



Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Northern Ireland

# Foyle Branch FOCUS

Member Support & Services



Spring/Summer 2008

## MS TACTICS PROGRAMME 2008

The MS TACTICS project is a partnership between The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland and the Multiple Sclerosis Society in Northern Ireland. The project is funded by Co-operation Ireland under the EU programme for Peace and Reconciliation. The project provides opportunities throughout the border counties of Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo for people living with MS, their families, friends and carers to share their experiences with others and to attend informative workshops.

All project events are cross border and cross community and we are currently hosting residential events during the months of May and June for people with MS and the carers of people with MS.

If you wish to reserve your place (places are limited) on our residential events please contact Pamela Byrne in MS Ireland Letterkenny 0749137879 or Terry McNamee MS Foyle, Derry 028 71360831

### MS TACTICS Programme of Events

**'Newly Diagnosed Event'** Mon. 5th - Wed. 7th May. Venue: Ramada Hotel, Leitrim.

**'Mens Group Event'** - Mon. 12th - Wed. 14th May. Venue: Manor House Resort Hotel, Fermanagh.

**'Couples Event'** - Fri. 30th - Sun. 1st June. Venue: Beech Hill Hotel, Derry.

### MS Couples Weekend March 2008

Six couples from the Foyle branch spent an enjoyable weekend in the Clarion Hotel in Sligo. Organised by the Tactics Cross-Border project, it brought together nine people with MS and their partners. The 3 days away gave everyone a chance to relax and unwind from the everyday pressures of living with MS. The hotel was excellent and catered for everyone's needs. It's one for the books

for those looking for accessible accommodation.

We all came home rested and appreciated the great work of those who organised the break. .



*Pauline Ferry, Linda Rosborough and Dr. Mervyn Brown attending the recent Tactics couples event in Sligo.*

Nelson McGonagle (pictured right) has kindly included the MS Foyle Branch as one of three charities to benefit from his charity day at Roe Park Golf Club this year. MacMillan Cancer and Cancer NI along with



MS Society Foyle will benefit and we are asking our members to please help with selling raffle tickets. Nelson puts a massive effort into organising a golf day, a dinner, auction and a raffle. If you would like to help please contact Terry on 71360831.

*Nelson McGonagle promotes the activities of MS Society Foyle Branch*

## BRANCH SERVICES

The Foyle Branch of the MS Society delivers a range of services providing help and support to people living with and affected by MS, whilst funding research for hope in the future. Information and advice is available Monday to Friday from the Foyle Branch office, 58 Strand Road - Tel 7136 0831.

The MS Society Foyle Branch provide a range of services including: Counselling, Physiotherapy exercise sessions, Yoga, Tai Chi/Qi Gong, Tuesday Club, Thursday Support Group, Accessible Transport, Library, Local and National Magazines.

**For information on any of our services please telephone the MS Society Foyle Branch office on 7136 0831, e-mail: [msfoyle@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:msfoyle@tiscali.co.uk) or visit our website at [www.msfoyle.org.uk](http://www.msfoyle.org.uk)**



*Dr Joe McEvoy was guest speaker at the Thursday support group in April 2008 when he gave a very informative talk and answered questions on the role of the GP.*

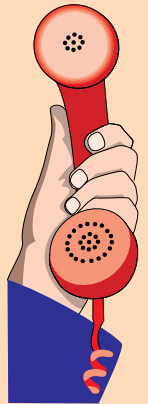
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## MS Foyle Branch QUIZ NIGHT 2008

A Quiz will be held on Thursday  
15th May  
in the Tower Hotel, Derry  
Starting at 7.30pm  
*Everyone Welcome*

## Who's Who

Development Officer: Terry McNamee  
**Tel: (028) 7136 0831**  
Welfare: Moira Leitch  
**Tel: (028) 7126 7400**  
Chairperson: Peter Eakin  
**Tel: (028) 7133 8641**  
Vice-Chair: Michael Heverin  
**Tel: (028) 7126 1118**  
Secretary: Marie McGinn  
**Tel: (028) 7186 0152**  
Treasurer: Damien McKenna  
**Tel: (028) 7136 3921**  
**(MS Society Charity No: 207 495)**



