

FAQ's
Fall 2019 Support Group Leader Call

REALTALKMS

What is a podcast and how does it work?

A podcast is a series of spoken, audio episodes, often focused on a particular topic or theme. You can subscribe to the show with an app on your phone or through multiple online platforms. You can listen to episodes whenever you like on your phone, computer, tablet or smart speaker.

What is the difference between a podcast and YouTube?

A podcast only offers audio, while YouTube provides access to video as well.

How do I access the RealTalk MS podcast?

The podcast can be accessed through several platforms listed here. Each episode runs about 30 minutes and you can choose from over 100 episodes. You can also view the show notes – summaries and details about what is discussed on each podcast as well as suggest topics for future podcasts.

Realtalkms.com

Apple podcast

Google podcast

Spotify

Pandora

iHeartRadio

When is RealTalk MS broadcast?

The podcast is launched weekly on Tuesdays. You can access past episodes on realtalkms.com.

How can I contact Jon Strum, the host of RealTalk MS?

You can share your thoughts, feedback and ideas for future program topics with Jon at jon@realtalkms.com or (310) 526-2283.

Can I include the link to the podcast with my group and on our public social media page?

Yes, please share the link to the podcast, realtalkms.com, widely.

Is RealTalk MS funded by the Society?

The Society partners with Jon Strum, who hosts RealTalk MS. We promote each other's efforts by building awareness of resources and information available to the MS community.

Jon, can you tell us some ways you keep your energy up while caregiving?

Jon: "It's not always easy to do and it doesn't always work. You need to take care of the caregiver, yourself, so you can be there for your loved one."

The Society offers [A Guide for Support Partners](#) to help support partners navigate the challenges of caring for a loved one living with a chronic disease.

If I was going to share one podcast with my group, which one should I choose?

Jon: "One of my most recent favorites is the bonus episode from ECTRIMS with Bruce Bebo where we discussed his perspective on the highlights of the entire conference."

RealTalk MS offers a variety of topics such as interviews with authors, researchers, healthcare professionals, etc. Ask your group members what topics interest them and listen to a podcast together.

We broadcast our meetings through Facebook Live. Would doing a podcast be beneficial and how do you learn how to create podcasts?

Podcasts are not interactive, but it is a great way to archive your episode and have it available on-demand. There are several free resources online to teach you how to create a podcast.

EVERYDAY MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

How do I access the Everyday Matters program materials?

Program materials are located on the Society's [Connection Program Volunteers](#) main page. Scroll down to Group Meeting Discussion Guides and Toolkits to access the program orientation video, facilitator guide, discussion summary, and the participant workbook in English and Spanish. You can print the materials yourself or contact your staff partner to request the materials by mail.

Much of this information is available online. How do we make these resources available to members without computers?

Your staff partner can provide you with program resources such as printed materials and CD's with the program video's. Local libraries are also a great resource to access free internet and online resources.

Will more new programs and tool guides be available this year?

We are launching the new Everyday Matters program format this year, but you can access other on-demand programs, webinars and educational videos on the Society's [Connection Program Volunteers](#) main page.

There are some program topics that I don't have personal experience with but would like to present them to the group.

The facilitator guide provides guidance to help facilitate the discussion. You will have access to tools such as videos and worksheets, an overview of the principles, talking points, discussion questions and action steps.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

What are some examples of Marketplace plans in my local area?

You can connect with your local Marketplace Assistor at localhelp.healthcare.gov. Enter your zip code in the search box to find assistance where you live.

If group members have questions about their Medicare insurance plans, where should I send them?

Our [MS Navigators](#) can assist in reviewing Medicare insurance plans. MS Navigators can be reached by emailing contactusnmss.nmss.org or calling 1-800-344-4867, 7am-5pm MT Monday-Friday.

Can MS Navigators assist with Cobra or look at other insurance options?

Yes, [MS Navigators](#) are familiar with all types of insurance and can help weigh the pros and cons of insurance benefits.

GENERAL GROUP QUESTIONS

What is a staff partner?

Your staff partner is the Program Implementation and Engagement Manager in your area. They are here to support you, provide resources and answer questions.

How did I connect with my staff partner if I'm not sure who they are?

You can contact our Director of Program Development, Suhail Ruano, at suhail.ruano@nmss.org and she will connect you to your local staff partner.

How many other people are new Support Group Leaders?

This number varies as we train new leaders every month as our groups grow across the country.

How can we connect with other leaders?

You can reach out to your staff partner and they can connect you to other local leaders. We encourage you to continue to attend and engage in the quarterly support group leader calls to connect with your peers, share ideas and learn from each other.

Are promotional flyers available for individual groups?

Yes, we have promotional tools for individual groups. They will be attached to this calls follow-up email. You can also reach out to your staff partner to request these materials.

Where do you get inspiration for meeting discussions?

We encourage you to ask your group members what they are interested in. Then go to the [Connection Program Volunteers](#) main page to look at available [on-demand education videos](#), [webinars](#) and program toolkits.

I have group members who ask about assistance with home remodeling. Should I tell them to contact the Society?

Yes, our [MS Navigators](#) can assist in connecting group members to the information, resources and support they need. MS Navigators can be reached by emailing [contactusnmss.org](mailto:contactusnmss.nmss.org) or calling 1-800-344-4867, 7am-5pm MT Monday-Friday.

Will the transcript of this call be available?

The recording and slide deck from this call will be emailed to all support group leaders. You can reach out to your staff partner if you have questions.

What does a group co-leader do?

Co-leaders help support the group by partnering with the leader to facilitate discussions, encourage attendance and engagement and manage group promotion. Not all support groups have co-leaders, but they can be beneficial to share some of the responsibilities of managing a group.

How do you contact your group members about the monthly meetings?

This may vary based on the size of your group. You can call members a day or two before the meeting, send an email (some leaders include the group flyer) or you're your group members. Some groups have social media pages and post reminders virtually.

How do you keep members coming to meetings?

Each group is unique. Members may be motivated by different education topics or presentations. Some groups engage members in activities that are more social like a holiday gift exchange, potluck or group wellness class. Talk with your members to see what they like.

Do groups use guest speakers and is there a suggested list?

Yes, many groups bring in guest speakers to present on topics that are of interest to group members. Your staff partner may have a list of local community organizations that support the MS community and are available to present.

Does the Society have to vet guest speakers?

The Society asks that all group leaders use the following disclaimer when having a guest speaker (*insert disclaimer*). We ask that speakers not be pharmaceutical representatives or sales representatives from other companies to avoid bias information from being provided. If you are not sure if a guest speaker is suitable for the group, reach out to your staff partner for support.

Any program topic suggestions?

We encourage you to ask your group members what they are interested in. Then go to the [Connection Program Volunteers](#) main page to look at available [on-demand education videos](#), [webinars](#) and program toolkits.

There is interest in starting a support group for those who do not speak English as their first language (they speak Farsi). Who should I reach out too?

Contact your staff partner. They will work with you to learn about interest level and provide you with information about how to apply to start a new group.

Are translators available to provide services at group meetings?

Currently, we do not have official translators on staff to provide this service, however contact your staff partner to explore what resources might exist in your community.