

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

- **Hand & Dexterity Exercise Series** | Thursdays, January 14, 21, 28, February 4, 11, & 18
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/dexterity-series
 - **Ask the Expert Webinar: Intimacy & Parkinson's** | Thursday, February 11
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/intimacy-webinar
 - **Boxing with Allie Series** | Fridays, February 26 & March 5
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/boxing-with-allie
 - **Seated Exercise Circuit Series** | Thursdays, March 11, 18, & 25
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/seated-exercise
 - **Speech, Swallow, & Communication Series** | Thursdays, February 4, 11, & 18
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/communication-series
 - **New Diagnosis Workshop Series** | Tuesday, February 16, & Wednesdays, February 17 & 24
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/new-dx-workshop
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UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Champions for Parkinson's

- Donate a Car Canada: Ongoing (read more: <http://bit.ly/2ORTuJn>)

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.

TIP JAR

The Tip Jar is where we share advice from support group members across the province. This month, we share some advice on using Zoom to connect with loved ones and join online events! Zoom is a video-calling platform that allows individuals to host online meetings and events.

- Want to hold your support group meetings on Zoom? Hosting a Zoom call is easy! Create an account at <https://zoom.us/signup>, and you can easily set up group meetings that can last up to 40 minutes, with up to 100 participants. If you want to test it out before signing up, join a test meeting at <https://zoom.us/test> to familiarize yourself with the platform.
- If you want to join a Zoom meeting, but don't have the desktop application installed, you can join any meeting from your browser! Follow the link provided to you by the meeting host, and click the button that will say either "Join" or "Launch Meeting." Once you do, underneath the button, you will see a link that says "Having issues with Zoom Client? *Join from Your Browser*" – click this link to access the meeting right in your browser!
- Did you know you can join Zoom meetings anonymously? Visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/zoom-anonymity for full instructions.
- If you need support with setting up and using Zoom for your support group meetings, Parkinson Society BC is here to help! Contact our friendly and knowledgeable staff at info@parkinson.bc.ca or call 1-800-668-3330, and we can walk you through the process.

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 at info@parkinson.bc.ca.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**COVID-19 Safety**

The government of British Columbia has currently suspended all in-person events and social gatherings. No social gatherings of any kind are allowed with anyone outside of your immediate household. Masks are mandatory in all indoor public spaces unless you have a physical or cognitive impairment which prevents you from wearing one. You can view details and updates to these orders at <http://bit.ly/covidsafetybc>.

It is important to keep an eye on these safety guidelines, as they are updated regularly. Stay informed and stay safe this winter.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Throughout 2021, COVID-19 vaccines will be made available to all Canadians. The Government of Canada has announced a phased approach to immunization, and high-risk communities have already begun receiving vaccinations to protect those who are most likely to develop complications from the disease. Read Parkinson Society BC's COVID-19 Vaccination Statement for more information about the vaccine – including how it works, how it will be distributed, and considerations for people with Parkinson's disease – at www.parkinson.bc.ca/covid-vaccine.

The netClé Project

The netClé project, organized by the Tetra Society of North America, is working to bring to market an affordable and customizable device that provides computer access to users facing mobility limitations. The netClé is in its second phase, and recruiting individuals to test their assistive device.

Learn more and apply to receive your free netClé here: www.tetrasociety.org/netcle.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Intimacy & Sexual Health**Discussion Questions**

1. What does intimacy mean to you?
2. How has COVID-19 affected your relationships? Has it brought you and your partner, friends, or family closer, or introduced new challenges?
3. What resources do you find helpful for maintaining intimacy and managing sexual health?

Intimacy is a broad term that includes more than just sex. Intimacy and sex often complement each other, but intimacy can also stand alone as a way of creating a loving, supportive foundation in a relationship. Intimacy can mean different things to different people, including non-erotic activities like hugging or hand-holding, or even just sharing thoughtful conversation. Intimacy is also an important part of non-romantic relationships and friendships as a way to foster trust, openness, and understanding.

