this guide.

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Additional Resources



# BASIC MS STRETCHING ROUTINE

Print this page or take a screenshot on your phone so you can reference the basic stretching routine easily.

## EXERCISE 1: KNEE BEND

- Lie with your knees bent up and your feet flat on the floor/bed.
- Keep your legs about 30cm apart.
- Pull one knee up to your chest with both hands, keeping the other leg bent.
- Release, then repeat with the other leg.
- Do 3-5 times repetitions on each leg.

## EXERCISE 2: KNEE ROLL

- Lie with knees bent and feet flat on the floor/bed.
- Roll your knees over to the left, stretching diagonally across the trunk. Make sure both shoulders stay in contact with the floor or bed.
- Bring your knees back to the middle.
- Then roll your knees over to the right and back to the middle again.
- Repeat 3-5 times each side.

## EXERCISE 3: SIDEWAYS LEAN

- Sit on the edge of your bed.
- Slide one hand along the bed while stretching out your trunk. Keep facing forward.
- Come back to the middle and do the same stretch on the other side.
- Repeat 3-5 times each side.

## EXERCISE 4: TABLE SLIDE

- Sit at a table (or similar flat surface).
- Roll up a small towel to use as your 'slider.'
- Put your hands on top of the towel. Now slide your hands away from your body so that you stretch forward and elongate your trunk.
- Slide back to your sitting position and repeat 3-5 times.





### EXERCISE 5: NECK ROTATION

- Sit on a comfortable chair, facing forward.
- Turn your head to the right, looking over your shoulder as far as you can without pain.
- Hold for 5 breaths.
- Turn your head to the left, looking over your shoulder as far as you can without pain.
- Hold for 5 breaths.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side.

### EXERCISE 6: NECK FLEXION

- Sit on a comfortable chair, facing forward.
- Slowly tilt your head to the right, bringing your right ear to your right shoulder. Keep your face looking forward the entire time. Only go as far as feels comfortable.
- Hold for 5 breaths.
- Return to your starting position.
- Now slowly tilt your head to the left, bringing your left ear to your left shoulder.
- Hold for 5 breaths.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side.



## COMMUNITY STORY #4

Watch the video below to hear from MS ambassador Chand Guria, who talks about the importance of staying active and maintaining a positive mindset.



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How do you respond to this story from the MS community?  
Make notes in the space below.



## RECONNECTING WITH YOUR VALUES

Living with a chronic condition can lead to a sense of disconnection from your former self. The changes and challenges you face may cause you to question your identity and lose sight of the passions and activities that once brought you joy. However, living with a chronic condition can also lead to a reevaluation of priorities and a deeper understanding of what truly matters in life.

Our values serve as guiding principles, shaping our choices and actions and providing a sense of purpose and meaning to our lives. By reflecting on your values, you can gain clarity on what's most important to you and how these values can be expressed and honored, even in the face of challenges and limitations.

The activity on the following page aims to help you reconnect with your values and find continuity between who you were before your diagnosis and who you are now. By recognizing the enduring aspects of your personality, interests and values, you can begin to find ways to embrace the new chapters of your life.

### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

It is sometimes easier to identify your most important values through conversation. Collaborate with the person you are caring for during the following activity, asking questions to help them identify their most important values:

- What do you like most about yourself?
- What is the moment that you felt proudest in your life, and why?
- What is your definition of hard work?
- Who is one of your role models and why do you admire this person?
- How would a good friend describe you?



# RECONNECTING WITH YOUR VALUES

01

**In the first column,** write down one of your core values. Choose a value from the list provided, or else write in one of your own.

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02

**In the second column,** write down some ideas for how you will continue to express or honor this value in the new context of living with a chronic condition.

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## VALUES LIST

Authenticity  
Balance  
Bravery  
Compassion  
Community  
Connection  
Courage  
Creativity  
Curiosity  
Determination  
Empathy  
Equality  
Fairness  
Faith  
Family  
Freedom  
Friendship  
Generosity  
Gratitude  
Growth  
Honesty  
Humility  
Integrity  
Kindness  
Love  
Loyalty  
Perseverance  
Purpose  
Respect  
Responsibility  
Self-Discipline  
Simplicity  
Trust  
Wisdom

## LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Living with a chronic condition can sometimes lead to feelings of limitation and a narrowing of your focus on health concerns.

