

Mental Health & Parkinson's

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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 neuro-degenerative 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

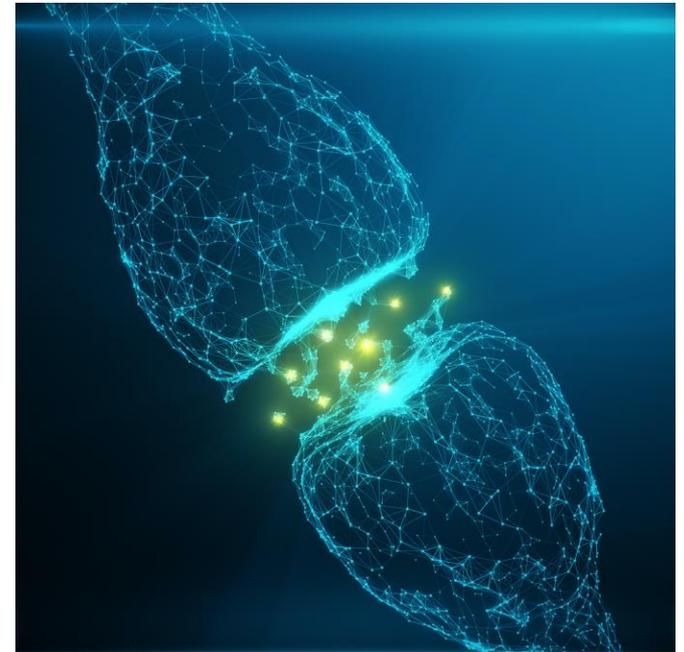
Apathy

- 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

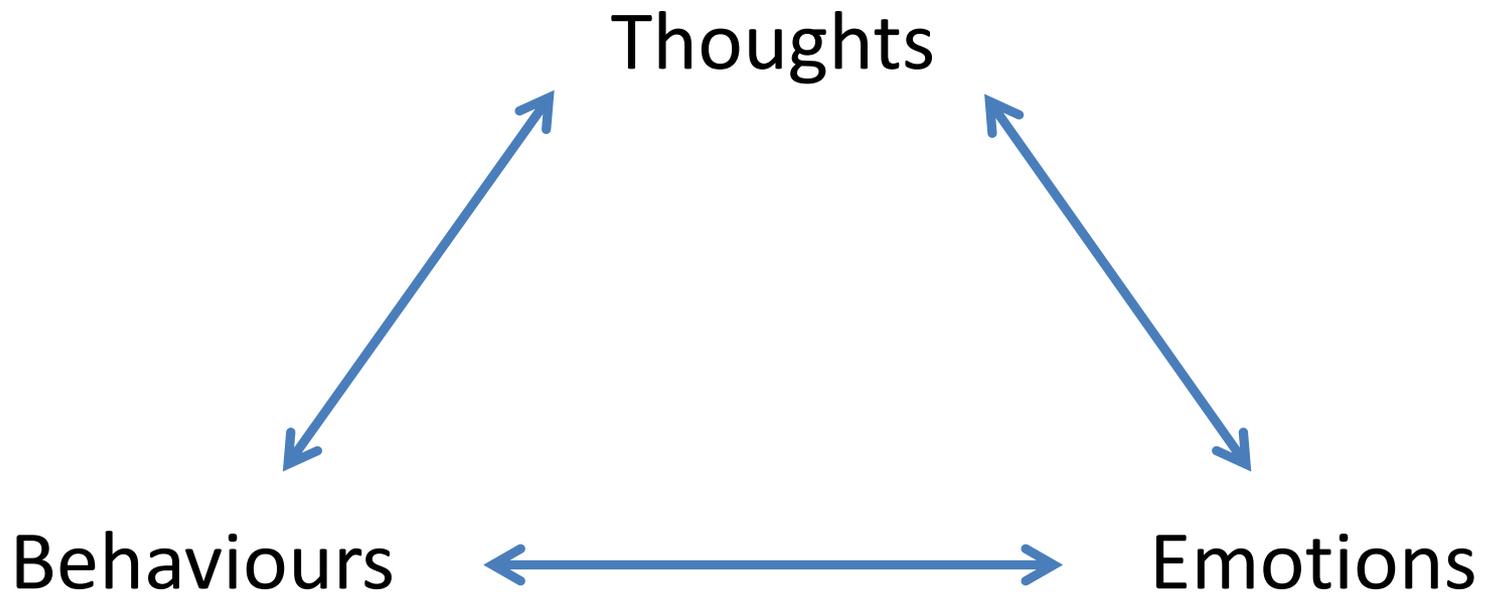
Psychotherapy

- 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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