MS INFO CHANNEL

Guide · Checklists · Evidence · Status 11/2026

# Mind and Mood with MS

Understanding low mood, anxiety and depression, finding help, crisis support, and advice for family

PDF BOOK · A4

68 PAGES

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# Foreword: For you and for those who walk beside you

MS is not only about the body. This book helps you take mood and feelings seriously and find help.

You may have MS. Or you may live with someone who does. Then you probably know days when the mind feels heavier than the body. There is no shame in that. It is a common part of life with MS.

This book brings you findings from recent studies and from the German MS guideline [5]. It also gives you checklists, worksheets and sentences for the talk with your doctor. Every number has a source.

## How the book is built

- Chapters 1 to 3: What belongs to mental health in MS? How do I recognise depression and anxiety?
- Chapters 4 to 6: Telling tiredness, thinking problems and mood apart. Why it happens. How questionnaires help.
- Chapters 7 to 9: How do I find help? What helps? How do I prepare for the appointment?
- Chapter 10: Crisis support and thoughts of suicide.
- Chapter 11: For family and partners.
- Chapter 12: Small steps in everyday life.

## How to read it

You do not have to read from front to back. Jump to what you need now. Read in small portions. Breaks are fine.

**ATTENTION If things are very bad right now**

If you are thinking about ending your life, or if someone is in danger, call your local emergency number now. In Germany, the emergency number is 112. In Germany, the TelefonSeelsorge answers day and night, free of charge: 0800 111 0 111, 0800 111 0 222 or 116 123 [16]. For other countries, the directory Find A Helpline lists free helplines (findahelpline.com) [32]. More in chapter 10.

**INFO What this book is not**

It is not a diagnosis and not therapy. It does not replace a talk with your doctor or therapist. It gives no doses and no legal advice. You always decide about medicines together with your care team.

**INFO A note for readers outside Germany**

Most findings come from international studies on people with MS. The sections on health insurance, therapy access and phone numbers describe Germany and are marked Germany. For your own country, ask your neurologist, your family doctor or your local MS society. We do not describe rules of other countries.

**INFO How good is the evidence?**

We tell you where each number comes from. Many studies are small or only observe. Then we write hint, not proof. Statements we could not check were left out. Status: 4 November 2026.

# 1 Mind and MS: What belongs together

Feelings are not weakness. This chapter shows how common depression and anxiety are, and what the numbers mean.

## A disease that also touches mood

MS changes a lot: strength, plans, the future. It is normal that this stirs up feelings. Sadness, anger, fear and worry belong to it. That alone is not an illness.

Sometimes the mood stays low for a long time. Then doctors speak of depression. The German guideline separates two things. An adjustment disorder is a reaction to the illness. Depression can also be linked to processes in the brain [5].

**REMEMBER The key point**

Low mood in MS is not a flaw of character. It is common, and it can be treated.

## How common is depression in MS?

A review estimates a lifetime risk of about 50 percent. For the general population, 16 to 20 percent is given. Among people with a new diagnosis, 47.4 percent showed signs of depression [1].

A short expert paper says depression is about three times as common in MS as in the general population [2].

**ATTENTION Numbers are not all alike**

Studies measure in different ways. Some ask who is affected right now. Others ask who was affected at some point in life. So you cannot simply put the values side by side [1][4].