That's why nurturing curiosity and learning new things can be a powerful antidote to these feelings. Learning something new not only expands your horizons but also stimulates the mind and opens the door to fresh and interesting conversations.

**Place a checkmark against a few things that you would like to learn something new about, or else write in your own interests in the boxes provided.**

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Food or Cooking       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History   | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astronomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Meditation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music     | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Film      | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature or Writing |

**Make some time to research one or more of these interests and actively try to learn something new that makes you feel excited.**



#### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Ask the person you are caring for to show you what they are interested in learning about. Help them find interesting links or sources to investigate! Follow up by asking questions about what they have learned and find other ways to continue to engage their curiosity.

**Make notes about the most interesting thing(s) you learn about and remember to tell someone about them soon!**

## GRATITUDE PRACTICE

Practicing gratitude can be a powerful tool for fostering emotional resilience and mental well-being. Gratitude shifts our focus from what we lack to what we have, fostering a sense of contentment and appreciation for the good in our lives.

The activity found on the next page includes a short meditation to help counterbalance negative emotions, reduce stress and improve your overall mood. If you wish, this step of the gratitude practice can be replaced by prayer.





#### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Expressing gratitude to others is a powerful step in any gratitude practice. Check in with the person you are caring for about what they are feeling grateful for and offer to be a sounding board if they want to discuss how they should go about expressing their feelings of thankfulness to others.

#### Follow these tips for a fulfilling gratitude practice:

##### Be specific

Instead of saying “I’m grateful for my family,” try to focus on specific qualities or actions that you appreciate about them.

##### Focus on the present

While it’s important to appreciate past blessings, try to also focus on the good things happening in your life right now.

##### Don’t force it

If you’re having a difficult day, don’t feel pressured to find things to be grateful for. Simply acknowledge your feelings and try again another time.

##### Express gratitude to others

After completing the activity, take the next step and let the people in your life know how much you appreciate them. Expressing our gratitude to others can go a long way to cultivating feelings of thankfulness and resilience during difficult times.

# GRATITUDE PRACTICE

## PART 1: GRATITUDE REFLECTION

Start your practice with a prayer or short meditation (you might want to try a guided meditation app, such as Insight Timer). Find a quiet space, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. As you inhale and exhale, bring to mind things you are grateful for. Allow yourself to fully experience the feelings of appreciation and contentment as your mind forms different thoughts and feelings.



### What's the relationship between prayer and meditation?

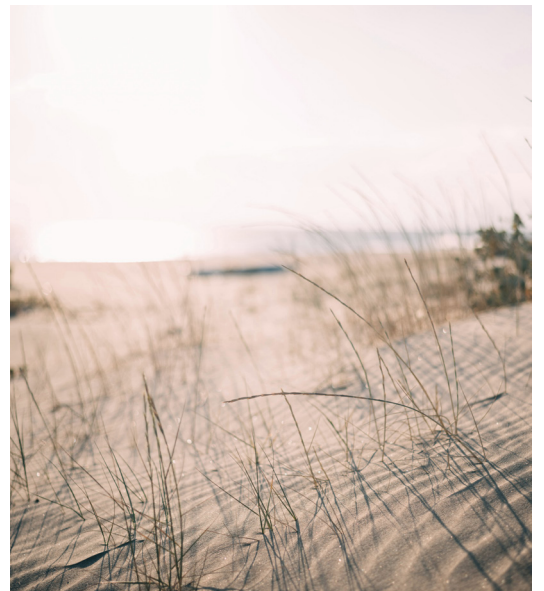
Prayer, like meditation, encourages reflection and focus. It often involves slowing down, controlling your breathing and being present in the moment. Both practices can bring a sense of peace and connection to something greater than oneself.

If you prefer a guided meditation, there are many of these available online to help you focus on your gratitude practice.

