



Health Awareness

Awareness Campaign Helps People Meet The Daily Challenges Of Living And Working With Multiple Sclerosis

(NAPSA)—Bradley is an active 48-year-old with a successful career in corporate franchise sales. But four years ago when doctors diagnosed him with multiple sclerosis (MS), a chronic, progressive disease, he was worried that his condition would affect his performance at work and that his employer and co-workers would lose confidence in his abilities.

“Working in sales, I often spend up to an hour on the phone at a time. When I was diagnosed, I was worried that I would have problems holding the phone or growing tired. I was concerned these things would affect my career growth.”

Many people like Bradley experience similar feelings when they are diagnosed with MS. In a survey of 100 Americans with MS, which looked at how the condition may impact people’s relationships, lifestyle and careers, 70 percent of people responding had at least one concern about how MS would affect their personal relationships. In addition, more than 60 percent said that having a chronic, progressive disease in the prime of their career makes them less confident and secure in their job.

To help educate people with MS, Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals launched a public awareness campaign called Mastering MS. The program offers tools and expert advice that can help people facing a chronic disease deal with its effects on their life at home and at work, including informative, free brochures available at www.MultipleSclerosis.com/MasteringMS.

Genelle, a young mother, juggles life with MS, school and her daily responsibilities, including caring for her family. Her partner



Experts say that seeking support through family and friends, health care professionals or career counselors is important in helping people cope with MS.

is her biggest source of support and she openly communicates with him about her MS. “The best way for me to help him understand how I’m feeling is to talk to him about it. He listens to me and my moods. I tell him when I’m tired and need to lie down, and then he will make dinner for our family or do the laundry. He is always there when I need him.”

Experts say that seeking support through family and friends, health care professionals or career counselors is important in helping people cope with MS. According to Michele Wahlder, a psychotherapist and life and career coach from Dallas, Texas, “An MS diagnosis typically creates anxiety. Support from loved ones can be an integral ingredient to help people with MS handle these feelings and make potential adjustments to better manage their daily lives. Example adjustments might include building confidence in having challenging conversations, planning in advance for social activities or asking for accommodations, like shift

changes or different software on the job, to make working easier.”

Small adjustments help Genelle continue to enjoy her favorite activities with her family. “We often go for hikes in our neighborhood, and my child loves to pick raspberries. If the walking becomes too much for me, my family goes ahead while I stop in a coffee shop. Later on, we meet along the trail.”

Bradley found the support he needed from an MS nurse. “After I was diagnosed, I talked to an MS nurse about how I was feeling physically and emotionally. She taught me to listen to my body and make adjustments to my workday, like taking periodic breaks when I feel fatigued.”

MS is a disease that affects the body’s central nervous system (brain, spinal cord, optic nerves). It is the most common central nervous system disease among young adults with approximately 400,000 people currently diagnosed in the United States. The symptoms of MS vary from person to person and can be unpredictable. Common symptoms include fatigue, blurred vision, weakness of one or more limb, numbness and tingling, stiffness, dizziness, slurred speech and loss of bladder control.

In most cases, MS progresses over time, but early diagnosis and treatment may help slow disease progression and manage symptoms.

For more information and to download free educational brochures, visit www.MultipleSclerosis.com/MasteringMS.

The survey was conducted by WorldOne Research, a global market research company, and was sponsored by Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals.