

SPECIAL NOTICE

In response to the global outbreak of COVID-19, Parkinson Society BC (PSBC) 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, visit this web page: www.parkinson.bc.ca/coronavirus. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@parkinson.bc.ca.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **SongShine with Joani** | Thursdays, June 2 – July 7
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/songshine>
- **Caregiving Series**
 - **Part I: Panel Talk: Our Caregiving Stories** | Friday, June 3
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/caregiving-stories>
 - **Part II: Legal Considerations & Long-Term Health Planning** | Wednesday, June 8
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/caregiving-legalandhealth>
 - **Part III: Caregiving Stages: Learn Optimism, Discover Hope** | Wednesday, June 15
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/caregiving-stories>
- **Hand & Dexterity Exercise Series** | Tuesdays, June 7 – 28
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/handanddexterity>
- **Debriefing the Caregiver Role** | Thursday, June 9
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/debriefingcaregiverrole>
- **Voice Aerobics®** | Thursdays, June 16 – 30
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/voiceaerobicspd>
- **Regional Conference: Kelowna** | Saturday, June 18
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/kelownaregionalconference>
- **Getting Started with Writing Workshop Series**
 - **Information Session** | Wednesday, June 22
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/writingseriesinfosession>
 - **Writing Workshop** | Wednesdays, June 29 – July 20
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/writingworkshop>

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 disease (PD)? Become a Champion for Parkinson's and plan your own independent community fundraising event! Contact Gurshabad Singhera at gsinghera@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330 ext. 255.

TIP JAR

The Tip Jar is where we share advice from Parkinson's community members. This month, we share advice on accessibility and digital devices.

- Tip from 100 Mile Facilitator: Sometimes I get tremors in my hand, arm, when watching TV. I find squeezing a foam/stress ball while watching TV can help stop tremors in the hand or arms.

Do you have any tips or tricks that you would like to share with the Parkinson's 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

Updated provincial health orders regarding in-person support group meetings

As per the updated COVID-19 restrictions, PSBC will resume in-person support groups for those who sign the indoor meeting agreement. Support groups may still choose to access our Zoom accounts if they prefer to remain virtual. For facilitator inquiries, please email Liz Janze, Education & Support Services Coordinator, at ljanze@parkinson.bc.ca or call 1-800-668-3330 ext. 228

Volunteer as a community organizer for Parkinson SuperWalk

To make our largest fundraising event possible, we are seeking walk coordinators across three communities (Comox Valley, Langley, and Prince George). Learn more and apply at www.parkinson.bc.ca/sworgrecruit.

New! Healthcare Navigator role

The Society has hired a new part-time staff member who will be available to provide guidance for navigating the complexities of the healthcare system. You can access this assistance by contacting us at info@parkinson.bc.ca. A staff member will work with you to assess your needs.

Support the expansion of the Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) program in BC

In 2019, the BC Ministry of Health promised a second neurosurgeon to help reduce waitlist times for DBS surgeries. The waitlist to see Dr. Christopher Honey for initial DBS assessment is now up to four years. Once approved for surgery, the wait is up to an additional 12 months.

We need the BC Ministry of Health to follow through on their promise. TAKE ACTION and support our letter writing campaign today at www.parkinson.bc.ca/dbs.

Class action lawsuit: Gramoxone® (paraquat)

Gramoxone® is an herbicide used to control weeds and grasses with an active ingredient called paraquat. It is alleged that paraquat exposure is linked to Parkinson's disease (PD). Law firm Siskinds Desmeules has filed proposed class action lawsuits on behalf of all Canadians who have been diagnosed with PD after using and/or being exposed to Gramoxone®, since July 1, 1963. To learn more, visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/gramoxoneclassaction.

COVID-19 vaccination

Throughout 2022, COVID-19 vaccines will be made available to all Canadians. 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.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Anxiety

Discussion Questions

1. How does anxiety appear in your life with Parkinson's disease?
2. How do you cope with symptoms of anxiety if they occur?
3. What are some triggers that cause anxiety to flare up in your life that you can outline and learn to identify?

Parkinson's disease (PD) is classified as a movement disorder; however, non-motor symptoms, including changes in mental health, are experienced by many people living with the disease. In fact, at least 50% of people with PD experience anxiety. Stress is a natural and normal emotion that can be experienced by everyone. Whether it be work, family, or everyday challenges, stress can appear in our lives as a response to external situations (Gilbert, 2020). Anxiety, on the other hand, is a response to internal forces; changes in the brain's chemistry occur, resulting in persistent worrying in the absence of a stressor (Gilbert, 2020). Anxiety is a real medical condition that can affect anyone on an emotional, physical, behavioural, and cognitive level. Even though mental health challenges are acknowledged to be a common symptom of PD, anxiety is undertreated and misdiagnosed in those living with Parkinson's (Chen & Marsh, 2014).

Causes of anxiety in PD

Researchers believe that mental health changes in those living with PD are due to the chemical imbalances that are caused by the disease itself (The Michael J. Fox Foundation, n.d.). The pathways that create dopamine, a neurotransmitter and hormone in the brain that affects movement, memory, and motivation, are impacted by Parkinson's disease (The Michael J. Fox Foundation, n.d.). These same pathways also aid in the creation of the brain chemical serotonin, which is responsible for regulating mood, appetite, and sleep (The Michael J. Fox Foundation,

n.d.). As a result, scientists believe that the impact on dopamine and serotonin pathways causes changes in mental health, such as anxiety disorders, for individuals living with the disease.