**Use the box below to save links to your favorite podcasts or videos.**

## PART 2: THREE GOOD THINGS

After completing your reflection, take a few moments to reflect on three things you are grateful for. These can be big or small, from a supportive family member to a beautiful sunset. Try to return to this activity every day, updating the boxes below, to establish a healthy gratitude practice and build emotional resilience in difficult times.



# COMMUNITY STORY #5

Watch the video below to hear from an MS ambassador Rana Kamareddine, who talks about coming to terms with her diagnosis and finding ways to maintain positivity.



WATCH VIDEO

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How do you respond to this story from the MS community?  
Make notes in the space below.



# PROFESSIONAL HELP & TREATMENT OPTIONS

Asking for professional help is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. It is proof of your courage and commitment to your well-being. Just like you would seek medical attention for a physical illness, seeking support for your mental wellness is equally important.

Therapists, counselors and other mental wellness professionals are trained to provide guidance and support as you deal with the emotional complexities of living with a chronic condition. They can offer a safe space to express your feelings, develop coping strategies and build resilience.

This section provides some tools for recognizing when you might want to seek professional help, as well as some ideas for different kinds of therapies to explore.

**Click on the titles to navigate directly to the following content sections:**

Emergency Situations	<a href="#">↗</a>
Low Mood vs Depression	<a href="#">↗</a>
Therapy Options	<a href="#">↗</a>
Write a Letter to Your Condition	<a href="#">↗</a>



# EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If you are experiencing severe mental distress, suicidal thoughts or any other mental health crisis, please seek immediate assistance from a qualified mental health professional or contact your local emergency services.

Begin by filling out your first point of contact for emergencies. This could be your MS or chronic condition nurse, or another health specialist that forms part of your team. Then add other important contact numbers, resources or links for safekeeping in case of emergency.



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## MY FIRST POINT OF CONTACT

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## NEAREST HOSPITAL OR CRISIS CENTER

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## THERAPIST CONTACT DETAILS

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## OTHER EMERGENCY CONTACTS

### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Ensure this table is completed and kept up-to-date with reliable information. This is an important responsibility in your role as primary carer.

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## NOTES

Remember to consult the NMSS Healthcare Directory for information about healthcare services in your area.

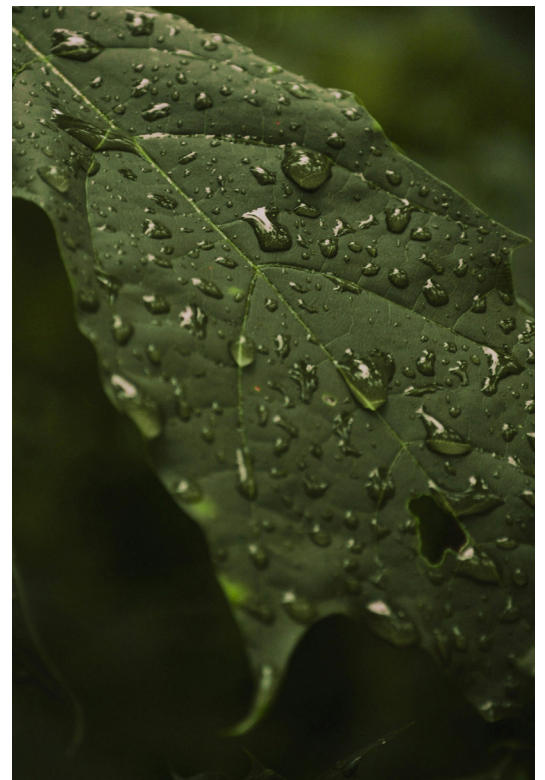
NMSS HEALTHCARE DIRECTORY



# LOW MOOD VS DEPRESSION

When facing the challenges of a chronic condition it is completely normal to experience periods of low mood or sadness. As we discussed earlier in the guide, these negative emotions can be related to symptoms of the condition or even side-effects of the medication you have been prescribed.

However, it's important to distinguish between a temporary dip in mood and the more persistent and severe symptoms of depression, for which a professional mental wellness evaluation is highly recommended.



## SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

**SIGECAPS** is an acronym commonly used in the medical and mental wellness fields to help identify the key symptoms of depression.

