

SPECIAL NOTICE

In response to the global outbreak of COVID-19, Parkinson Society BC staff are working remotely until further notice. We will continue to offer programs and services in alternate formats. For the most up-to-date information, please visit this PSBC web page: www.parkinson.bc.ca/coronavirus. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@parkinson.bc.ca.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please note: Participation in the exercise programs below will be done at your own risk within your home. Please ensure you are wearing proper footwear, and have the space needed to follow the exercises with no obstacles or barriers in your way.

Parkinson Society BC (PSBC) will not be held liable for accidents or incidents that may occur in your home. By participating in the exercise programs listed below, you are recognizing that risk of illness and/or injury may be inherent in any movement or exercise class and are participating with the express agreement of, and understanding that PSBC and its directors, officers, employees, partners, and agents are hereby released from any and all claims, costs, liabilities, expenses, or judgements associated with these exercise for Parkinson's programs.

Balance Exercise Class

Join Parkinson Society BC's own neuro physiotherapist, Shelly Yu, for 4 weeks of balance exercise classes! This class will target the mechanisms that control our balance, stability, rigidity, and improve our ability to react to unexpected disturbances. The class will start in sitting then move to standing. No equipment is needed for the class, other than a chair to sit in. Please note that due to the nature of a virtual balance class, participants may need to have a loved one nearby to ensure safety.

Dates: Mondays, September 14, 21, 28, & October 5
Time: 1:30pm - 2:30pm
Cost: Free
Register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/balance-exercises

September Symposium

Parkinson's disease is a unique and complex condition. To assist in expanding your knowledge of the disease, Parkinson Society BC will host three webinars in this symposium series to provide the PD community the opportunity to learn from leading experts.

Frequently Asked Questions about Parkinson's Disease

As a complex disease, Parkinson's impact is diverse and unique to each individual. Due to the disease's chronic progressive nature, individuals with PD may experience different symptoms and/or combinations of symptoms at varying intensities as the disease moves through its different stages. From those who are newly diagnosed, to those progressing into advanced PD, individuals at all stages may have questions about their condition, and next steps.

In this webinar, Dr. Jonathan Squires, a movement disorder specialist at the Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, addresses frequently asked questions to provide clarity and insight for the Parkinson's community. Registration for this webinar closes on Friday, September 4.

Date: Tuesday, September 8
Time: 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/september-symposium-faq

Cognitive Changes in Parkinson's: Experiencing Brain Fog

Cheryl Daniels, a nurse at the Movement Disorder Clinic in Kelowna, highlights some cognitive changes that can accompany Parkinson's, such as apathy, memory loss, and brain fog. While highlighting all these challenges, her talk will focus mainly on brain fog – identifying the symptoms and how it relates to mental and physical fatigue, and evaluating other factors, including sleep, cognitive changes, mood swings, medication, mobility issues, and other general health conditions outside of PD.

Cheryl's talk will cover compensatory and adaptive strategies to manage the fatigue associated with brain fog, as well as general wellness and brain health activities. Registration for this webinar closes on Thursday, September 10.

Date: Monday, September 14

Time: 11:00am – 12:00pm

Register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/september-symposium-cognitive-changes

Thawing Out: Strategies to Reduce Freezing

Freezing is a frustrating symptom of Parkinson's disease and can often lead to falls or a loss of independence. Although the most common type is freezing of gait (walking), it can also present in the arm (affecting the ability to eat) or in the tongue (affecting the ability to speak).

Join PSBC's own, Shelly Yu, neuro physiotherapist, as she discusses reasons for freezing and practical strategies that may help people with Parkinson's overcome this obstacle. Registration for this webinar closes on Thursday, September 17.

Date: Monday, September 21

Time: 11:00am – 12:00pm

Register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/september-symposium-thawing-out

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Champions for Parkinson's

- Full Throttle: September 27 (learn more: www.parkinson.bc.ca/fullthrottle)
- IMPACT Parkinson's: Ongoing event proceeds (see events: impactparkinsons.com)
- Donate a Car Canada: Ongoing (read more: bit.ly/2ORTuJn)
- Naturally Urban Pet Food Delivery Sales: Ongoing (read more: bit.ly/2MLasvX)

We're looking for more Champions!

