

SUBSCRIBE TO GROUPLINK!

If you wish to receive personal copies of GroupLink please connect with Caroline at cwiggins@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330 and your name will be added to our GroupLink email distribution list.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) endeavours to make attendance at events accessible to all who may benefit. The Society may be able to subsidize attendance fees for those who require financial assistance. **Please contact Caroline at cwiggins@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330 for more details.**

NEW PILOT PROJECT! ONLINE CAREPARTNER SUPPORT GROUP

This new monthly online support group is especially geared for individuals who care for someone with Parkinson's disease (PD). Whether you are a spouse, partner, adult child or friend, Parkinson Society British Columbia invites you to join our growing online community.

Start Date: Every third Wednesday of the month
Time: 9:00am – 10:00am
Location: Via webinar. *A valid internet connection will be required to participate.*
Contact: Myriame at mlepinelyons@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

NEWLY DIAGNOSED WEBINAR SERIES: WHAT YOU WANT TO LEARN TODAY TO BETTER YOUR TOMORROW

Everyone responds in a different way when told they have Parkinson's disease. For some, identifying the cause of physical and mental changes may come as a relief. Others may find themselves in denial and need time to accept the diagnosis. You will likely have questions about how to cope and what the future may hold. This webinar series will attempt to answer some of these questions.

If you have been newly diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, we invite you to join PSBC and special guests for a 4 week webinar series every Friday in November.

Date: Every Friday in November, beginning November 3
Time: 10:00am – 11:00am
Location: Via webinar. *A valid internet connection will be required to participate.*
Cost: Free
Registration: www.parkinson.bc.ca/newly-diagnosed-webinar-series



COMMUNICATION AND SWALLOW WORKSHOP (CHILLIWACK)

This interactive and participatory workshop, led by Registered Speech Language Pathologist Sherri Zelazny, will focus on the communication and swallowing challenges faced by people with Parkinson's (PwP). It is open to those already experiencing communication and swallowing challenges, as well as those who wish to be proactive in their treatment.

Date: Saturday, November 4
Time: 10:00am – 2:30pm
Location: Best Western – Rainbow Country Inn
43971 Industrial Way, Chilliwack ([map](#))
Cost: Member \$40 / Members (Pair) \$70
Non-member \$50 / Non-members (Pair) \$90
Registration: www.parkinson.bc.ca/chilliwack-communication-swallow

For a listing of all upcoming education events, visit our [education events calendar](#).

Champions FOR PARKINSON'S

- Shifting Gears for Parkinson's: March 13, 2017 – October 31, 2018 ([read more](#))
- THOUGHTS R LIFE Apparel: Online apparel sales that benefit PSBC, ongoing ([read more](#))
- TeaParky: 35% from every sale on TeaParky.com will go to PSBC, ongoing. Special: Use promo code PSBC at check-out for 10% off your purchase.

FALL ONLINE AUCTION

Getting a head start on your holiday shopping and looking for that perfect gift? Look no further! Parkinson Society BC is hosting a fall online auction from November 1 – November 15, and this year's items will feature golf & spa packages, wine, and family-friendly activity vouchers. There's sure to be something for everyone! Bidding will take place online through Able Auctions at www.bit.ly/PSBCOnlineAuction2017, a safe and secure website.



WE'RE LOOKING FOR MORE CHAMPIONS TO HELP US IN 2018!

Do you want to help fund research, grow support networks and improve quality of life for those living with Parkinson's? Become a Champion for Parkinson's and plan your own independent community fundraising event! Please contact Mirela at mdzaferovic@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

UPDATE: LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF EXERCISE & PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S

Irene Wong, a PhD Candidate in Rehabilitation Sciences at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, recently investigated the long-term effects of multi-system balance training programme on enhancing comprehensive balance in people with Parkinson's ([watch her webinar](#)). Now, a year later, Irene publishes her latest research findings in *Nature Reviews Neurology*. Read the article here: <http://rdcu.be/wlVb>.

