

@Momentum



Art by Brooke Pelczynski

Getting help for depression

I just read and appreciated the article about the hidden symptom of depression (“[The hidden symptom](#),” Spring 2019). I’ve dealt with MS symptoms for 37 years. Hearing that depression is an MS symptom freed me to get help for depression as [when I was] 23 with no visible MS symptoms. In the past 27 years, I have been slowly disabling. I am now in a wheelchair and totally dependent on a caregiver (my husband) for meeting my daily needs. I am now dealing with depression specifically connected with grieving, for almost three decades, the continual loss of functioning. I am seeking specialized counseling to deal with the disabling grief I feel for now and for the past. Fortunately, I live two miles from the Mayo Clinic and this help is available. Thank you for addressing this issue.

Therese Anderson, Minnesota

The feeling is familiar

Thank you and Brooke Pelczynski for her article, “[New ways of creating](#)” and her cover illustration (Spring 2019). I really connected with her illustration of depression: having one’s head in the sand, preventing you from seeing the beauty all around you. I know that feeling. Acceptance of my situation while finding a way to appreciate the good is a daily challenge.

My first grandchild is a major motivator for me.

Sid Burwell, California

The ability to create

Thank you so much for your article by Brooke Pelczynski, "[New ways of creating](#)" (Spring 2019).

I was diagnosed with MS in 1997. At the time it never occurred to me that I would leave a job I loved and start disability benefits, that I'd end up needing a walker or that my physical activities would become so limited it changed the way we lived. What saved me was my ability to create. My love of making jewelry brought me joy while keeping me sane when other parts of my body refused to respond. As the progression and loss from MS has continued over the last 21 years, so have I. I've adjusted my creativity to my abilities. Working with leather took the place of beads. Working with paper in all forms lets me create cards and gifts. My newest passion is felting. I start small. I try to set myself up for success. Being able to still create in any form somehow makes me feel like I'm winning the battle.

Debbie Salazar, Washington

Let's hear it! Share your thoughts and comments about this issue's stories.

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- Like and comment on our page on [Facebook](#).
- Email editor@nmss.org.
- Or send mail to **Momentum** Editor, National MS Society, 900 S. Broadway, Suite 200, Denver, Colorado, 80209. Letters to the editor must include your name and a way for our staff to contact you. Letters should be no more than 100 words and may be edited.

A powerful diagnostic tool

While perusing my Winter 2018-19 issue of Momentum, I happened upon the article, "[A better look](#)," about Dr. Frederik Barkhof regarding MRIs.

I was 24 in 1980 when the neurologist I initially met with did a "spinal tap" and CT scan and gave me a cursory diagnosis of MS, saying I could look forward to being in a wheelchair and living a handicapped life in two to three years! I was beginning a new career as an accountant, newly wed, with a 6-year-old daughter. That evening, my new husband consoled me and said we would fight through this together. At the time I was living in Northern Colorado, 50 miles from Denver and the University of Colorado Medical Center. There were no support groups or websites or any new research known by "lay" people. I located a neurologist at the medical center who was working in immunology and the new diagnosis of

MS. At the time, MRI was a new entity. This physician believed in the MRI and had me take one. He said it would be a much better test for the diagnosis and so it was. It showed obvious scarring in the right brain. He also said to keep working and living my normal life. Don't change anything! In 1996, things in my life changed, with great periods of stress. My MS reared its ugly head and showed its true colors. I walk now with a walker and travel with a wheelchair. MRI is definitely a great diagnostic tool.

Colleen Richardson

Doing the right thing

The article on cognitive function in the Spring 2019 Momentum magazine ("[A closer look at cognition](#)") reassured me that I am doing the right thing. I was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS in 2003. I recently took an MS cognitive evaluation at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The test was administered by a neuropsychiatrist and was covered by Medicare. I am waiting for the results. One thing notable about this test was that it only took two and a half hours. Before the test, I was concerned about fatigue. I know if I am fatigued, my cognitive function goes down. It is one of my biggest sources of disability and can be very scary. This shortened version of testing took that into consideration. On a side note, I had to chuckle about the line in the article about rewashing clothes. I compensate for that problem by using liquid detergent and throwing the measuring cup in the washer with the laundry. Recently, I did laundry before bed and went to bed wondering if I had remembered the detergent. In the morning, I saw the cup in the washer and knew I had remembered. I felt good that I came up with this solution myself.

Nancy Wilson, New Jersey

Rooms not always accessible

Thank you for publishing the article, "[It's your community, too](#)" (Spring 2019). My husband's MS does not allow him to transfer, and when we travel I have a portable Hoyer lift. The problem is many hotel chains do not accommodate for under the bed clearance. The beds are usually on a platform base. It is frustrating because I call the individual hotel and ask to speak to a manager who is usually unavailable and the front desk does not know. On occasion you check in and the bed is on a platform and he ends up sleeping on a pull-out sofa bed, which is uncomfortable and not acceptable. Once we encountered that our reservation was booked over and our room was given to someone that did not even need an accessible room. It is a simple task and I don't understand why all the major chains cannot accommodate with at least a couple of rooms.

Colleen and John Petersen, Michigan

My personal marathon

I want to thank Dorothy R. Dickhaus for her comments about all the "success stories" written by this magazine ([@Momentum](#), "No more pie-in-the-sky-stories," Spring 2019). Stories should be told about people like myself who are in a wheelchair and battle every day just to

be able to get out of bed. That's my personal "marathon" that more people, both with or without MS, should be made aware of.

Ronald Baznik, Pennsylvania