



# spotlight on health

## Relationship Matters: Learning To Live With MS



Couples can learn to get past the issue of MS to build a strong, thriving relationship.

(NAPSA)—Everyone deserves healthy relationships. That's why the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's Relationship Matters program helps people with MS and their partners learn how to work with this unwanted reality in their lives—before a crisis hits.

The program's goals are:

- Improving communication and problem solving;
- Having greater fulfillment in the relationship;
- Managing MS as a team;
- Helping the relationship thrive.

Relationship Matters gets dramatic results because it teaches techniques that are based on research but that are not commonly taught in school or at home, said Greg Thiel, a facilitator.

"Listening has been called one of the great time-savers. Five minutes of effective listening prevents five hours of fighting and 50 hours of being mad and distant from each other," he said.

Relationship Matters is a free program made possible by funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Classes are delivered online, in person and over the phone. Subjects include:

• **Eight Hours to a Lifetime of Relationship Satisfaction.** This fun and interactive class helps people enhance communica-

tion and problem-solving skills, helping them tackle even the most difficult issues.

• **Adapting: Financial Planning for a Life with MS Together.** MS can be an expensive disease. Couples learn to plan for their financial future together through classes in budgeting, debt management and building savings.

• **Intimacy: Enriching Your Relationship.** Not knowing how to talk about the tough issues can get in the way of true intimacy. This class teaches creative ways to address and overcome these issues.

• **Staying Connected: Having Fun Together.** MS can interfere with the things couples enjoy doing together. Fun can still be had—in new and adaptive ways.

• **Career Choices: Managing Your Options Together.** Employment issues cause concern in any relationship. MS can exacerbate those worries. This class teaches how to manage potential employment issues as a couple.

The National MS Society addresses the challenges of each person affected by MS by funding cutting-edge research, driving change through advocacy, facilitating professional education, collaborating with MS organizations around the world and providing programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward.