

Can we help?

The National MS Society offers information, educational publications and videos, local referrals, and more. For more information on MS and the Society's services, please contact us at 1-800-344-4867 or visit nationalMSsociety.org.

The National MS Society's mission is for people affected by MS to live their best lives as we stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost and end MS forever. To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world, and provides programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward.

Information for Employers

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is proud to be a source of information on multiple sclerosis related topics. The information provided is based on professional advice, published experience, and expert opinion, but does not constitute medical or legal advice. For specific medical advice, consult a qualified physician. For specific legal advice, consult a qualified attorney.



CARLOS
DIAGNOSED IN 2001



**National
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Society**

nationalMSsociety.org

1-800-344-4867



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

KAREN
DIAGNOSED IN 2007



One of your employees has multiple sclerosis (MS). You may be wondering what this means to you and your staff.

MS is an unpredictable neurological disease that interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and the rest of the body.

- MS is most often diagnosed in adults 20–50 years of age—prime working years
- It is not contagious
- The symptoms of MS are unpredictable and vary from person to person
- Most people are able to manage their symptoms and remain productive

Managing MS symptoms

Symptoms can range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The severity and progression of MS symptoms for any one person cannot be predicted. Symptoms are often present for a period of time (relapse) and then go away (remission). Medical management is available for many MS symptoms; your employee will learn to compensate for others.

Many strategies can help control MS

With the use of FDA-approved disease-modifying therapies for MS, and evidence-based wellness and lifestyle changes, and other interventions, the outlook for continued long-term productivity and quality of life for people with MS is greatly improved.

Workplace accommodations

Accommodations for MS are rarely complex or expensive. As the “expert” on living with MS, your employee will research accommodations and offer proposals for your consideration. For example, you might be asked to provide a phone headset, schedule brief rest periods, offer a modified work schedule or install an electronic door opener. Accommodations are negotiated on a case-by-case basis and may not impose a major financial hardship on an employer.



A mutually acceptable accommodation will enable you to benefit from the productivity of a valuable employee.

- Because symptoms typically come and go, people with MS may not always use their accommodations.
- The types of accommodations needed may change over time.
- No two people with MS will necessarily need the same accommodations.
- Some people with MS will never need an accommodation.

Your employee will expect you to offer the same training and promotion opportunities as would have been given before you learned of the diagnosis.

Managing attitudes

Co-workers or supervisors may be fearful, overly helpful, or resentful of accommodations for a person’s MS. Sometimes, if symptoms are invisible or have remitted, others don’t believe the person has a real medical problem. MS-related fatigue is oftentimes one of the most misunderstood symptoms. People think they know what it is like to be tired, but MS fatigue is unique and can’t be overcome by “trying harder.” MS fatigue can often be managed with a brief rest period or alternative work schedule.