



**National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society**

**Snappy Comebacks  
to “But You Look So  
Good!”**

# Presenters

## **Caitlin Anderson, Ph.D., CPCC**



- Certified Life and Creativity Coach, Founder of her Own Consultation Company
- Designs Workshops and Retreats; Coaches Newly Diagnosed

## **Michelle Clos, LPC, CEAP, ACC**



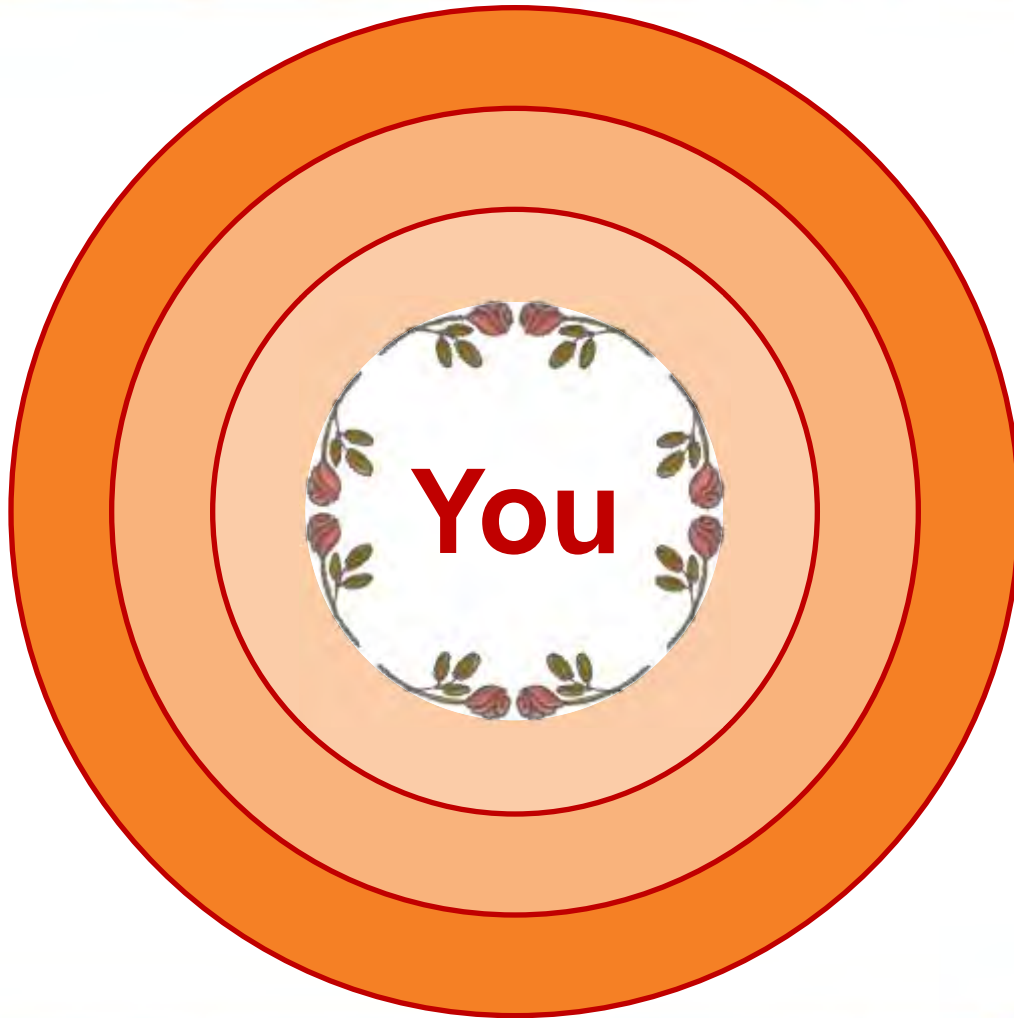
- Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Employee Assistance Professional, Management Consultant, Associate Certified Coach
- Career Coach for the South Central Region



# “But You Look So Good!”

- **Take a minute. Think about this comment.**
- **And YOUR answer?**
- **Did you come tonight expecting the “official” answer?**
- **What is the speaker’s underlying message?**
- **Intention?**

# “But You Look So Good” and Personal Relationships



- **YOU** and those you choose to be “inside the roses” with you
- **Family/close friends; children**
- **Neighbors/acquaintances**
- **Work/co-workers, professional level**
- **And beyond ...**

# “But You Look So Good” and Employment



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# MS and Employment

- **MS Does Not Automatically Equal Loss of Career**
- **The Society's Latest Survey Indicates 40% of People with MS are Employed After 20 years**
- **May Have an Opportunity to Educate Coworkers about MS**
- **Even if You Don't Work— You May Need to Respond to Questions or Misconceptions about MS**

