

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Bollywood Dance** | Thursday, February 1
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/bollywoodjan-23>
- **SongShine with Joani (Series 1)** | Thursdays, February 1, 8 & 15
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/songshinejanfeb-24>
- **Forming New Connections: PD Dating and Friendships** | Monday, February 5
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/newconnections-24>
- **Move with Martial Arts: Karate Fundamentals** | Tuesdays, February 6, 13, 20 & 27
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/martialartsfeb-23>
- **New Diagnosis Workshop Series** | February
 - **Introduction to Causes, Diagnosis, and Symptoms** | Tuesday, February 6
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/ndfeb-1>
 - **Treatment and Management** | Wednesday, February 14
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/ndfeb-2>
 - **Living Well** | Tuesday, February 20
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/ndfeb-3>
 - **Your Healthcare Team** | Thursday, February 29
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/ndfeb-4>
- **DOPABEATS (Series 1)** | Wednesdays, February 7, 14, 21, 28 and March 6 & 13
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/dopafeb-24>
- **Communication and Swallow Workshop (Abbotsford)** | Saturday, February 10
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/commswall-ab24>
- **Songshine with Joani (Series 2)** | Thursdays, February 29, March 7, 14, 21, 28 & April 4
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/songshinefeb-24>
- **Rock Steady Boxing (Level 3)** | Tuesdays, March 5, 12, 19, 26 and April 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/rsb-marapr24>
- **DOPABEATS (Series 2)** | Wednesdays, March 27, April 3, 10, 17, 24 & May 1
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/dopamar-24>

For a full list of our upcoming events, visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/events/education-events/

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS**Donate a Car Canada**

[Donate a Car Canada](#) accepts vehicle donations for Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC)! Free towing is provided in most areas across Canada. When you donate your car, truck, RV, boat, or motorcycle to PSBC through Donate A Car Canada, it will either be recycled or sold at auction (depending on its condition, age, and location). After your vehicle donation is complete, PSBC will send you a tax receipt and will put your gift to good use.

We are looking for more Champions!

Do you want to help fund research, grow support networks, and improve the 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 us at events@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

TIP JAR

The Tip Jar is where we share advice from Parkinson's community members on a wide range of topics from daily lifestyle hacks to safety. This month we share a tip to ease daily movements:

Consider incorporating music into your daily routine to aid in movement and enhance overall well-being. Engage in activities like rhythmic walking or dancing to the beat of the music. The rhythmic patterns can serve as cues for smoother and more coordinated movements, helping to alleviate some of the motor challenges associated with Parkinson's disease. Additionally, the emotional benefits of music can uplift your mood and contribute to a positive mindset. Choose music that resonates with you and suits your preferences, making it an enjoyable and therapeutic part of your daily life!

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***Seeking Support Group Facilitators***

Parkinson Society British Columbia is currently seeking volunteer support group facilitators for Abbotsford (in-person), Tri-Cities/Coquitlam Caregivers (in-person), West Kelowna (in-person) and Langley (in person). If you're interested in starting your own support group in your area, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#). [\[learn more\]](#)

Volunteer Opportunity: Parkinson SuperWalk Organizers

Join us in organizing our biggest fundraiser of the year, Parkinson SuperWalk! We're seeking passionate leaders to coordinate this fundraising event in areas around BC. If you're community-minded, compassionate, detail-oriented, we would love to hear from you! Commit 4-5 hours per week and make a meaningful impact. [\[learn more\]](#)

Join PSBC's Book Club!

PSBC's Book Club is a social club for like-minded people who have PD, or carepartners of those with PD, to meet and discuss books that are selected by the peer committee or group members. The group meets at 11:30 am on the first Thursday of each month. If you are interested in joining this virtual, peer-led book club, please contact [Kelly Felgenhauer](#).

Renew your Membership!

