

Depression and MS



We're always saddened when a favorite celebrity dies. But somehow the death by suicide of actor/comedian Robin Williams has felt like a sucker-punch to the gut. How could someone so seemingly full of life, someone who lit up so many other lives, have arrived at such a dark place that he'd take his own life?

Depression.

In the aftermath of Williams' death, we've been reminded that he long struggled with depression. We've been bombarded with messages urging us to be more aware of mental illness in general and depression in particular, and social media have been replete with videos of people telling us how we might help those in our lives who suffer from this insidious disease.

As anyone reading this blog is likely aware, the incidence of depression among people with multiple sclerosis appears to be higher than it is among the general population. As the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's excellent [overview of MS and depression](#) explains, depression in people with MS may be triggered by any number of circumstances, from physical and chemical changes to the brain and immune system to the challenges of coping with this unpredictable disease.

The thing is, when you're in the depths of depression, you can't make yourself understand or believe that there is any way out. You know people want to help you, but you have no confidence that they can.

But in truth, depression is treatable, and people can in fact help. So, if you are feeling depressed – even a little, because a little depression can morph into a lot of depression – call someone, tell someone, reach out to someone, and when they reach back, clasp their outstretched hand and hold on for dear life.

And if you know someone who is carrying a heavy heart, make yourself the one who reaches out.

The link above offers clinical guidance as to how to seek help for depression. My non-clinical hope is that all of us, famous or not, rich or poor, depressed or not, physically healthy or otherwise, remember that we are all in this together. Please keep your eyes and heart wide open for opportunities to help and be helped.

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