- **Sleep:** significant changes in sleep patterns (either increased or decreased)
- **Interest (loss of):** loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activities; persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness or emptiness
- **Guilt:** feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- **Energy (decreased):** significant fatigue or loss of energy
- **Concentration (difficulty):** difficulty concentrating, making decisions or remembering things
- **Appetite (changes):** significant changes in appetite (either increased or decreased)
- **Suicidal ideation:** thoughts of death or suicide
- **Psychomotor agitation:** physical symptoms such as aches and pains, headaches or digestive problems

## SYMPTOMS OF LOW MOOD

- Worry
- Feeling anxious or a sense of panic
- Sadness
- Tiredness
- Anger
- Frustration
- Low self-esteem

## NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

The activity on the following page is a questionnaire designed to help the person you are caring for test the strength and extent of their feelings. We recommend that you offer to review the results of the questionnaire with them, discuss any questions they may have and make plans for any next steps (if required).

The main difference between low mood and depression relates to the duration and severity of the symptoms you are experiencing.

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### DURATION

Low mood is usually temporary, while depression persists for at least two weeks.

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### SEVERITY

Depression significantly impacts daily life, work, relationships and overall functioning. If your low mood is starting to dramatically impact your daily life, then it might be a sign of depression.



# LOW MOOD VS DEPRESSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Complete the following questionnaire to test if what you’ve been feeling might be classified as depression. Answer the questions using the scale provided. Then add up your score and see if the description in the corresponding box matches what you’ve been feeling.

Think about how you’ve been feeling over the past two weeks. Then read each statement carefully and rate how strongly you agree or disagree with it.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel down or sad most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
I have lost interest or pleasure in activities I used to enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel tired or have little energy.	1	2	3	4	5
I have trouble sleeping or I am sleeping too much.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a poor appetite or am overeating more than usual.	1	2	3	4	5

### Score of 10-29:

Your score indicates that you may be experiencing low mood rather than depression. Focus on lifestyle changes like diet, exercise, stress management techniques and spending more time with loved ones.

### Score of 30-39:

Your score could suggest mild to moderate depression. It's advisable to consult a healthcare professional for further evaluation and support.

### Score of 40-50:

Your score indicates potentially severe depression. It's important to seek professional help from a doctor or mental health specialist immediately.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel bad about myself or feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4	5
I have trouble concentrating or making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
I avoid social situations or spending time with others.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel hopeless or helpless about the future.	1	2	3	4	5
I have thoughts that life is not worth living.	1	2	3	4	5

### IMPORTANT HEALTH NOTICE

This activity is meant to provide a safe and private space for you to explore the strength and extent of the feelings you have been experiencing. It is not intended to replace a professional mental wellness evaluation. Please seek professional help if you think you might be experiencing depression.

## THERAPY OPTIONS

Do you feel like you could use some extra support in your mental wellness journey?

Therapy can offer emotional support and promote well-being by helping to build coping skills, and there are many different kinds of therapies available to suit all personality types. This activity invites you to explore different types of therapy and consider which ones might resonate with you and your individual needs.

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Place a checkmark against all the types of therapies that you would be interested in exploring.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art therapy                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet therapy      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equine therapy (horse therapy)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychotherapy    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horticultural therapy (gardening therapy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Support groups   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness-based therapy                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk therapy     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music therapy                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga therapy     |

Which of these options appeal to you? Do some research to explore more about the therapies you are interested in. Are there opportunities in your area to try one of these therapies? Make notes in the box below.

## NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

You can participate in this activity by helping the individual with MS understand more about the different types of therapy listed below. Help by searching for websites, finding interesting videos and podcasts, looking up local therapy options, etc. Check out the NMSS Event Page for activities such as art therapy sessions and talks from expert guests.

### NMSS EVENTS



## WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR CONDITION

Sometimes, living with a chronic condition can feel like you're carrying a heavy burden that's difficult to share with others. Letter writing can offer a safe and therapeutic space to express your thoughts and feelings, even those you might find difficult to articulate out loud.

