



Background:

Depression and anxiety are highly prevalent comorbidities in MS associated with the disease process itself and the psychosocial impact of the disease. Studies have reported that the rate of depression in MS can be as high as 50% and anxiety as high as 35%.

These symptoms have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The National MS Society identified the need for mental health care providers to be educated on MS/chronic illness and to provide a virtual network of support for these providers. Thus, the web-based calls “Clinical Discussions for Mental Health Professionals” was formed.

Objective:

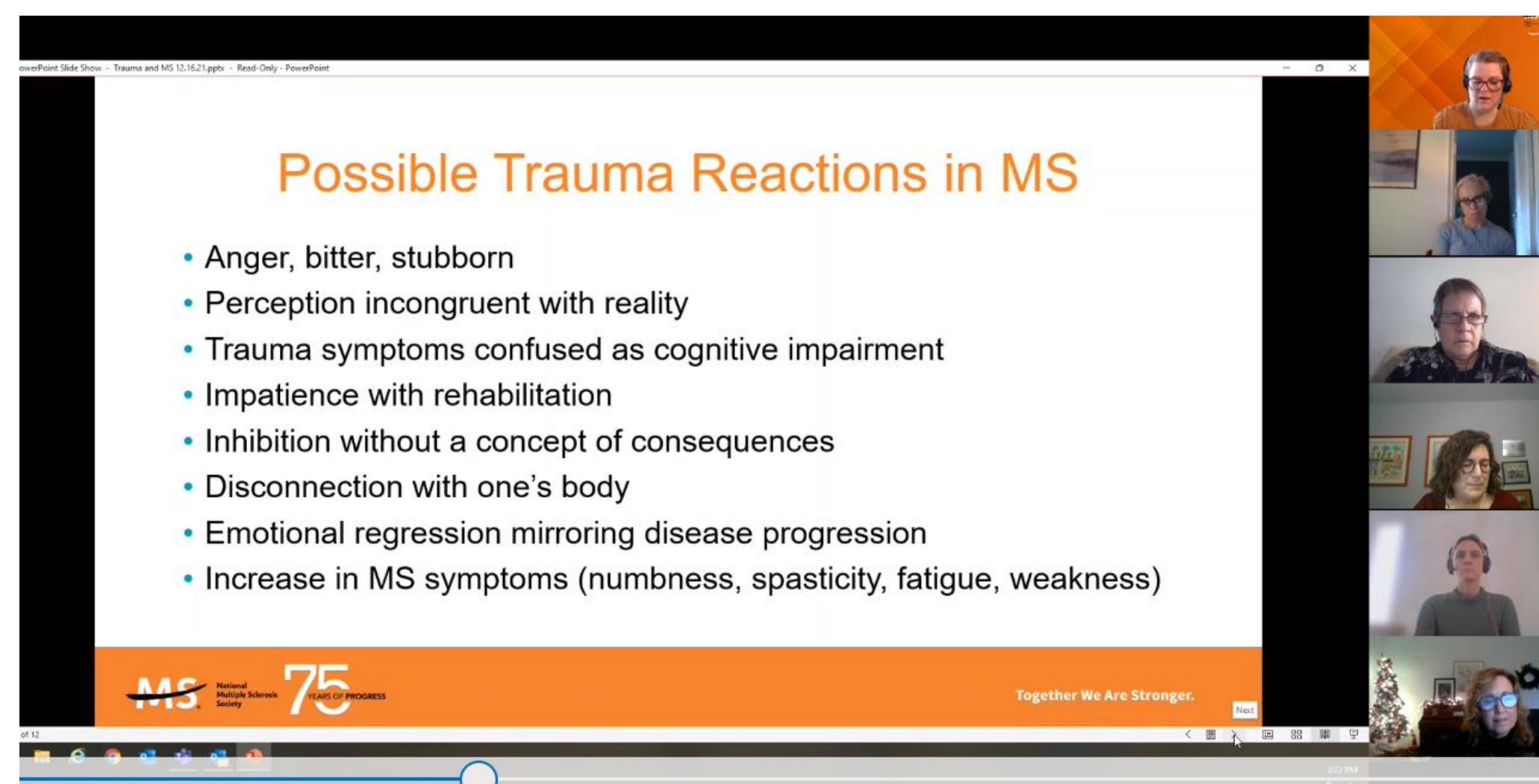
The “Clinical Discussions for Mental Health Professionals” are designed to provide opportunity for education, resources, engagement, and networking to enhance the knowledge, skillset, and efficacy of mental health practitioners working with individuals and families living with MS across the country. The target audience are those from the mental health field across the spectrum of experience in providing care to people with MS.

Methods:

A Mental Health Provider Steering Committee was formed consisting of professionals across the US within different mental health disciplines and settings to provide expert guidance, ensure quality outputs, and to participate in the webinars. This committee meets quarterly to determine webinar discussion topics and leaders for the upcoming quarter based on relevant research, world events and participant feedback.

