



MS CLINICAL DIALOGS

COMPREHENSIVE CARE

OVERVIEW

Comprehensive care is an approach that cares for the whole patient and all their healthcare needs, using the resources of many professionals working together for the prevention and management of multiple physical and emotional health problems of a patient over a period of time in relationship to family, life events, and environment.

RELEVANCE FOR MS

The Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers outlines: "Comprehensive care in MS is an organized system of healthcare that is designed to address the medical, social, vocational, emotional, and educational needs of patients and their families. This care is provided by a team of professionals in one facility and tries to ensure that the direction and goals of treatment are consistent, logical, and progressive. The team approach facilitates coordination of services and continuity of care, and avoids duplication and fragmentation for the patient and the family. Comprehensive care embraces a philosophy of empowerment in which the person with MS takes an active role in planning and implementing healthcare and self-care activities and acts as consultant to the team. This active rather than passive role is fitting in light of the fact that MS, like all chronic illnesses, is expected to last a lifetime. Persons with MS must learn to adapt and change in response to alterations in their physical functioning. The comprehensive care team in MS consists of a well-informed person with MS, the family, relationship sphere, and care partners. The team may consist of a neurologist and other physicians such as primary care physician, internists, urologists, gynecologists, orthopedists, ophthalmologists, physiatrists, as well as other professionals such as nurses, social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, recreation therapists, psychologists, neuropsychologists, and clergy. This interdisciplinary team evaluates each patient individually, and develops a plan of care that reflects individual function with the individual's input. This plan of care reaches beyond center or clinic walls into homes, workplaces, and places of recreation to enable full and independent functioning and a full quality of life. This vigorous plan of care reflects the ever changing health care, social, and emotional needs expressed by the person with MS."

ABOUT YOU

- I have been educated and understand my disease.
- I am helping myself stay well with MS.
- I am active in helping plan my care.
- I am or have seen other healthcare professionals in addition to my Neurologist.
- I feel hopeful about my future.
- I have a primary care physician.
- I have regular preventive health screenings.
- I am aware of healthy lifestyle activities which will help my MS.
- I have a good relationship with my prescriber.
- I have a support system to help manage my MS.
- I have my individual needs met.
- I am encouraged to include my family and care partners in my care.



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RESOURCES

<http://www.mscafe.org>

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org>

