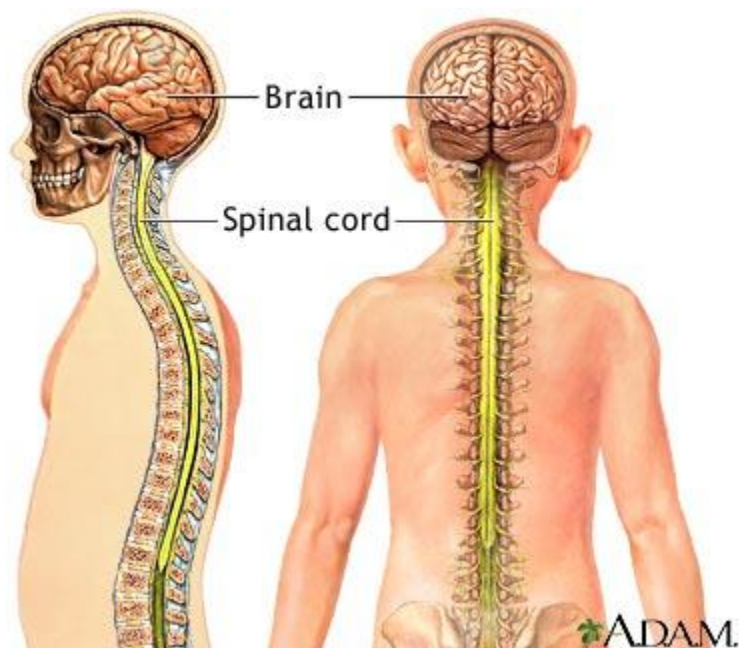


# MS and the issues that affect Employment





Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic inflammatory disease of the central nervous system. (brain, spinal cord & optic nerves)

- MS is more predominant in women
- Most people are in their 20s and 30s when first diagnosed
- There may be 20,000+ Australians with MS

- MSA in Victoria delivers a Disability Employment Services, Employment Support Service (ESS)
- 207 Employment Support Services providers nationally
- Delivering services from 1,141 sites throughout all states and territories
- Overwhelming majority are generic service providers
- MS ESS (Vic) is the only contractually defined specialist service provider for people with MS in Australia

- MS employment client demographics in comparison to overall DES-ESS participants
- MS Symptoms which can cause issues & affect employment
- Impact of MS symptoms on every day life
- MS employment service delivery
- Identifying the issues & affect on employment
- Some common MS symptoms which affect employment
- Managing symptoms & affect in relation to employment
- Brief summary
- Questions

# MS employment client demographics in comparison to overall DES-ESS participants



<b>Age</b>	<b>Employment Support Services</b>	<b>MS ESS</b>
Under 21	14.74%	0.00%
21 - 24	10.52%	0.84%
25 - 34	19.62%	12.61%
35 - 44	20.16%	39.50%
45 - 49	10.95%	18.49%
50 - 54	10.38%	20.17%
55 - 64	13.45%	7.56%
65 and over	0.18%	0.84%

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Employment Support Services</b>	<b>MS ESS</b>
Male	60.17%	32.50%
Female	39.83%	67.50%

# MS employment client demographics in comparison to overall DES-ESS participants cont.....



Quality of Employment	Employment Support Services	MS ESS
Percentage of participants currently working	30.96%	70.37%
Average Hourly Rate of Pay	\$15.80	\$30.60
Average Weekly Hours Worked	14	30.68
Average Weekly Income	\$221.20	\$938.64
Average Yearly Income	\$11,502.40	\$48,809.09