# Common Invisible Symptoms that Affect Work

- **Fatigue**
- **Tingling/Numbness**
- **Cognitive Symptoms**
- **Vision Problems**
- **Bladder Problems**
- **Pain**
- **Heat Sensitivity**
- **Emotional Changes/Depression**



# Work Challenges Due to Hidden Symptoms

- **Adjustment to Disability**
- **Denial**
- **Stress**
- **Disclosure**





# Disclosure

- **Major Concern for Many People Living with MS**
- **Can Be a Stressful experience/decision, Especially with Invisible Symptoms**
- **Most Commonly Comes Up:**
  - When Newly Diagnosed
  - Symptoms Start to Interfere with Work
  - Looking for New Job
- **Reasons For Disclosure**
  - To Obtain an Accommodation
  - To Obtain Short-Term Leave
  - If Performance is Being Affected
- **No Easy Answer– Disclosure is a Personal Decision**



# Case Scenario

- **Jill works as a law clerk and has had MS for 5 years. She is doing well except for some fatigue. She noticed the fatigue was worse when she had to go back and forth to the file room and to climb the ladders in the file room. She spoke with her boss and they accommodated her by moving her cubicle closer to the file room and also allowing to request assistance from the file clerk when her fatigue was particularly challenging. Betty, another law clerk, noticed the accommodations and walks up to Jill and says “How do you rate? You have a file clerk running back and forth for you and you’re the closest one to the file room! I wish I could be treated special!”**
- **What Kind of Snappy Comeback Should Jill Use?**



# Case Scenario

- **Jim works in IT and has had MS for 10 years. He is starting to experience some fine motor issues that is making it harder for him to do his job. His boss Jeff has noticed that it is taking him longer to get his work done and is starting to comment on his job performance. Jim has not told Ron about his MS but is now concerned that he may be written up or lose his job due to his symptoms.**
- **What Should Jim Say to His Boss?**



# Case Scenario

- **Mandy uses as wheelchair due to weakness in her legs. She meets with a new client and the client starts to act strangely. She talks to Mandy louder and slower than she did on the phone and continuously stares at Mandy’s wheelchair. Mandy tries to ignore this and act normally in the meeting but eventually the client asks her “How come you’re in that chair? Did you have an accident or something?”**
- **What kind of Snappy Comeback should Mandy use?**



# What Does the South Central Region Have to Offer?

- **Career Coaching**
- **Assistance with Benefit Issues/Concerns**
- **Advocacy and Legal Assistance**
- **Education Regarding MS**
- **Adapted Recreation Programs**
- **Care Management**
- **Financial Assistance**



# Links and Resources- Employment

- **National MS Society: Disclosure Tool**
  - <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/DiscloseWork>
  - <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/living-with-multiple-sclerosis/employment/disclosure/resources/index.aspx>
- **National MS Society Employment Information**
  - <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/employment>
- **National MS Society**
  - 1-800-344-4867 or [www.nationalmssociety.org](http://www.nationalmssociety.org)
- **Job Accommodation Network**
  - 1-800-526-7234 or <http://askjan.org>
  - MS Specific- <http://askjan.org/media/mult.htm>
- **DBTAC**
  - 1-800-949-4232 or [www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org)
- **U.S. EEOC**
  - 1-800-669-4000 or [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)



# Homework!



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# Homework Action Plan

- **Designed to help hold ourselves accountable for goals we set!**
- **WHAT** you are going to do; **HOW MUCH**, **WHEN**, and **HOW MANY DAYS A WEEK?**
- **EXAMPLE:**
  - “By next call, I will **SWIM (WHAT)** at aquaerobics class, 40-50 minutes (**HOW MUCH**), Monday, Wednesday and Friday (**WHEN**), at least 7 (**HOW MANY**) times.”



# HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT YOU CAN COMPLETE THIS PLAN?

- On a scale of 0-10, with 0 being unconfident and 10 totally confident, rate yourself!
- Ideally, we'd like you to be confident at level 7!
- What can we suggest or how can we help you RAISE your confidence level?
- ACTION PLAN IDEAS:
  - Exercise
  - Compliance with medicines/prescriptions
  - Napping
  - Trying new responses to “But you look so good!”
- QUESTIONS? Email [nmssactionplans@gmail.com](mailto:nmssactionplans@gmail.com)

# Questions



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# Thank you!

- **Thank you so much for joining our call! To learn more about any of the resources we discussed today, please call 1-800-344-4867.**
- **You will get a follow-up email from us with a link to a survey to provide us with feedback, including an option to suggest future teleconference topics! YOUR feedback is important to us!**
- **Please watch our calendar, Facebook pages and E-Newsletters for information on future programs**