SPIRAL DRAWING TEST DETECTS PARKINSON'S IN RECENT STUDY

In a study led by PhD researcher Poonam Zham from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 62 participants were given a drawing test. This drawing test was able to detect whether individuals had Parkinson's disease with 93% accuracy. To learn more, visit <http://parkinsonslife.eu/spiral-drawing-test-detect-early-parkinsons>.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS MAY LEAD TO PARKINSON'S

An article published on the Canadian Occupational Safety website highlighted several potential workplace exposures/materials that may increase the risk of developing Parkinson's. Some of the exposures listed were: head trauma, pesticides and manganese. Read more about this at <http://www.cos-mag.com/occupational-hygiene/34516-several-workplace-exposures-may-increase-risk-of-developing-parkinsons-disease>.

TIP JAR

Let's face it: it can be difficult to remember to take your medications. Do you press "snooze" on your pill alarm? Do you press "stop" on your alarm and then resume the activity you were doing and tell yourself: "I'll just finish this and take my pills"? Forgetting to take your pills happens, there's no doubt about that. We aren't perfect. However, there are some things you can do to set yourself up for success.

One support group participant has shared that he specifically sets a "warning alarm" that sounds ten minutes before his "real" alarm, so there is no chances of ignoring or forgetting. This tip may be useful to you as well. Give it a try!



Do you have any tips or tricks that you would like to share with the PD community? These can be tips from something that works well, to eating and dressing, to getting out of bed or travelling! All tips and tricks are welcome! Please share your ideas with Myriame at mlepinelyons@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What qualities or skills do you think help someone be an effective communicator?
2. What are some ways to show your carepartner kindness and compassion?
3. What are you doing to maintain healthy relationships in your daily life?

Communication and compassion are two key components of healthy relationships. For some, these components may be old news; for others, this may be the first time that they've considered them in the context of their relationship. Relationships are inherently different from one another, in the sense that the way someone interacts with their partner will naturally vary from friends and family. Context matters. This month, we'll explore both the concepts of communication and compassion in the hopes that it encourages stimulating thought and discussion.

COMMUNICATION

There are many types of communication styles. Dr. Gottman of the Gottman Institute refers to criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, which is a metaphor predicting that frequent use of these communication tactics are likely to result in the end of a relationship (Lisitsa, 2013). The antidote to criticism is to talk about feelings using "I" statements. To combat contempt, you can treat each other with respect and appreciation. Accepting responsibility, even for part of the issue, can counteract defensiveness; and taking a 20 minute break from the conversation before resuming the talk can help you avoid stonewalling. To learn more about this approach, view the following YouTube video by the Gottman Institute: <http://bit.ly/4HorsemenOfCommunication>

A popular myth about communication in relationships is that since you talk to your partner, you're automatically communicating. However, talking to your partner about everyday topics isn't necessarily communicating the important stuff. Healthy communication involves much deeper conversations and topics, such as stating your fears or recalling joyous memories. You can improve your relationship by exercising

1. Focus on one topic
2. Gather your thoughts
3. Be honest with your partner
4. Pay attention to your body language and non-verbal signs
5. Take a moment to listen to your partner
6. Rephrase what you've heard (Grohol, 2009)



Keep in mind that trying out a new communication style is like learning a new dance. You will stumble and fumble, which is part of the learning process. Start small; practice 1 of the 6 tips. Once you have mastered one component of a new communication style, integrate another. For example, choose one topic to talk about with your partner, such as a fear of falling. Then once you've both said your piece, rephrase what you heard your partner share. This will help clarify your positions, and ultimately create a space for understanding.

COMPASSION

At Stanford University, scholars explore the concept of compassion in depth. "Compassion unfolds in response to suffering, beginning with your recognition of it, then conjuring change to elicit empathy and concern. This, in turn, motivates us to take action, and help relieve that suffering" (CCARE, 2016). One may think expressing compassion is simple, but it can be complex!

Humans have a natural capacity for compassion, but stress, social pressures and life experiences can suppress it – potentially resulting in physical and psychological problems. The good news is that we can train ourselves to nurture others while developing our compassionate instincts. Understanding others requires patience, steady care, proper tools and a supportive environment. Most of the time when your partner belches out a frustration, they are silently asking for your understanding and compassion. They want to feel that you are on their team (Lisitsa, 2012).