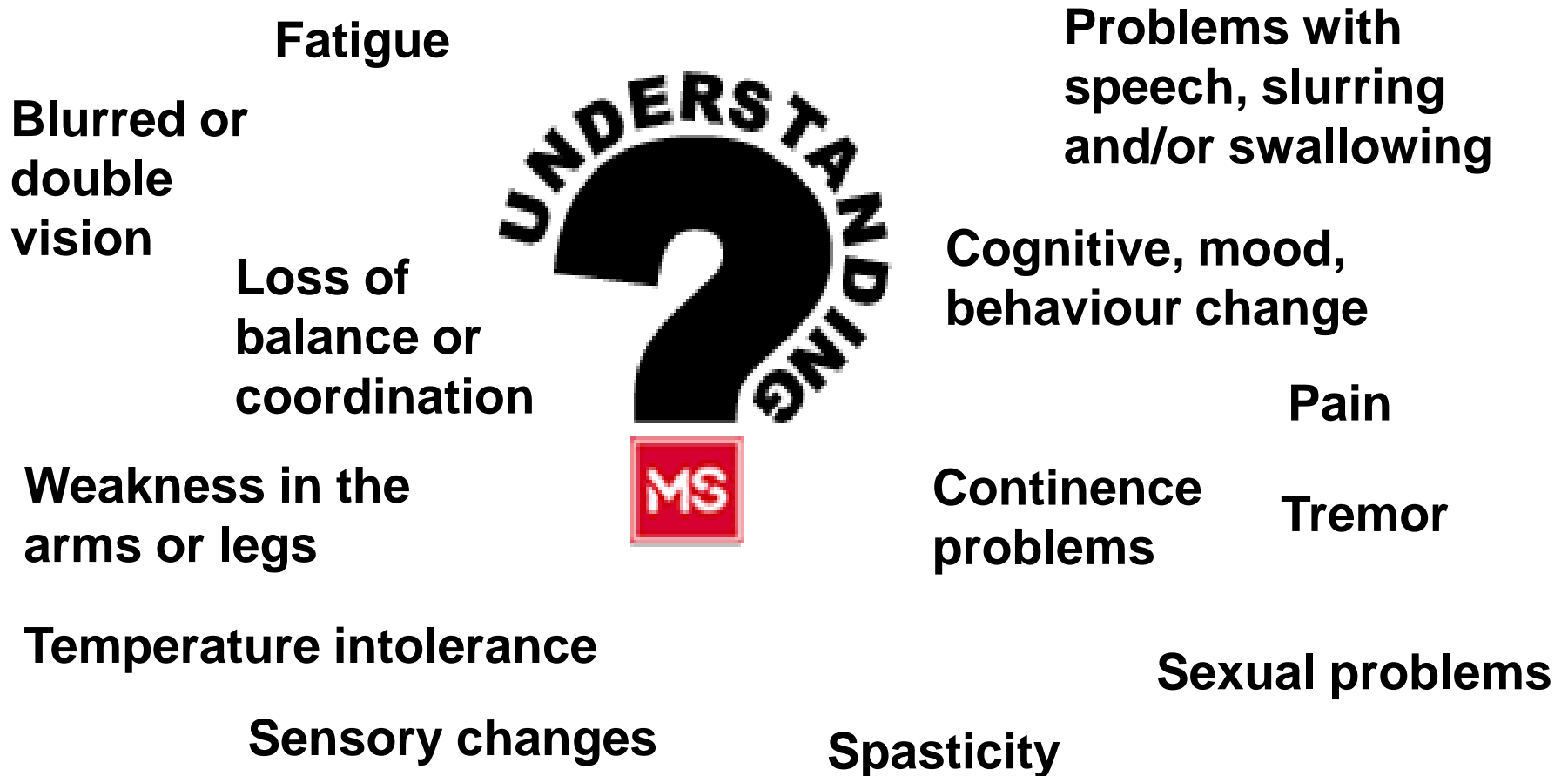
Centrelink Allowance Type	Employment Support Services	MS ESS
Newstart Allowance/Youth Allowance	42.84%	2.48%
Disability Support Pension	38.10%	32.23%
Parenting Payment Partnered/Single	3.38%	1.65%
Other Pension or Allowance	0.86%	0.83%
Non-Allowee	14.82%	62.81%

#### All data from

DEN Health Check Report - Capped July to February 2010

Disability Employment Services Report - Data as at 30 - April - 2011

MS ESS as at 24 May 2011



# Impact of MS symptoms on every day life



Impact varies from minimal to extreme in the context of individual circumstances

Can affect:

- Physical independence and self-care
- Driving ability
- Social functioning and leisure activities
- Decision-making
- Relationships and intimacy
- Mood & emotion
- Employment

- Has evolved driven by the needs of individuals seeking assistance with work related issues.
- Based on informed self management principles by being: person centred, holistic, accurate, timely & appropriate.
- Informed self management is the active participation by people in managing their condition and related issues.
- This includes the emotional impact of living with the condition & the changes to daily life that are a consequence of the condition and how these changes impact on employment.

## Initial needs and vocational assessment & Workplace assessments

- Detailed report
- Recommendations / Actions
- Reviews
- Ongoing support
- Transition from employment

