

# Mental Health & Parkinson's d

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# Outline

- Parkinson's disease overview
- What are Mental Health challenges
- Causes of Mental Health challenges in PD
- Barriers to Diagnosis and Treatment
- Treatment Options and Practical Tips
- Key Points

# Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a chronic neurological disorder, or neurodegenerative disorder.

The loss of dopamine in a part of the brain called the substantia nigra; area important for controlling movement



# Symptoms of PD

## Motor

- Resting tremor
- Rigidity
- Slowness of movement (Bradykinesia)
- Balance and postural impairment
- Softened voice (Hypophonia)

## Non-Motor

- Reduced facial expression (Hypomimia)
- Sleep disturbances
- Constipation
- Fatigue
- Low blood pressure
- Visual issues
- Swallowing and communication issues
- **Changes in mood**

# Cognitive vs. Mental health

- Mental health can include cognitive health
  - For the purpose of this discussion we will NOT be discussing cognitive health/impairment
- **Cognitive** impairments in PD may include problems with executive functioning, word-finding difficulties, difficulty with attention, memory recall, planning, reasoning and problem solving.

At least 50% of people with PD experience depression and/or anxiety.



# Depression

It is a **real medical condition** with many **emotional, physical, behavioural** and **cognitive** symptoms.

- **Emotional symptoms**
  - Constant sadness
  - Feeling worthless/hopeless
  - Loss of interest/pleasure
- **Physical symptoms**
  - Low energy, aches & pains, insomnia/hypersomnia
  - Changes in weight
- **Behavioural symptoms**
  - Changes in appetite
  - Impression of restlessness
- **Cognitive symptoms**
  - Difficulty making decisions or focusing
  - Suicidal thoughts

# Anxiety

Anxiety is also a **real medical condition**, and affects people on an **emotional, physical, behavioural** and **cognitive** level.

- **Emotional symptoms**
  - Feeling fear and/or nervousness
  - Having excessive worry
- **Physical symptoms**
  - Increase in HR and BP
  - Breathing heavily
  - Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- **Behavioural symptoms**
  - Urges to escape or avoid situations/activities/people
- **Cognitive symptoms**
  - Difficulty with ruminating thoughts and realistic thinking



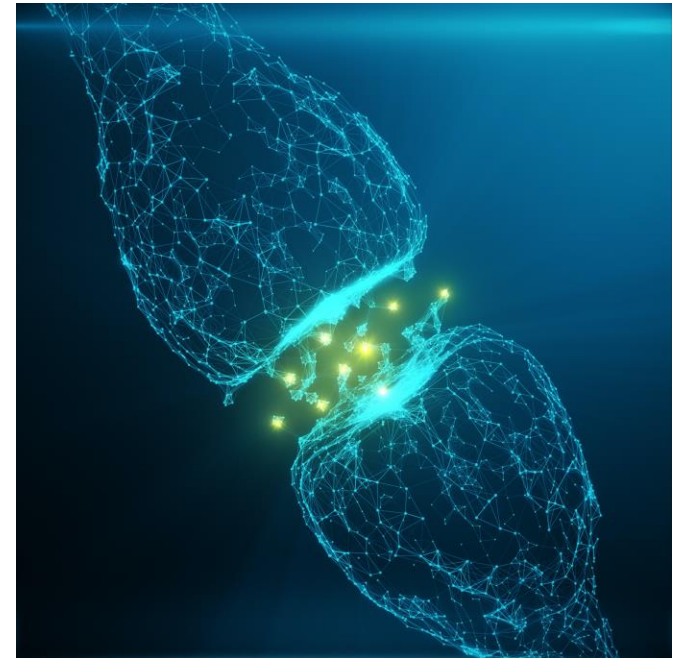
# Apathy

- Another common symptom in individuals with PD (40%)
- Often hard to distinguish between depression and apathy
- Categorized as a lack of interest and motivation in things but *without* sadness, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, etc.
- Important to differentiate the conditions for appropriate treatment

# Causes

- Mental health issues in PD can be caused by:
  - Reaction to your initial diagnosis
  - Changes experienced as the disease progresses
  - Changes in your brain chemistry

*It is **normal** to be worried about your symptoms and to wonder what is coming in the future.*



# Factors as Barriers

- Stigma of mental health
- Lack of awareness that mood disorders are part of PD.
- Similarities between the physical symptoms of PD and depression, anxiety and apathy.

# Treatments

- **Medication**
  - Ask your physician and/or neurologist
  - Utilize UBC Pharmacists Clinic
- **Familial/Social Support**
  - Reach out to family and friends
  - Support groups + PD Link
- **Psychotherapy & Mindfulness**
  - Individual counselling
  - CBT / Exposure Therapies
  - Staying present
- **Complementary Therapies**
  - Exercise (walk, PWR!, Yoga, T'ai chi, swim, Pilates, dance)
  - Diet (including supplements)
  - Art Therapy
  - Meditation & Visualization
  - Acupuncture
  - Massage
  - Music Therapy
  - Reflexology
  - Chiropractic treatment