Renew or join as a member! It's that time of the year again. If you haven't already, consider joining or renewing your membership with Parkinson Society BC (PSBC) to take advantage of a variety of benefits and lend your voice to the community. Together, we're better. [\[learn more\]](#)

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Intimacy and Communication***Discussion Questions***

1. How has Parkinson's disease impacted your experience of intimacy in various aspects of your life, such as romantic relationships, friendships, and self-care?

2. What are some strategies you've found useful in navigating challenges with intimacy and open communication? What are some steps you've taken to strengthen your intimacy with others?
3. *Optional:* Given the emphasis on prioritizing emotional intimacy, how have you and your partner actively nurtured this aspect of your relationship?

Parkinson's disease affects various aspects of a person's life, including intimacy and communication, consequently impacting interpersonal relationships. As individuals navigate the challenges posed by Parkinson's, maintaining healthy relationships becomes crucial for overall well-being and emotional health.

Intimacy

Intimacy can be described as the "closeness between people in personal relationships [that] builds over time as you connect with someone, grow to care about each other, and feel more and more comfortable during your time together" (Johnson, 2019). We can find intimacy in many different areas of our lives – romantic relationships, friendships, family, self-care, following passions, pursuing hobbies, and more. Parkinson's disease can affect both the physical and emotional aspects of intimacy. Motor symptoms, such as tremors and stiffness, may contribute to physical limitations, impacting an individual's ability to engage in intimate activities (Bronner & Korczyn, 2017). Additionally, non-motor symptoms like depression, anxiety, and mood changes can affect emotional closeness and communication within relationships. Understanding these challenges is crucial for individuals and their loved ones to foster a supportive and empathetic environment.

The Seven Aspects of Intimacy

The concept of intimacy is multifaceted, encompassing various elements that collectively build a strong and meaningful relationship. The Seven Aspects of Intimacy provide a guiding framework for understanding and cultivating deep connections (Johnson, 2019).

1. Trust
2. Acceptance
3. Honesty
4. Safety
5. Compassion
6. Affection
7. Communication

These pillars are not static; they require ongoing attention and effort to maintain and strengthen over time. One of the main ways these pillars are met is through conversation – sharing experiences you’ve been through, both good and bad, the way it made you feel, and then receiving compassion and understanding from the other party. It can be valuable to reflect on one's own relationships and consider areas that could be enhanced.

Practical Tips to Nurture Romantic Intimacy

Here are some suggestions for creating a deeper intimacy with your loved one:

- **Open Communication:** Establishing open and honest communication is fundamental. Both people in the relationship should feel comfortable expressing their feelings, concerns, and desires. This can help in creating a supportive environment where both individuals understand each other’s experiences and emotions.
- **Educate Loved Ones:** Knowledge is empowering. Partners, friends, and family should educate themselves about Parkinson's disease, its symptoms, and the potential impact on intimacy. Understanding the condition can reduce misunderstandings and foster empathy. Share resources with those who can benefit from learning more about Parkinson’s.
- **Quality time:** Amid everyone's hectic schedules and life's inevitable busyness, prioritizing uninterrupted time together is crucial, even for those who share the same living space (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.). Whether it's simply watching an episode of a favorite TV show in the evening or savoring a cup of tea before bed, intentionally carving

out time for one another remains an essential practice in building and nurturing intimacy.