# Some common MS symptoms which impact employment



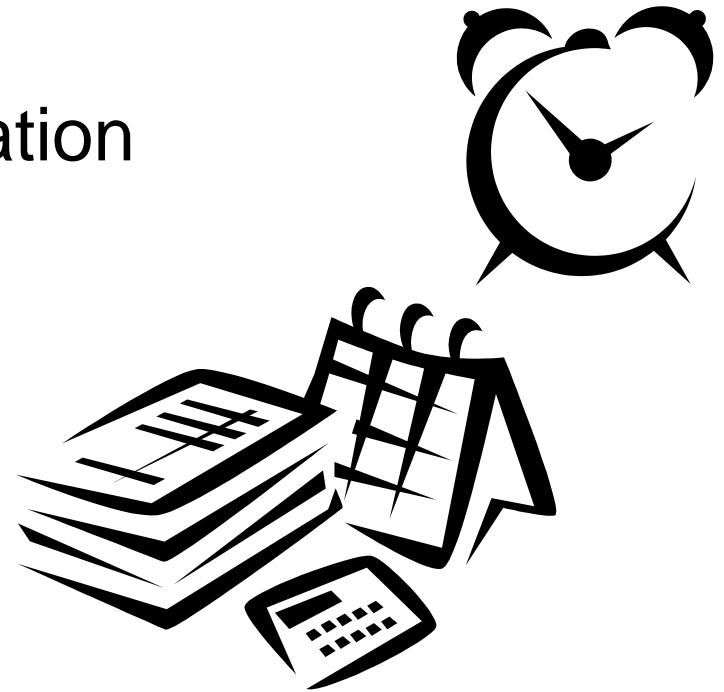
- Fatigue
- Cognitive function including Memory
- Mobility
- Visual Disturbance
- Contenance Issues
- Heat Sensitivity

- Most common symptom (Polman, et al, 2001)
- Among the most disabling symptoms (Polman, et al, 2001)
- **Most common reason people leave employment (Kinkel, 2000)**
- Overwhelming sense of tiredness
- Different for each person
- Cause of fatigue in MS is complex.

- Lassitude Fatigue
- Neuromuscular Fatigue
- Normal every day Fatigue



- Pacing & Regular Breaks
- Planning & Organisation
- Practicing Energy Conservation
- Keeping Active
- Sleeping Well at night



## Additional Support:

- MS Australia
- Local Health Agencies

- Plan & Prioritise
- Organisational Strategies
  - Keep a Diary
  - Write lists / messages
- Limit Distractions
- Cognitive Assessment
  - Help identify your strength & weaknesses
  - Provides strategies to manage any changes



## Additional Support

- MS Australia
- Employer

- Strengthening / Stretching – Keep Active
- Changes to Environment
- Physiotherapy Assessment
- Mobility Aids
- Rehabilitation
  
- Additional Support
  - MS Australia
  - Local Health Agencies



# Managing Changes to Vision at Work

- Adjust the environment  
i.e. glare, computer screen, lighting
- Ophthalmologist Assessment
- Additional Support
  - MS Australia
  - OH&S Rep
  - Vision Australia
  - ComTech

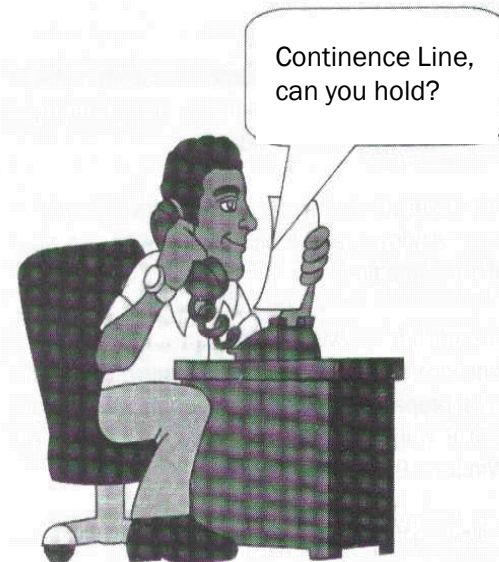


- Limit Caffeine Intake
- Drink approx. 2 litres daily
- Healthy Diet – high in fibre
- Consider environment e.g. distance to toilet
- Continence assessment



## Additional Support

- MS Australia
- GP
- Continence Clinic



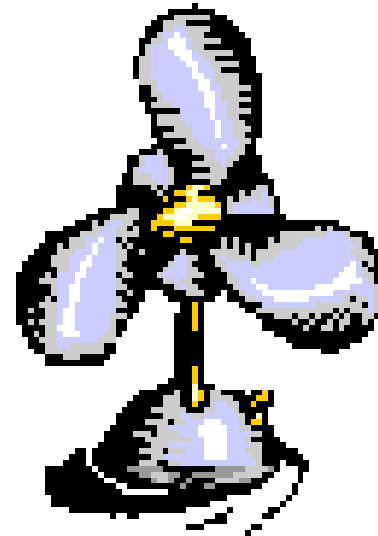
- Temperature related failure of demyelinated nerve fibres to conduct messages
  - Hot weather
  - Hot shower
  - Infection
  - Exercise
- May cause a temporary worsening of symptoms
- Also known as temperature intolerance



- Cool Drinks
- Air Conditioning
- Cooling Vests
- Shaded Car Park

## Additional Support

- MS Australia



People with MS in the workforce face challenging issues

Overcoming issues requires knowledge of MS and understanding

- by the individual
- medical and health professionals
- family, friends, colleagues
- service providers
- employer

Individuals need to make informed decisions