When your partner comes to you complaining that they have been treated unfairly at the grocery store, the last thing they want to hear is that they have been overstressed and that they should move on. Instead, they want to hear you say, "That sounds so frustrating! I can understand why you are so upset." Expressing empathy will become more natural by practicing empathetic statements like this.

The secret to compassion thus lies in empathy. Empathy is defined as understanding what another person is feeling, because you have experienced it or can imagine yourself in their shoes. Empathy entails a more personal understanding than sympathy. For example, a doctor is empathetic with a patient if they can relate personally to their experience. A doctor is sympathetic to their patients when they comfort them and their families (Diffen LLC, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

Good communication and compassion are the keys to healthy relationships. They may not completely resonate with you, and that's okay. What's important is that we hone in on their meaning. Relationships are hard work; they require attention and effort. We hope that this discussion topic has made you consider what you are currently doing to help maintain healthy relationships in your life, and where you might be able to improve.

CAREPARTNER'S CORNER

Parkinson's disease affects the whole family, not only the individual affected. It alters the lives of spouses, partners, children and friends. Parkinson Society British Columbia understands what carepartners go through. Many of you have shared your stories. Sometimes, the stories are bright and hopeful, other times dark and scary. We want you to know that you are loved. The following is a thank you letter from PSBC to all carepartners/cargivers, adapted from an excerpt from the Caregiver Stress Blog.

Dear Carepartner,

If you are reading this, it means you finally took a few minutes for yourself. We know taking time for yourself can be hard. We also know that it's been quite some time since you've heard the words "thank you".

Have we thanked you for your devotion? For your unconditional love and support? For your incredible flexibility and adaptability? For your perseverance? For your compassion and empathy? For your bravery? Have we done this?

You have done so much to care for your loved one. This is truly amazing. You have adjusted your schedule to fit theirs, carried their load on your shoulders, washed the dirt off their hands and fed them when they were unable to do so. You have done this all with such grace.

The truth is, we see all that you do. We see what you have sacrificed, we see the exhaustion in your eyes and we hear the worry in your voice. We know you are trying desperately to make all the moving parts work. We know you sometimes cry quietly so no one will see your tears.

Thank you for the amazing job you do. The selflessness of which cannot accurately be described. Know that you don't have to do this alone; we are here to help.

If we could bottle all the love and appreciation in the world, it still wouldn't be enough for you. But we will try, and will start with telling you:

Thank You!

Adapted from Cresto, 2012.

CAREPARTNER RESOURCES

- Caring for Someone with PD brochure [\[view\]](#)
- Asking for and Accepting your own Support [\[view\]](#)
- Caregiving in a Family with Parkinson's [\[view\]](#)

Sources

Cresto, Derek. (2012). *Thank You Caregiver*. CaregiverStress Blog. Retrieved from <https://www.caregiverstress.com/2012/11/thank-you-caregiver/>

Diffen LLC. (n.d.). *Empathy vs Sympathy*. Diffen.com. Retrieved from http://www.diffen.com/difference/Empathy_vs_Sympathy

Grohol, John M. (2009). *9 Steps to Better Communication Today*. Psych Central. Retrieved from <https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2009/04/14/9-steps-to-better-communication-today/>

Lisitsa, Ellie. (2012). *Expressing Compassion and Empathy*. The Gottman Relationship Blog. Retrieved from <https://www.gottman.com/blog/what-makes-love-last-expressing-compassion-and-empathy/>

Lisitsa, Ellie. (2013). *The Four Horsemen: Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness, and Stonewalling*. The Gottman Relationship Blog. Retrieved from <https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-recognizing-criticism-contempt-defensiveness-and-stonewalling/>

The Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE). (2016). *Why Cultivate Compassion?* Retrieved from <http://ccare.stanford.edu/education/about-compassion-cultivation-training-cct/why-cultivate-compassion/>