

# Black Community TAKE CHARGE®

Provide an immersive and holistic learning experience for Black people with multiple sclerosis (MS) and their care partners from people on similar MS journeys

## Why It Matters

Recent evidence indicates MS incidence may be highest in Blacks, particularly Black women. Black people with MS are more likely to experience significant disability, disproportionate co-morbid conditions, and greater healthcare inequities.

Factors that delay diagnosis and comprehensive MS management for Black people include inadequate access to care, health literacy challenges, socioeconomic status, lack of education, and biases amongst healthcare providers. Limited access to comprehensive MS care forces many people in underserved communities to neglect critical aspects of their wellness. The Black MS community needs health and wellness solutions that focus on education, connection, and activation.

## Solution

Black Community TAKE CHARGE is a 1¼ day live virtual group coaching program for Black MS patients and their care partners. Participants learn about setting personal health, wellness, and MS-related goals and establish a personalized plan for achieving their goals. The program is facilitated by Black healthcare professionals from multiple clinical and wellness disciplines, Can Do MS coaches, and a patient advocate from the We Are Ill organization. In a small setting, participants and coaches share the intersecting experiences of being a Black MS patient in the Black community.

### Program objectives include:

1. Expanding understanding of MS management, wellness principles, and SMART goals
2. Strengthening resilience, adaptability, and self-efficacy
3. Developing supportive connections by learning and sharing with others

## Key Learnings

- A key element of these programs is the recognition that Black people affected by MS have unique knowledge, wisdom, and valuable experiences to share with one another.
- Ask for feedback from participants. People in the Black community have valuable ideas for improving both access to care and the overall healthcare system experience.
- Checking in with participants to assess how we can continue to meet their learning needs, provide additional connection opportunities, and encourage activation to navigate the challenges of MS.



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## Impact

Following participation in the TAKE CHARGE program, participants report improvement compared to pre-program baselines:

- ↑14% Dealing more confidently with the frustrations of MS
- ↑18% Dealing with the uncertainty of MS
- ↑18% Controlling fatigue
- ↑13% Preparedness to implement realistic goals
- ↑10% Awareness of trusted resources
- ↑16% Feeling more connected to others

Survey results and a post-program focus group drove the decision to continue the TAKE CHARGE program in 2023 and create additional connection opportunities for Black people with MS.

