

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

- **March Symposium Series** | March 10, 15, & 30
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/march-symposium
 - **Seated Exercise Circuit Series** | Thursdays, March 11 – 25
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/seated-exercise
 - **April Challenger** | Thursdays, April 1 – 22
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/april-challenger
 - **Our Journey: Living with Parkinson's** | Wednesday, April 14
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/pd-panel
 - **Improv for Parkinson's** | Wednesdays, April 14 – May 19
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/improv-laughter
 - **Songshine with Sharon** | Thursdays, April 15 – May 20
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/april-songshine
 - **Chair Yoga** | Thursdays, May 6 – 27
Learn more & register: www.parkinson.bc.ca/chair-yoga
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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 a piece of advice on sleeping more comfortably from a Vancouver member.

- The Bed Block is a device that frees your feet from getting tangled in your bed sheets and allows them to rest in their natural position while you sleep. It can help increase air flow, regulate temperature, and decrease muscle tension. Learn more at bedblock.co.

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**We're Hiring!**

Parkinson Society BC is hiring a new Education and Support Services Coordinator. Do you know someone who may be a good fit? Read the job posting: www.parkinson.bc.ca/ess-coordinator.

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>.

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 begun receiving vaccinations to protect those who are most likely to develop complications from the virus. 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 – 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.

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month!

Every year, Parkinson Society BC dedicates the month of April to raising awareness of the unique experiences of people with Parkinson's, and the needs of our community. Awareness Month is an opportunity to engage the public in expanding their understanding of Parkinson's, and its profound effects on the lives of over 13,000 British Columbians living with the disease.

This April, we want to spread the message that Parkinson's is *more than a tremor*. The disease can affect all aspects of one's life, and there is no cure.

Our 2021 campaign highlights:

- **Personal journeys** shared by people with Parkinson's, their families, and carepartners.
- The importance of **living well with Parkinson's**, through self-management, self-reliance, and self-advocacy.
- **Community ties and peer support** bringing together the Parkinson's community across British Columbia.

In recognition of Parkinson's Awareness Month, and World Parkinson's Day on April 11, we are encouraging individuals affected by the disease to share their experiences through our **#MoreThanATremor** campaign. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, our campaign will be focused online, so be sure to follow us on social media for stories from the community, PD tips, and inspiring interviews! Find us on social media at www.instagram.com/ParkinsonsBC, www.twitter.com/ParkinsonsBC, and www.facebook.com/ParkinsonSocietyBritishColumbia.

Learn more about our April Awareness campaign plans at www.parkinson.bc.ca/awareness.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Letters to Our Younger Selves**Discussion Questions**

1. Have you ever kept a journal or practiced writing for self-reflection and mental wellness? If so, are there any other journaling activities you have found helpful or beneficial?
2. What types of activities do you engage in to practice self-care and maintain your mental well-being?

In honour of Parkinson's Awareness Month this April, we are sharing stories from members of the Parkinson's disease community to inspire hope, spread awareness, and empower others.

Every journey with Parkinson's is unique. The disease can run in families, or come as a complete surprise. Often, many people with Parkinson's don't understand much about the disease until they themselves are diagnosed. We invite you to reflect on your journey by writing a letter to your younger self. These letters may be shared throughout the month of April in our awareness campaign on social media, on our website, and in newsletters to our community.

We welcome letters from anyone affected by Parkinson's, whether you were recently diagnosed, or living with the disease for years. Carepartners and family are also encouraged to share their stories. Visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/letter-submissions to learn more and submit your letter.

The Benefits of Journaling

A journaling activity like this letter can be a powerful time to pause and reflect on moments of struggle, growth, and joy throughout your life. Journaling is proven to reduce stress, improve mood, and regulate emotions by helping clarify thoughts and process experiences (Axelrod, 2016). Keep in mind that you do not have to be the best writer to do this activity – look at it as an opportunity to express yourself and communicate your journey in a way that is authentic and meaningful to you.

Think of when you were first diagnosed, and of all the questions, worries, and emotions you had at the time. Consider the following prompts to ask yourself as you begin writing:

- What are some of the key pieces of advice I received over the years?
- What do I know now that I wish I had known when I/my loved one was first diagnosed?
- What important lessons have I learned during my journey with Parkinson's?

- What are some things that have gotten me through difficult times?
- Were any of my beliefs or fears about Parkinson's misguided?
- What good came from my journey with Parkinson's?
- What has been my greatest strength throughout this journey?
- What was my most humbling experience, and what was the lesson it taught me?

Allow these questions to lead you towards clarity and closure. Sometimes, the unconscious beliefs you hold about yourself or your past can keep you from moving forward in a positive way. Writing a letter to your younger self can help you identify these thoughts and instead realize how far you have come, how you have grown, and how some of your most difficult times have made you resilient and wise.

Additional Resources

Our Experience with Parkinson's | Video | <http://bit.ly/ourexperiencePD>

Advice for the Newly Diagnosed – YOPD | Booklet | <http://bit.ly/yopdnewlydiagnosed>

Frequently Asked Questions | Video | <http://bit.ly/questionspd>

The Progression of Parkinson's Disease | Helpsheet | <http://bit.ly/pdprogression>

Inspirational Stories | Articles | <http://bit.ly/3ktwLVn>

Self-Esteem Journal | Worksheet | <https://bit.ly/3umoHKB>

Sources

Axelrod, J. (2016, May 17). *The Health Benefits of Journaling*. Retrieved from <https://psychcentral.com/lib/the-health-benefits-of-journaling#1>