The activity on the following page invites you to write a letter directly to your chronic condition. There are no right or wrong responses to this activity, and this is a private letter - so express yourself freely. Putting your thoughts on paper can help you make sense of your experience and gain new insights. The process of writing can also be cathartic, allowing you to release pent-up feelings and emotions that are hard to express to others.

### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

This activity is designed to encourage deep self-reflection. You can participate in this activity by talking to the individual with MS about the different questions contained in the letter writing activity prompts, or else offering to read the letter and discuss its content when they are finished.



# WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR CONDITION

**Use the template below to write a letter to your chronic condition.**

If you find this activity emotionally challenging, don't feel pressure to complete the letter in one sitting. Come back to what you have written at a later point and continue to refine your feelings as time passes and you begin to feel different things.

**Dear Chronic Condition,**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

How would you describe your relationship with your condition? What did you feel when you were first diagnosed, and what impact did it have on your life?

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## **EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS**

What emotions has your condition brought up for you? How has your condition affected your daily life, relationships and sense of self? What are some of the biggest challenges you face in living with your condition?

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## **INSIGHTS**

What have you learned about yourself through this journey? What coping mechanisms or strategies have helped you manage your condition? Are there any positives or unexpected gifts that have emerged from your experience?

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## **LOOKING AHEAD**

What are your hopes and dreams for the future? What final message would you like to convey to your condition?

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**YOURS SINCERELY,**

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## COMMUNITY STORY #6

Read the following interview with Deborah Dunne, an MS ambassador living in the UAE, who shares some tips and inspiration from her personal mental wellness journey.

**How important is the role of mental wellness in managing the overall experience of living with MS?**

Mental wellness is crucial in managing my MS because it impacts resilience and my quality of life. Living with MS, I have seen how stress and emotions can intensify physical symptoms. Maintaining mental well-being helps me stay proactive and cope better with life's daily challenges.

**What are some effective strategies for managing mental wellness issues like stress and anxiety in the context of MS?**

Some effective strategies that work for me are having a daily routine and a work-life balance, which can be difficult at times. Connecting with friends and family, and taking time for activities that I enjoy like spinning classes (Crank) and spending time with my dogs. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society also provides a sense of understanding and connection, which reduces the feelings of isolation.

**How can family members and caregivers best support the mental well-being of someone with MS?**

I have an extremely supportive family that provides understanding and encouragement by being empathetic and patient, and they listen to me when I need to talk. My close friends and family help me manage challenges by staying positive and being flexible.

“Mental wellness is crucial in managing my MS because it impacts resilience and my quality of life.”



Deborah Dunne

**Are there specific cultural considerations or stigmas surrounding mental wellness in the UAE that might affect individuals with MS?**

In the UAE, there may still be some stigma around mental wellness, though it's gradually improving. This stigma could affect how open people feel about seeking mental wellness support especially when newly diagnosed with MS. Due to my openness about living with MS, I have opened a platform for people to speak privately to me about how they are dealing with MS.

**What advice would you give to someone with MS who is hesitant to seek professional help for their mental wellness?**

I would make them aware that mental wellness support is as essential as physical treatment. Encouraging someone with MS to view mental wellness care as a part of self-care, rather than a sign of weakness, can make a difference. Sharing how you're dealing with MS with your friends and family will help them understand your limits.

# LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please consult the following helpful  
resources for further informational support  
in your mental wellness journey.

# LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## IMPORTANT UAE CONTACTS

Emergency calls: 999

MS Helpline: 800677

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NMSS Directory	<a href="#">↗</a>
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## CHRONIC CONDITION GUIDES

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Multiple Sclerosis Factsheet	<a href="#">↗</a>
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MS Patient Journey	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Beginners Guide to Multiple Sclerosis	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Treatment Guide to Parkinson's Disease	<a href="#">↗</a>
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About Alzheimer's Disease	<a href="#">↗</a>
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A Practical Guide to Epilepsy	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Rheumatoid Arthritis Information Book	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Coping with Lupus	<a href="#">↗</a>
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A Guide to Understanding Heart Disease	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Life After Stroke Guide	<a href="#">↗</a>
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## WELLNESS GUIDES