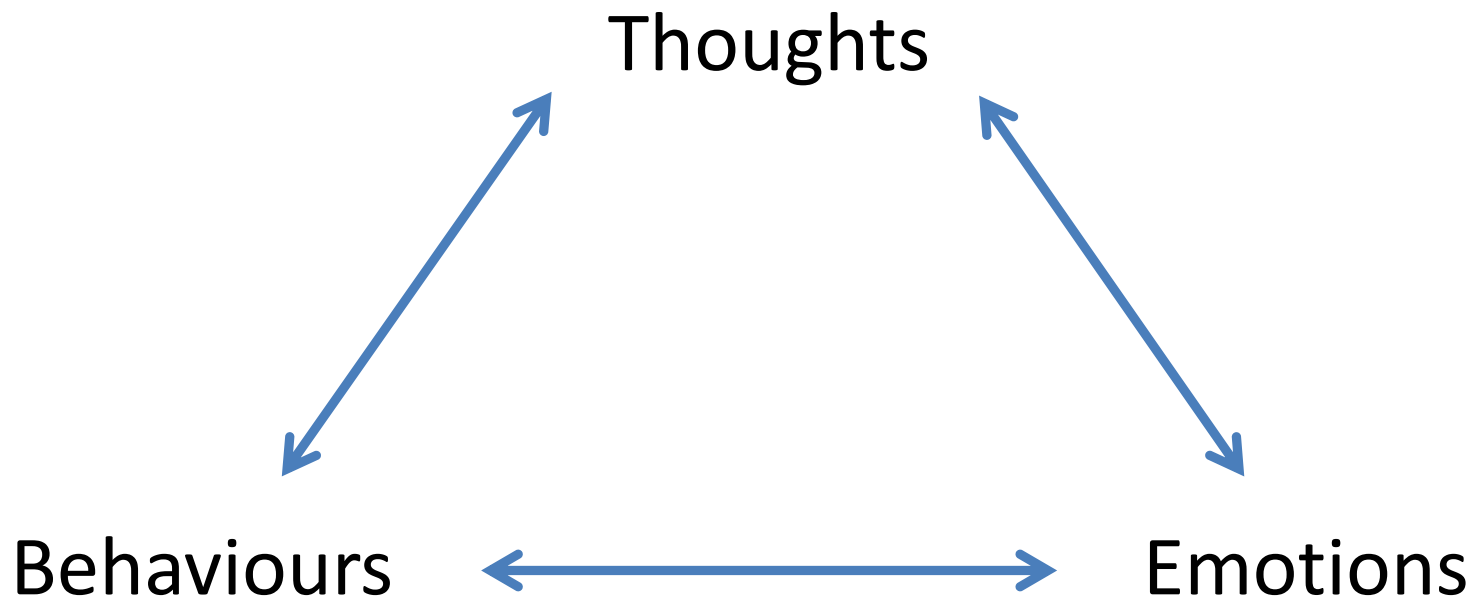
# Psychotherapy

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) – one of the most empirically valid therapies to treat mental health disorders
- Situation leads to certain, thoughts emotions and behaviours which area interconnected



# CBT

Situation occurs:



# CBT cont'd

- **Situation:** You see a friend walking down the street so you wave at them and they don't wave back

**Thoughts:** "They don't like me, I must've done something wrong"

**Emotions:** Sad, confused, depressed, anxious, vulnerable

**Behaviours:** Go home and cry, ignore them next time you see them, replay the scenario in your head repeatedly

# CBT cont'd

- Alternative thoughts to same situation

**Thought:** “They must not have seen me, maybe they’re preoccupied”

**Emotions:** Neutral

**Behaviours:** “Call friend later to see how they’re doing and check in”



# CBT cont'd

- Cognitive approach:
  - Identifying distorted thinking styles and negative core beliefs
  - Ex. Catastrophizing, All-or-nothing thinking, overgeneralization
  - Ex. “I’m not worthy”
  - Once patterns are identified we can actively work to reframe our thoughts
  - Leads to improved emotions and behaviours

# CBT cont'd

- Behavioural approach:
  - Identifying negative behaviours
  - Creating new/healthy behaviours
- Can be especially helpful for apathy/amotivation
  - Committing for 5 minutes
    - Action before Motivation
    - Non-negotiable
- Connecting to the WHY of your goals

# Mindfulness

- Practice staying present and in the moment without judgement
- Learn about your mind and how your thoughts come and go without reaction
  - 5 senses exercises
- Thoughts tend toward past/future
  - Notice and gently bring thoughts to the present
  - Replacing what “if” with what “is”

# Mindfulness cont'd

- Practice using guided recordings or apps (eg. Headspace, Calm)
- Practice throughout the day (eg. Eating, walking, sitting, driving, etc.)

# More Practical Tips

- Journalling thoughts, emotions, positive affirmations
- Practicing deep diaphragmatic breathing exercises
- Staying/getting active
- Limiting news and getting outside more
- Seeking support from professionals and loved ones

# Key Points

1. Depression and anxiety are real illnesses & can be treated.
2. Apathy is a common symptom that may co-exist with depression/anxiety
3. Acknowledging any mental health challenges is a critical step to getting better
4. Listen to others' observations about your changes in mood.
5. There are several treatments/therapies including CBT and mindfulness that you can learn on your own or with a mental health practitioner
6. Get the support you need!

# Questions or Comments?



# Thank you!

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