

MS Ireland and Novartis launch video series to support the wellbeing of those living with multiple sclerosis (MS) during Covid-19 pandemic

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MS Ireland and Novartis have launched a new video series developed to help those living with MS in Ireland better manage their mental health during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The launch coincided with World Brain Day 2020, an international awareness day, that this year, aims to promote understanding of the impact COVID-19 has on people with neurological conditions.

The video series, which has been created in partnership with Professor Cesar Jayaro, Department of Psychology at Saint Louis University, Madrid Campus, aims to provide those living with MS with coping techniques to help them navigate these uncertain times. The eleven-part video series covers three topics; relaxation, anxiety management and positive psychological wellbeing. The videos have been created based on scientifically supported techniques and are used to deal with a variety of situations that a person living with MS may face and that have been compounded by the pandemic.

Ava Battles, Chief Executive of MS Ireland said, "Like many people living with chronic illnesses, those with MS have been encouraged to cocoon over the last few months. We are aware of the impact this can have on mental wellbeing, and even as restrictions ease it can bring a new sense of anxiety and worry. The series that we have developed with Professor Jayaro provides some useful tools and techniques that people with MS can use to help them manage their psychological wellbeing both now and into the future."

"We feel it is apt that we launch this series on World Brain Day as we take the opportunity to acknowledge the challenges our community has faced over the past few months, navigating the pandemic while managing a neurological condition. We would also like to recognise the tireless work being undertaken by charities and support services across the nation as they aim to continue to provide peace of mind to their service users throughout the toughest of conditions."

Christine Murphy, Spokesperson for MS Ireland "The online resources provided by the MS Society during the recent lockdown have been fantastic. Our weekly exercise class was moved online and I participated on a 'Reflective Writing' class also run by the MS society. I was able to keep physically and mentally active during the strange and stressful time of social isolation. The MS-Wellness section on the site is especially invaluable for managing anxiety as we tentatively emerge from 'cocooning'. The talks given by a neuropsychologist contain very practical exercises for people with MS in dealing with anxiety around COVID-19. This is an excellent resource to have at our disposal to keep mentally healthy."

Audrey Derveloy, Managing Director, Novartis Ireland said, "The last few months have been challenging, particularly for people living with chronic illnesses like MS. We hope that these videos can be a source of support for those living with MS and that they may learn some new techniques to cope with any uncertainties that might come their way."

For more information, and to view the videos, visit:

- <https://www.ms-society.ie/ms-wellness-mental-health>
- <https://www.ms-society.ie/ms-wellness-relaxation>

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List of links present in page

1. <https://prod1.novartis.com/ie-en/ie-en/stories/ms-ireland-and-novartis-launch-video-series-support-wellbeing-those-living-multiple-sclerosis-ms-during-covid-19-pandemic>
2. <https://prod1.novartis.com/ie-en/taxonomy/term/61>
3. <https://www.ms-society.ie/ms-wellness-mental-health>
4. <https://www.ms-society.ie/ms-wellness-relaxation>