Intentionally focusing on intimacy can be a great way to enhance your connections and feel less alone. Take some time to reflect on where and how intimacy may be lacking in your life, and proactively communicate these feelings to your partner or loved ones. Start with small changes, like a daily hug or expression of gratitude, and maintain reasonable expectations. Trying a new activity together is another way to build intimacy – a new experience may reignite your relationship and strengthen your bond.

Maintaining intimacy during COVID-19

For many, COVID-19 has disrupted intimacy with partners and loved ones. In light of health and safety measures like physical distancing and stay-at-home orders, you may be feeling especially lonely or isolated. Try the following practical tips to maintain healthy, intimate relationships with friends and family during these challenging times:

- Use the phone and video-chat platforms like Zoom to stay connected to friends and family outside your home.
- Try playing fun, online brain games during your video calls to spend more time together and challenge your mind. Check out this article for game ideas: <http://bit.ly/gamesonzoom>.
- If you feel comfortable, consider getting outside for fresh air and a physically-distanced walk with someone in your bubble.

- More time at home may put undue stress on your relationship with your partner (Kraft, 2020). Try to be patient and considerate as you both adjust to changes in scheduling.
- Small, loving acts such as daily hugs or words of gratitude can go a long way in building intimacy.
- Look for opportunities to improve your relationships and work through issues you may not have previously had time to address (Kraft, 2020).

Don't hesitate to reach out for professional help if you are feeling overwhelmed – PSBC offers free, confidential counselling that can support you in navigating the complexity of relationships. For more information, visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/counselling.

Sexual health & Parkinson's

Concerns around sexual health and function are very common among people with Parkinson's disease (PD). PD can impact motor function, mood, hormone regulation, and motivation, thus causing a number of symptoms that can interfere with a healthy sex life. For example, bradykinesia or tremor can affect the fine motor ability that allows for gentle, rhythmic touch, or depression and anxiety from reduced dopamine can decrease sexual desire and excitement. These physical and emotional challenges can be distracting, causing further symptoms such as erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, loss of lubrication, or painful intercourse, affecting the ability to reach orgasm.

Alongside these symptoms, common Parkinson's medications can also contribute to changes in sexual function. For example, some individuals report a feeling of heaviness while taking anti-depressants, impairing their ability to become aroused. Conversely, dopaminergic treatments used to treat motor symptoms can cause increased sexual desire and hypersexuality. While these feelings can be confusing and distressing for sexual partners, oftentimes medication can be adjusted to address issues of compulsive behaviour – however, it is very important to always speak to your physician before adjusting any medications.

Support for sexual health & intimacy

Sex and intimacy have a significant impact on quality of life. Many individuals, whether they have a health condition or not, can experience difficulties with sex and intimacy. While these

can sometimes feel like uncomfortable issues to discuss, they are valid and worthwhile to address – help is available.

Using open communication to talk with loved ones can help you implement small changes together and find what works best to build intimacy in your relationship. A therapist or relationship counsellor can help you express these feelings and restore intimate connections. If your concerns are related to specific issues with sexual function, your physician may suggest techniques like planning sexual activity when both partners feel their best or using things like ED medications, oils, or lubricants.

It is important to remember that intimacy and sexuality are holistic, comprehensive matters that extend far beyond physical intercourse. Expanding your understanding of sexuality and intimacy can bring relief, balance, and trust to your relationships.

Additional Resources

Sex & Intimacy | Helpsheet | <http://bit.ly/pdintimacy>

Sexual Health in YOPD | Video | <http://bit.ly/yopdintimacy>

Maintaining Sexual Health | Video | <http://bit.ly/maintainingintimacy>

Sex Therapy | Counselling BC | <http://bit.ly/sextherapybc>

Sources

Kraft, C. (2020). How to Keep Your Relationship Healthy During the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Retrieved from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/keep-healthy-relationship-during-pandemic>