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! Contact Caroline Wiggins at cwiggins@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome back, Courtney!

Courtney Doherty, our Clinical Counsellor and Education & Support Services Coordinator, has returned from maternity leave! Courtney is back to seeing our counselling clients two days per week, alongside Tricia Wallace. This month, our counselling team also sends a heartfelt goodbye to Dr. Judy Zhu.

Interested in seeing Courtney or Tricia for counselling? Visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/counselling.

Parkinson SuperWalk

Parkinson SuperWalk is happening this month! This year, we are bringing you an engaging virtual SuperWalk experience. **Walk weekend is September 12th & 13th** – don't miss our live-streamed opening ceremonies on Saturday, September 12th at 10:00am!

Although we can't come together in person this year, we hope you will join us in championing the cause for SuperWalk's 30th anniversary! Funds raised through SuperWalk help Parkinson Society BC carry on providing the programs, support services, and educational resources that people with Parkinson's, their families, and carepartners rely on.

Mark your calendars, gather your loved ones, and join this year's special SuperWalk experience! If you can't join us at SuperWalk, please consider making a general donation to the event – every dollar counts. Register or donate at www.parkinson.bc.ca/superwalk.

Moving Forward, Together Provincial Conference

Our provincial conference is moving online! Featuring presentations from prominent Parkinson's specialists and researchers across the country, this year's Moving Forward, Together will be a fully virtual experience.

The half-day event will offer three plenary talks, with opportunities for participants to ask their questions of our expert speakers. Just like our in-person event, we will also offer guided exercise breaks, and host a virtual exhibition hall. Register early, and you will be entered into a prize draw, with winners announced at the end of the conference!

Topics covered include:

- The Evolution of Defining and Diagnosing Parkinson's Disease | Dr. Anthony Lang
- The Research-Based Benefits of Exercise for Parkinson's | Dr. Matthew Sacheli
- Understanding the Development of Parkinson's Disease and Related Therapies | Dr. Jon Stoessl

Date: Saturday, October 17

Time: 9:00am – 12:30pm

Fees: **Early Bird** (Until September 15)

Member: \$15

Non-member: \$20

Late Riser (after September 15)

Member: \$30

Non-member: \$40

Register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/movingforward

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Managing Financial Stress**Discussion Questions**

1. How did your financial situation change when you were diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, or your loved one was? How has it changed as the disease has progressed?
2. What are some ways you handle financial stress? These may be financially oriented (i.e. budgeting, financial advisor, etc.), or mental health oriented (i.e. self-care, counselling).
3. What is some of the best financial advice you have received?

Since January, COVID-19 has swept across Canada and created upheaval in the lives of individuals. Among the host of challenges that the pandemic has presented, the economic impact is one of the most pronounced effects of the virus. In March 2020 alone, it's estimated that over one million Canadians lost their jobs, with many struggling to find work again today (Murphy, 2020). In BC, the unemployment rate reached a record 13.7% in May – fortunately, we are now beginning to see this rate begin to drop again after three straight months of watching it climb (Bakx, 2020).

Amidst these troubling statistics, it is no wonder Canadians are feeling stressed. In a recent survey conducted by Borrowell (2020), one of Canada's leading financial technology companies, 74% of Canadians reported feeling stress from the crisis, with over 40% worrying about how they will pay for their basic needs like food and rent.

While few Canadians are immune to these economic impacts, the Parkinson's community is especially susceptible to financial stress. When an individual is first diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD), they often encounter unexpected financial obstacles, such as having to leave work sooner than expected, or relying on disability assistance as their sole income. On top of the physical and mental hardships brought on by symptoms of PD, people with Parkinson's and their carepartners experience more financial hardship due to medication and equipment requirements, home modifications, and other healthcare costs (PHAC, 2014).

Financial Interventions***Personal Budgeting***

The first key to reducing financial stress is to develop and implement a concrete budget that includes all of your basic needs, healthcare costs, and recreational activities. An all-encompassing budget provides a complete picture of your finances, facilitating a sense of calm and control. A budget helps add purpose to your financial decisions and reduce worry around unexpected costs.

