

Asking for help



by Cyndi Zagieboylo



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In the series finale of the hit HBO series “The Sopranos,” Meadow Soprano arrives at the diner late to meet her family. As the door opens in the final shot, her father, Tony, looks up, and we never learn Tony’s—or Meadow’s—fate.

That might have been what it felt like for actress Jamie-Lynn Sigler, who portrayed Meadow,

when she learned she had multiple sclerosis. Indeed, that opening of a door and not knowing what comes next is a strong metaphor for the way many people feel when they are diagnosed. In "[Jamie-Lynn Sigler: 'Open, honest and real about MS'](#)," Sigler discusses the long road she traveled toward accepting her own diagnosis, and finally coming to terms with it, before deciding to disclose it to her fans and the public at large.

Sigler's courage in taking that step, even while recognizing it might not go well, is inspiring. She had legitimate concerns about revealing her disease, as do many people living with MS. Fortunately, Sigler's fans met her announcement with love and support. And that, in turn, created new connections.

Connections are so important in a life with MS. People with strong connections feel less isolated, less alone. That's important for everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, gender or any other aspect of being human. And that's why this issue of **Momentum** highlights the importance of men who live with MS finding the connections they need.

It's not always easy for men to ask for help. Often, they're raised to believe that such outreach is a sign of weakness when, in fact, it's a strength, as you'll read in "[When men get MS](#)." Most people appreciate the opportunity to help another, and recognize it as a way to make a meaningful connection with someone. Keeping that in mind may make it easier to ask for help.

Still, some people may never be comfortable asking directly for help or support. For example, having regular get-togethers to play poker with other guys who have MS may feel more acceptable than engaging in a traditional support group. And that's fine. What matters is the connection, the ability to be yourself and to discuss things in your life—including MS.

At the National MS Society, we're here to connect you to information, resources and others with a shared experience (visit nationalMSSociety.org or call an MS Navigator at 1-800-344-4867). If you're concerned with how to disclose that you have MS, we can help you prepare and think through the pros and cons. After you take the step to disclose, there is the reaction of others to deal with next; we can support you in dealing with whatever that may be. We may not know what lies beyond the door of disclosure, but we'll be there as you walk through it.

If you're a man affected by MS, please also consider visiting MSconnection.org to join an existing men's discussion group or start a new one. Or sign up for an event like Walk MS or Bike MS as a participant or volunteer, where you can meet others who share your experience. And drop me a line and let me know about what you learn and experience in making connections.

The National MS Society is here. We are your partner. You are not alone. Let's keep in touch!

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Let me know your thoughts. Email me at cyndi@nmss.org.