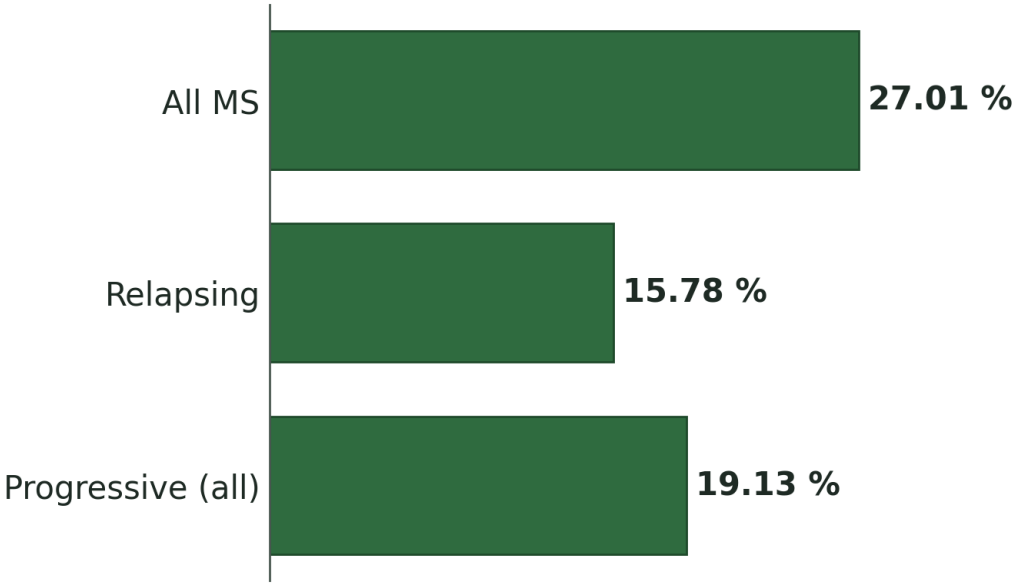



**Figure 1: Depression in MS by disease course**
*Source: [3] Peres et al. 2022 (meta-analysis).*

This figure comes from a meta-analysis of only 12 studies from 2015 to 2021 [3]. The subgroups were analysed separately. Do not add them up.

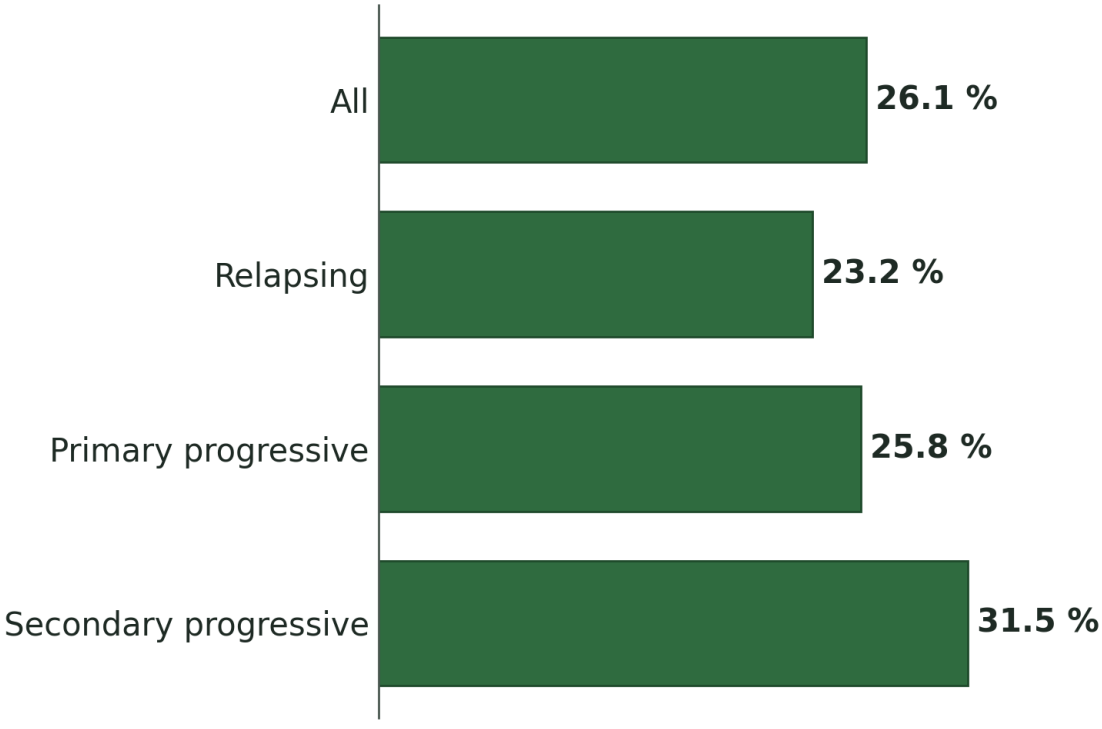



**Figure 2: Probable depression in the British TONiC-MS study (5,633 people)**
*Source: [1] Sullivan et al. 2025 (review).*