## Can a Caregiver Be Too Helpful?

I took my youngest daughter to her softball practice yesterday evening. She played hard. She bats well, throws hard and loves to run. She wore herself out. As we were walking up the hill from the field she stopped, turned, and pointed to her bat bag she had left behind the backstop. She asked, "Daddy, will you go get my bag?" I stopped and replied, "No, Sweetie. You're the one playing ball, you get your bag. I'll wait for you." Then, when we got to the truck, she took off her very muddy shoes and dropped them on the parking lot. "I'm too tired to pick them up and put them in the back of the truck," she complained when she saw the question on my face.

"Toughen up, Girl," I replied, "you can do it."

"Anyone who is tough enough to get them muddy, is tough enough to pick up shoes and put them in the back of the truck." She returned to her shoes, picked them up and tossed them over the tail gate into the back of the truck.

I want my daughters to be independent, tough and responsible for their world. When they start something, I expect them to finish it. Even when it takes longer because they're tired. I've thought about last night's exit from the ball field today. I treat my healthy daughters very differently than I treat my wife who has Multiple Sclerosis. If my wife were playing softball, I'd carry her bat bag for her and I'd pick up her shoes for her. She wouldn't even need to ask! But, why? She's a

tough lady. And I want my wife to be just as strong and independent as my daughters. I like to think it's partly because I'm a southern gentleman reared to hold doors and umbrellas; taught to walk by the curb on sidewalks, eager to carry packages for ladies, with a strong desire to treat all females with respect. Mostly, though, I treat my wife differently because I want to make her life easier. MS isn't easy to live with. If a person lives with MS, they're obviously "tough". Multiple Sclerosis is a heavy burden. So, if I can ease my wife's fatigue by carrying something for her, I'll do it gladly. If cleaning the kitchen gives her more "leg hours" to enjoy for herself, I clean the kitchen and wash the dishes.

The list of things I'll do for my wife without being asked is very long compared to what I'll do for my daughters. They have the strength to do it for themselves. "Don't be a quitter. Be a go-getter!" I tell them. To my wife I ask, "can I help you with that?"

Sometimes I wonder, though. How do I know I'm drawing the line in the right place. What if I'm being "too" helpful? What if by making life a little easier for her, I'm actually preventing her from being as tough as she really is? What if being helpful so often really isn't helpful?

Would she walk further? Could she carry more groceries? I think she would and could. Would it be good for her? I don't know. I do know she would be much more fatigued and stressed. Would that be good? No. And I know if one of my daughters had MS such that she were so easily fatigued, I wouldn't make her carry her bat bag if she had worn herself out playing ball. I'd carry it for her.

As a caregiver, if you wonder when or whether your caregiving might be "too" caregiving, there's a simple way to find out. Ask the person for whom you care if you're doing too much. And remember, what you're needed for today may not be what you're needed for tomorrow. The symptoms caused by Multiple Sclerosis vary over time. You may need to do the grocery shopping for several months in a row and then be surprised when you're told, "I'll do the shopping today."

When that happens, let your loved one do it. Grab a cup of coffee and a good book. Enjoy the moment!

*Caregiver Tip: Talk with the person for whom you care about what help is needed and remember that the need will change over time.*



"Before I joined my local MS Society yoga class, the thought of walking my sons to school felt like climbing Everest"

Naomi, 59, Belfast

MS may change the way I do things, but it isn't going to stop me being a wife and mum. Exercise classes through my local MS Society branch are a great help and I've made a lot of great friends.

There's a whole range of emotional and practical support available from the MS Society, and we're always looking out for volunteers. Call the MS Society Helpline on 0800 800 8000 or visit [www.msociety.org.uk](http://www.msociety.org.uk)

**MS**  
Multiple Sclerosis Society

MS Society. Pulling the pieces together.