Barriers to diagnosis and treatment

There are many treatments available for anxiety, but several factors can delay early diagnosis and treatment. According to Chen & Marsh (2014), diagnostic imprecision can occur due to symptoms of anxiety overlapping with other mental health challenges associated with PD, such as depression and psychotic anxiety. Other barriers to diagnosis are as follows:

- Mental health concerns are stigmatized. Some people can feel embarrassed about what they are experiencing and, as a result, may ignore their mental health. Others may also deny being depressed or anxious.
- Many healthcare professionals, including family physicians, are unaware that mood and anxiety disorders are a common symptom of PD. Depression and anxiety may thus go unnoticed and untreated.
- The general public does not understand that changes in mental health can be a direct result of PD, making these symptoms more difficult to discuss openly.

Anxiety is most commonly diagnosed by a primary care doctor or mental health professional. During the appointment, the care provider will have a conversation with the individual about any changes in mood and behaviours. They may also ask the individual to fill out a questionnaire that helps assess the symptoms and severity of anxiety (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).

Consider asking yourself the following questions to determine if anxiety is a part of your life with PD:

- Have my sleep patterns, appetite, energy levels, or sexual function changed recently?
- Am I more irritable and/or worried than I used to be?
- Am I having difficulty concentrating?
- Am I unmotivated to do things?

If the answer to even one of these questions is yes, you may be experiencing mental health changes and should consider talking to your doctor about anxiety.

Common symptoms include:

- Emotional symptoms:
 - Feeling fear and/or nervousness
 - Having excessive worry
- Physical symptoms:
 - Increase in heart rate and blood pressure
 - 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

Types of Anxiety

It is important to understand anxiety is a common non-motor symptom of Parkinson's disease, and not only a reaction to the diagnosis and challenges of life with PD. There are several types of anxiety disorders, and as many as two out of five people with PD will experience one of the following:

- General anxiety disorder (GAD):
 - Characterized by recurring feelings of nervousness, worrying, and fear, typically lasting consistently for a long period of time. Physical symptoms can include nausea, trouble breathing, increased heartbeat, sweating, and increased tremors (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).
- Anxiety attacks:
 - Can mimic the feeling of a heart attack and usually start with severe physical and emotional stress. These attack episodes can last from a few minutes to an hour.

When they occur during PD 'off' periods, such as when levodopa is not working optimally, they can last for longer periods of time (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).

- Social anxiety:
 - May result in the avoidance of everyday social experiences, which can be due to embarrassment of PD symptoms, such as tremors and dyskinesia (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD):
 - May result in the urge to participate in certain routines (compulsions) to control persistent and unwelcome thoughts/images. Some examples include being obsessed with germs, resulting in excessive handwashing. Not engaging in compulsions results in an increase in anxiety (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).

Treatment

Fortunately, there are many options available for treating anxiety. It is best to consult your physician to decide which option is ideal for you. Medications used to treat anxiety in PD are also used to treat depression; selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as sertraline and paroxetine, as well as norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), such as venlafaxine, may be good choices (Gilbert, 2020).

Psychotherapy, including cognitive behavioural therapy

Cognitive behavioural therapy, also known as CBT, is one of the most empirically researched therapies known to treat mental health disorders. This style of therapy reworks the thinking process, mapping out how situations lead to certain thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. In CBT, you will begin to identify the distorted thinking styles and negative beliefs that provoke anxiety, such as catastrophizing, feelings of unworthiness, and overgeneralization. Through self-awareness of these thought patterns, we can proactively begin to retrain our thoughts and behaviours.

Mindfulness

Learning to stay present is especially helpful when treating anxiety. Through mindfulness and mindful exercises, you are learning more about your mind and how to allow even difficult thoughts to pass, without them eliciting a strong emotional reaction. Simple exercises, such as mindful breathing, walking, or using guided meditations through apps such as Headspace, can transform your thought process and overall lifestyle.

Other treatment options

Other practical lifestyle changes and tips to include in your daily life to mitigate anxiety include:

- Journaling thoughts and positive affirmations
- Staying physically active
- The support of friends and family, which is crucial during episodes of depression and anxiety. Do not hesitate to ask for help, even if just to set aside a time to talk to someone
- Educating yourself on anxiety, as well as other PD symptoms
- Joining a support group. The Society offers support groups in almost all areas BC; learn more [here](#)
- Counselling, which may help you monitor your mental health changes, and provide you with support in establishing self-management strategies. Consider Parkinson Society BC's free, short-term [counselling](#).

Additional Resources

Mental Health and Parkinson's | Helpsheet | <https://bit.ly/mentalhealthandpd>

Mental Health and Parkinson's | Video | <https://bit.ly/symposiumseries-mentalhealthinpd>

Mindfulness and Parkinson's | Video | <https://bit.ly/mindfulnessandpd>

Dr. Andrew Howard discusses problematic anxiety in people with Parkinson's | Viewpoints Article (p. 3 – 5) | <https://bit.ly/viewpointsspring-22>

Assessing and Managing Problematic Anxiety in Patients with Parkinson's Disease | Video |
<https://bit.ly/annualgeneralmeeting-20>

Sources

Anxiety. (n.d.). Parkinson's Foundation.

<https://www.parkinson.org/Understanding-Parkinsons/Symptoms/Non-Movement-Symptoms/Anxiety#:~:text=Anxiety%20is%20a%20common%20non,brain%20chemistry%20of%20the%20brain.>

Chen, J. J., & Marsh, L. (2014). Anxiety in Parkinson's disease: identification and management. *Therapeutic advances in neurological disorders*, 7(1), 52–59.

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Depression & Anxiety. (n.d.). The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

<https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/depression-anxiety>

Gilbert, R. (2020, February 12). The relationship between stress, anxiety and Parkinson's disease. APDA.

<https://www.apdaparkinson.org/article/stress-anxiety-parkinsons-disease/>