These bi-monthly webinars are advertised to mental health providers and listed on the Society web page. The webinars engage participants in didactic learning and discussion. Following the webinar, a post-discussion survey is sent to participants.

Topics:

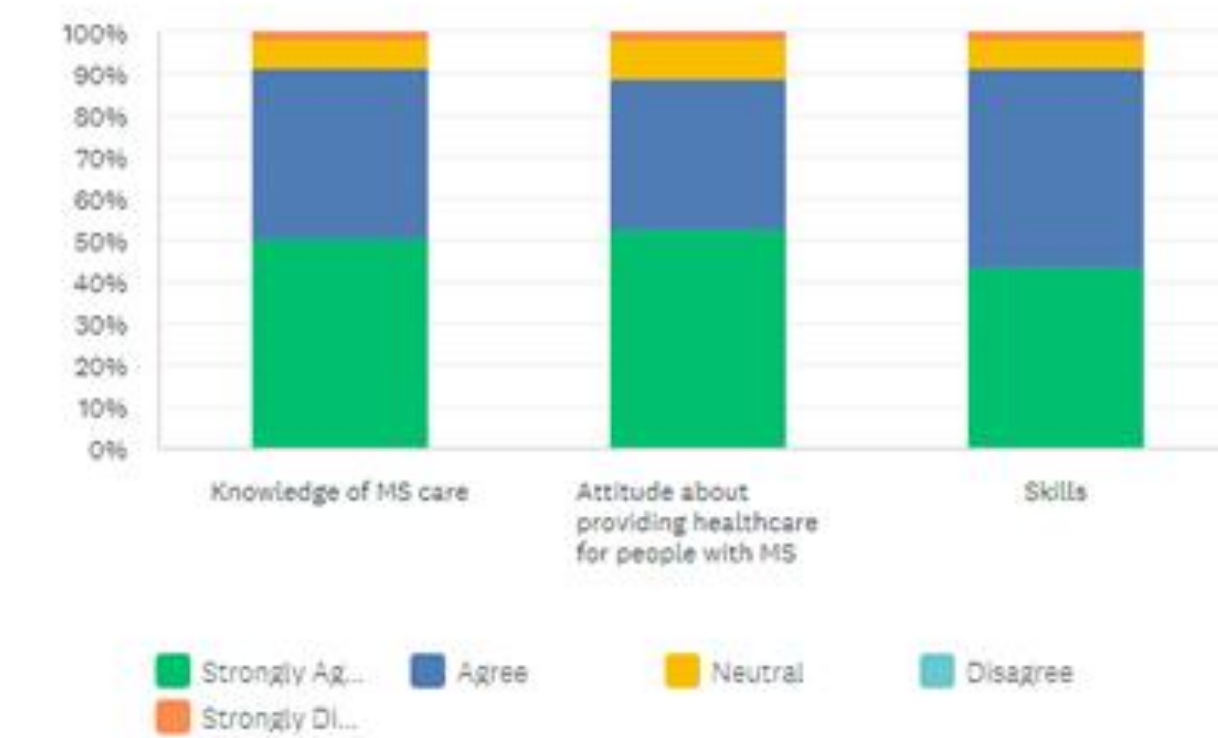


Results:

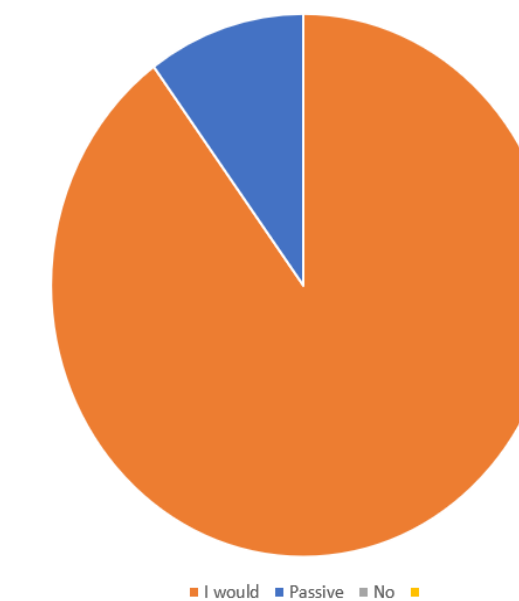
There were a total of 226 participants in the bi-monthly discussions (April 2020 – December 2021). Out of 73 responses to the webinar evaluations, 91% indicated they planned to change their practice or behavior in some way because of participation in the webinar, 80% stated they found the quality, design, and education of the materials useful to their practice, and 50% strongly agreed that their knowledge of MS care improved. In addition, 89% would recommend the MS Society to a friend or colleague.

This activity improved my:

Answered: 73 Skipped: 0



How likely are you to recommend the National MS Society to a colleague or friend?



Conclusion:

The “Clinical Discussions for Mental Health Professionals” web-based calls are an effective tool to advance education and community amongst mental health professionals providing care to people/families with MS and the Society.