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Emotional Wellness Checklist	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Parent's Guide to Mental Wellbeing	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Mental Health & Physical Activity Toolkit	<a href="#">↗</a>
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A Workbook for Mental Wellbeing	<a href="#">↗</a>
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MS & Mental Health	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Let's Find Better Days	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Self-Care Workbook	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Everybody Stretch: A Physical Activity Workbook for People with Multiple Sclerosis	<a href="#">↗</a>
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MS & Your Emotions: Understanding and Dealing With Your Feelings	<a href="#">↗</a>
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## RECOMMENDED MS WEBSITES

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National Multiple Sclerosis Society (UAE)	<a href="#">↗</a>
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MS Focus (US)	<a href="#">↗</a>
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National Multiple Sclerosis Society (US)	<a href="#">↗</a>
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MS Trust (UK)	<a href="#">↗</a>
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Overcoming MS	<a href="#">↗</a>
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## GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS

This section contains simple definitions of some of the key terms used in this Mental wellness Handbook & Reflection Journal.

<b>Anxiety</b>	A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, often about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.
<b>Catharsis</b>	The process of releasing strong emotions (often through creative expression, journaling, or talking with someone), leading to a sense of relief and renewal.
<b>Cognitive fatigue</b>	Mental tiredness or exhaustion, often experienced by people with MS and chronic conditions, characterized by difficulty with concentration, memory and processing information.
<b>Communication difficulties</b>	Challenges with expressing thoughts, feelings, or needs effectively. This can stem from cognitive changes, speech impairments, or emotional factors related to MS or other conditions
<b>Depression</b>	A mood disorder that causes persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness and loss of interest in activities.
<b>Disease-modifying therapies (DMTs)</b>	Medications that aim to slow the progression of multiple sclerosis and reduce the frequency and severity of relapses.
<b>Emotional blunting</b>	A reduced ability to experience and express emotions, sometimes described as feeling numb or detached.
<b>Emotional lability</b>	Also known as pseudobulbar affect (PBA), it involves sudden, uncontrollable outbursts of laughing or crying that are often disproportionate to the situation.
<b>Holistic</b>	An approach to well-being that considers the whole person and how different aspects of life interact to influence health.
<b>Journaling</b>	The practice of regularly writing down thoughts, feelings and experiences. It can be a helpful tool for self-reflection, processing emotions and tracking progress.





<b>Limited mobility</b>	Restrictions in physical movement and the ability to perform daily activities due to muscle weakness, spasticity, or other physical limitations.
<b>Meditation</b>	A practice that involves focusing on a single point (such as your breath, a mantra, or an image) to quiet the mind and promote relaxation and inner peace.
<b>Mindfulness</b>	Paying attention to the present moment without judgment. It involves noticing thoughts, feelings and sensations as they arise, cultivating a sense of awareness and acceptance.
<b>Processing</b>	The act of understanding and working through thoughts, feelings and experiences, often with the help of a therapist or through self-reflection.
<b>Pseudobulbar affect</b>	See: Emotional lability.
<b>Psychologist</b>	A mental health professional who provides therapy and support to help individuals cope with emotional challenges, mental health conditions and life transitions.
<b>Resilience</b>	The ability to bounce back from adversity, cope with challenges and adapt to change.
<b>Self-Care</b>	The intentional actions you take to care for your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It involves prioritizing your needs and engaging in activities that promote relaxation, reduce stress and enhance your overall quality of life.
<b>Self-Help</b>	Strategies and techniques used independently to manage symptoms, improve well-being, and cope with challenges.
<b>Spasticity</b>	A condition characterized by muscle stiffness and tightness, which can interfere with movement and cause discomfort.
<b>Stress management</b>	Techniques and strategies used to cope with stress and reduce its negative impact on physical and mental wellness.
<b>Support groups</b>	Gatherings of people with shared experiences, providing a safe space for connection, support and information sharing.
<b>Therapy</b>	A collaborative process between an individual and a mental wellness professional to address mental wellness concerns, improve coping skills and enhance overall well-being.

# GET INVOLVED

Are you inspired to share your story and connect with others in the MS community?