During these uncertain times, identifying your 'needs' versus 'wants' is a useful way to increase savings – evaluate any superfluous spending and cut any non-essential expenses. You may realize that you have been spending less already, saving on things that have been placed on hold from COVID-19 like eating out, commuting, shopping, and entertainment. Redirecting this money into an emergency fund equivalent to 3-6 months of expenses will provide further peace of mind (FCAC, 2020).

[The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada](#) (FCAC) offers an online [Budget Planner](#) to help you get started on creating and managing your budget on an easy-to-use platform. They also offer many other resources on budgeting, savings, debt management, and interactive tools to help you maintain good financial health during these challenging times.

Professional and institutional resources

Another practical option to ease financial concerns is to reach out to financial professionals and institutions. For people with Parkinson's, managing the many costs that come with a diagnosis can be overwhelming to do alone – scheduling an appointment with a financial advisor to discuss your expenses may offer support. An advisor may be able to suggest options on how to protect and grow your savings. Individuals can tend to hyper-monitor their funds, and while it is important to be proactive and have a clear picture of your finances, setting boundaries and passing this job off to an objective trusted professional may help reduce stress and improve your financial situation long-term.

Since COVID-19, many financial institutions are offering financial relief to their clients. Take some time to investigate and understand these options, including things like deferring mortgage or credit card payments, lowering credit card and loan interest rates, or taking out a home equity line of credit. While these choices could be beneficial, it is important to fully understand the conditions and long-term implications of each. Contact your financial institution to explore your options further.

Finally, there are many other organizations that offer valuable free online resources for people with Parkinson's. Parkinson Society British Columbia has many educational and exercise webinars, free legal services and counselling, and a large collection of accessible resources on different topics including finances, mental health, and staying connected. Taking advantage of these free offerings is one more way to lessen your costs and stay positive during these unusual times. Visit our website to view all our upcoming events, as well as other organization's events and programs, at www.parkinson.bc.ca/events.

How to ease financial stress

Beyond concrete financial interventions, there are other valuable ways to manage financial concerns. Firstly, one of the most important things to remember is that *you are not alone*. Many are feeling anxious or worried about finances during this challenging time, and as a vulnerable population, the Parkinson's community is especially prone to the negative social and economic impacts of COVID-19. Though it can be uncomfortable, opening up to someone you trust about your finances and mental health during this time can be extremely beneficial. If you are concerned about a sharp decline in your mental health or PD symptoms, reach out to your doctor or a healthcare professional immediately.

Consider history

Many have referred to this pandemic as an “unprecedented time” – however, it is useful to consider the fact that we have seen similar economic conditions in the past (TD Canada, 2020). While many economists are predicting a recession in 2020, history has shown that after large economic downturns, a period of growth generally follows. So, while it is still natural to feel worried or anxious during these times, consider the idea that there are better times ahead.

Give to get

Finally, while you may be worried about your finances, there are ways you can support your community that don't cost a penny. Check in on friends and family, empathize with those on the front lines of the health crisis, or show support by volunteering extra time you have. Studies have highlighted the benefits of generosity on our physical and mental health, showing it can help reduce stress, fight depression, and enhance your sense of purpose (Firestone, 2020).

Additional Resources

Budget Planner | Financial Consumer Agency of Canada | bit.ly/canadabudgetplanner
Disability Benefits, Tax Credits, & Deductions | Government of Canada | bit.ly/disabilitytaxinfo
Financial Wellbeing Resources | Government of Canada | bit.ly/canadafinancialresources
Tax Tips for People with Parkinson's & Carepartners | PSBC | bit.ly/pdntaxtips

Sources

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Borrowell. (2020). COVID-19: 3 in 4 are Experiencing Financial Stress. Retrieved from <https://borrowell.com/blog/survey-reveals-3-in-4-canadians-experiencing-financial-stress-due-to-covid-19>

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Murphy, Jessica (2020). Coronavirus: Canada lost a record one million jobs in March. *BBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52232674>

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