

## 2023 REAL TALK MS Excerpt with Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD What is Cognitive Rehabilitation?

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- JON STRUM: 00:04      What is cognitive rehabilitation and how might that help someone with M.S.?
- NANCY  
CHIARAVALLOTI: 00:05      So cognitive rehabilitation is a term that refers to a set of intervention events. It's not only one treatment, it's a set of different interventions, but they all aim to improve a person's ability to perform cognitive tasks by retraining, previously learned skills or teaching compensatory strategies. So cognitive rehabilitation does not involve medications. It's usually done with a therapist, either one on one or in a small group.
- STRUM: 00:34      Cognitive rehabilitation includes restorative activities and compensatory activities. Can you help us understand the difference between the two and maybe share some examples?
- CHIARAVALLOTI: 00:46      Sure. Restorative cognitive rehabilitation seeks to improve cognitive functioning by strengthening the functions a person has lost or continues to find challenge. So restorative cognitive rehabilitation helps a person practice skills so that they can improve. And that builds upon the idea of neuroplasticity, which is the belief that the brain can change with practice. So restorative cognitive rehabilitation really refers to repetitive practice, compensate.
- CHIARAVALLOTI: 01:19      Auditory cognitive rehabilitation is a little bit different in that it helps a person develop new ways to do something. Compensatory cognitive rehabilitation can involve internal or external strategies. We all use external strategies. An example of that is using your iPhone to store your calendar and your to do lists and your phone numbers. Everything goes in my phone so that I don't forget things.
- CHIARAVALLOTI: 01:45      That's an external strategy that we all use internal strategies. A lot of people also use and these are strategies where you do something, you process information, a little bit differently to help you remember it. So as an example, you might use imagery to help you remember a person's name when you first meet them. Or you might use imagery to help you remember a number.
- CHIARAVALLOTI: 02:13      Like, one of the things that I do is I'll visualize an old fashioned telephone and where the numbers are on the face of the phone, and I'll use that to help me remember numbers.