Naomi O'Loughlin, Foyle branch member from Limavady with her two sons, Kieran and Ryan who all feature in the new MS advertising campaign.

## Counselling Service Available

MS Society Foyle is happy to announce that they are offering a counselling service to their members.

The service has been set up to help those who have been diagnosed with MS, their carers and family members affected by the diagnosis. The counselling service complies with best practice as described in the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACAP)

### **What is counselling?**

The overall aim of counselling is to enable people to work towards living their lives in a more positive and satisfying way. It is a form of helping based upon 'Listening'. People may be emotionally troubled due to current life circumstances or life events and often suffer from stress, anxiety or depression as a result and may be concerned with:

- Addressing specific problems

- Coping with a crisis and change
- Working through difficult feelings
- Improving relationships with others.

Counselling provides people with an opportunity to explore their life issues in regular sessions within a confidential and safe setting with someone who is trained to help. The counsellor will aim to relate to the person in a supportive and respectful manner, accepting them as they are, listening to and helping them move forward. Counsellors do not offer advice but aim to provide the client with an opportunity to:

- explore and understand issues which are impacting negatively on your life,
- develop greater self-awareness and understanding of your relationships and help you develop more effective coping strategies and life skills
- help you work towards living in a more satisfying and resourceful way

### ***The Counsellor/Client Commitment***

The counsellor will meet the client weekly and the sessions will last for fifty minutes. The counsellor must attend supervision for ongoing professional development together with personal development programmes. The counsellor will not contact clients outside of the allocated space and time.

There are certain conditions that must be met by the client before the counselling session can continue. These are: The client must be free from the influence of alcohol or mind-altering drugs, otherwise counselling will not take place. At least one days notice is required if either party has to cancel.

Your use of counselling remains confidential to the service within the limits agreed with your counsellor.

Your first full appointment will be an assessment session. This session will help us to decide together whether counselling is appropriate for you. If counselling is appropriate, you will be offered a further five sessions. It may be possible to extend this offer if, together we reach that decision.

### ***Supervision***

Supervision is important for a number of reasons, to ensure that the counsellor is compliant with BACAP and IACAP guidelines. It is an opportunity to further personal and professional development and communicate any key issues

that are emerging together with any difficulty the counsellor may be experiencing themselves. Supervision is for the benefit of the client and counsellor to ensure safe practice.

### ***Making an Appointment***

Please ring Terry McNamee at the Foyle Branch office on (028) 71-360-831. Should no one be available to take your call, messages will be responded to as soon as possible.

### ***Waiting Time:***

Three to six weeks

### ***Commitment:***

It is beneficial and in the clients best interest to commit to attend weekly for the progression of the counselling work.

### ***Cancellation and late arrival at Sessions***

If a client arrives late for a session then the session will still have to end at the appointed time. If a client does not show for the session then the counsellor is only obliged to wait for 30 minutes. NB: It is very important to give at least 24 hours notice of cancellation. As this space and time is reserved for you it is very important to inform the counsellor or Terry if you no longer require the service. We will be in a position to offer the place to the next person on the waiting list.

### ***Counsellor Profile:***

#### ***Madeline Callaghan***

I have worked with the M.S. Society for ten years as a Yoga teacher and facilitator in Holistic Health Programmes.

A listening ear service was established as the result of the expressed needs of people attending these courses. The service was of great benefit to all who availed of it and now I am delighted to offer a counselling service.

I am a qualified Yoga teacher with a Certificate in Remedial Yoga. I have BSc (Hons) degree in Psychology, Certificates in Counselling Skills and Studies Level 2 and 3 Certificate in Cancer Counselling with MacMillan Cancer Support and I am currently studying for a Diploma in Counselling. My primary approach is the person-centred approach (Carl Rogers). However I employ an integrative approach drawing from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Beck), Gestalt and the Eagan models of counselling, if and when it is useful.