GET INVOLVED

FOLLOW NMSS UAE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

NMSSocietyUAE	
National MS Society UAE	
National Multiple Sclerosis Society UAE	
NMSSocietyUAE	
NMSSocietyUAE	



# APPENDIX OF REUSABLE ACTIVITIES

This section of the guide contains extra copies of some of the activities featured throughout the workbook. Use these on a daily or weekly basis to give yourself support on your mental wellness journey.

# APPENDIX OF REUSABLE ACTIVITIES

How Am I Today?	↗
What Makes Me Happy?	↗
Reconnecting with Your Values	↗
Gratitude Practice	↗



# HOW AM I TODAY?

This interactive table is meant to be used every day to track your feelings throughout the week. Start each day by capturing your thoughts, emotions, concerns or hopes. Some helpful adjectives have been provided for you in the borders of the page. At the end of the week, take a screenshot or make a copy of this journal page for your records.

<b>SUNDAY</b>	Happy Disappointed Playful Energetic
<b>MONDAY</b>	Angry Anxious Curious Stressed
<b>TUESDAY</b>	Loved Content Strong Grateful
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	Jealous Scared Joyful Empowered
<b>THURSDAY</b>	Overwhelmed Discouraged Proud Sad
<b>FRIDAY</b>	Restless Hopeful Peaceful Motivated
<b>SATURDAY</b>	Exhausted Frustrated Enthusiastic

# WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY?

Place a checkmark against all the things on this page that make you happy.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with loved ones | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping others                | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experiencing nature           | <input type="checkbox"/> Delicious food        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning something new        | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a good book   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music            | <input type="checkbox"/> A warm bath or shower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pets                          | <input type="checkbox"/> A massage             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Expressing gratitude  |

Reflect on ONE of your choices and in the box at the bottom of the page, write a practical idea for how you will experience this happiness over the course of the coming week.

## NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Ask the person you are caring for to show you their ideas for how to experience happiness this week. Help them make it happen! Encourage them to return to this activity every week and challenge themselves to experience something new each time.

Return to this page anytime and challenge yourself to experience a different kind of happiness! (This activity also appears in the Appendix of Reusable Activities section of the workbook.)

# RECONNECTING WITH YOUR VALUES

01

**In the first column,** write down one of your core values. Choose a value from the list provided, or else write in one of your own.

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02

**In the second column,** write down some ideas for how you will continue to express or honor this value in the new context of living with a chronic condition.

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## VALUES LIST

- Authenticity
- Balance
- Bravery
- Compassion
- Community
- Connection
- Courage
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Determination
- Empathy
- Equality
- Fairness
- Faith
- Family
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Generosity
- Gratitude
- Growth
- Honesty
- Humility
- Integrity
- Kindness
- Love
- Loyalty
- Perseverance
- Purpose
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Self-Discipline
- Simplicity
- Trust
- Wisdom



#### NOTE FOR PRIMARY CARERS

Ask the person you are caring for to show you what they are interested in learning about. Help them find interesting links or sources to investigate! Follow up by asking questions about what they have learned and find other ways to continue to engage their curiosity.

**Make notes about the most interesting thing(s) you learn about and remember to tell someone about them soon!**

# GRATITUDE PRACTICE

## PART 1: GRATITUDE REFLECTION

Start your practice with a prayer or short meditation (you might want to try a guided meditation app, such as Insight Timer). Find a quiet space, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. As you inhale and exhale, bring to mind things you are grateful for. Allow yourself to fully experience the feelings of appreciation and contentment as your mind forms different thoughts and feelings.



### **What's the relationship between prayer and meditation?**

Prayer, like meditation, encourages reflection and focus. It often involves slowing down, controlling your breathing and being present in the moment. Both practices can bring a sense of peace and connection to something greater than oneself.

If you prefer a guided meditation, there are many of these available online to help you focus on your gratitude practice.

**Use the box below to save links to your favorite podcasts or videos.**

## PART 2: THREE GOOD THINGS

After completing your reflection, take a few moments to reflect on three things you are grateful for. These can be big or small, from a supportive family member to a beautiful sunset. Try to return to this activity every day, updating the boxes below, to establish a healthy gratitude practice and build emotional resilience in difficult times.