- **Adapt and Experiment:** Experimenting with new ways to connect intimately can be key. Finding activities that accommodate physical limitations and maximize one's abilities to maintain a satisfying connection (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.). Use all your senses to enrich intimacy, especially in the realm of physical intimacy. Shift the focus away from goal orientation and, instead, prioritize pleasure. This mindset shift can elevate the overall experience, contributing to a more fulfilling and satisfying connection.
- **Patience and understanding:** The struggles of PD, accompanied by the realities of getting older, means your body may look, feel, or respond differently than the way it did when you were younger. Depending on the way you deal with this, it can bring you closer to your loved one or be a cause of potential emotional stress and distance. It may be helpful to place your focus on enjoying each other and being comfortable, as opposed to performance (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.). Think about your bond before Parkinson's and be patient with one another as you learn to navigate the physical and emotional challenges of intimacy together.
- **Seek Professional Guidance:** Approximately 50% of men and women with Parkinson's disease will experience some form of intimacy and sexual problems (Bronner & Korczyn, 2017). You are not alone with the symptoms, and you are not alone if you have difficulty talking about it. Sexual dysfunction with Parkinson's can be attributed to symptoms such as "pain, limitation of movement, fatigue, and sleep disorders – coupled with emotional challenges such as anxiety and depression – as well as medication side effects" (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.). It is important to not feel embarrassed about any issues you may be dealing with around physical intimacy and sex and to have an open dialogue with your healthcare professional who may be able to answer questions and offer solutions.
- **Prioritize Emotional Intimacy:** While physical intimacy may face challenges, emotional intimacy can be deepened. Nurturing emotional intimacy involves actively listening to one another and providing a supportive environment where feelings are acknowledged and validated. Engaging in shared activities whether it's reminiscing about cherished

memories or exploring shared interests that evoke positive emotions, can also strengthen emotional intimacy.

Open Communication

Open communication stands as a foundational pillar of intimacy, playing a crucial role in building and maintaining meaningful relationships. Open communication serves many benefits including:

- **Enhanced Understanding:** Open communication allows both people/partners to express their thoughts, emotions, and concerns freely. This exchange of information enhances mutual understanding and empathy and fosters a deeper connection between individuals. It allows individuals to comfortably show up as themselves in a relationship.
- **Emotional Support:** Through open dialogue, individuals with Parkinson's can articulate their emotional experiences, allowing their support network/partners to provide targeted emotional support. This is particularly important given the prevalence of non-motor symptoms, such as depression and anxiety, that often accompany Parkinson's.
- **Overcome Challenges Together:** Open communication creates a platform for individuals and their loved ones to address the challenges posed by Parkinson's collaboratively. By sharing concerns and brainstorming solutions, people with Parkinson's can navigate the complexities of the condition as a united front.

For individuals with Parkinson's disease, fostering open dialogue becomes especially vital, considering the unique challenges posed by the condition. Misunderstandings can easily arise, as direct verbal communication may be hindered by the phenomenon known as "facial masking." This occurs when the stiffness and slowness that impact various activities in individuals with PD extend to the facial muscles, making it challenging to interpret their expressions (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.). This can unintentionally convey a lack of interest, adding a layer of complexity to interpersonal dynamics. Recognizing the unique hurdles posed by Parkinson's, fostering open dialogue becomes essential.

Fostering Open Dialogue

Navigating open communication can be a challenging endeavor, often easier said than done. Fostering an open dialogue requires a continuous and concerted effort. Here are some tips to help create an open dialogue to build and maintain healthy relationships:

- **Establish a Safe Space:** Create an environment where both people/partners feel safe expressing their thoughts and emotions without fear of judgment. Ask one another what is needed to feel secure on a personal level. Emphasize the importance of openness and assure each other that the relationship is a space for mutual support.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Schedule regular check-ins to discuss how each person/partner is feeling physically and emotionally. These check-ins provide an opportunity to address concerns early on and prevent potential misunderstandings or escalation of issues.
- **Active Listening:** Practice active listening, focusing on fully understanding the message being conveyed. Avoid interrupting, and multitasking during conversations, and allow one another ample time to express oneself.
- **Encourage Expression of Emotions:** Emphasize the importance of expressing emotions, whether positive or challenging. Encourage the use of words to describe feelings, developing a deeper emotional connection.
- **Utilize Alternative Communication Methods:** Recognize and explore alternative communication methods, such as written communication or visual cues, especially if speech difficulties arise. These methods can serve as effective supplements to verbal communication.

Maintaining intimacy and effective communication is essential for individuals with Parkinson's and their trusted social network/partners. Understanding the challenges posed by the disease, along with implementing practical strategies, can contribute to a fulfilling and supportive relationship. In addressing these matters of intimacy, it is crucial that they are treated with care, compassion, and empathy. By fostering open communication, adapting to physical changes, and seeking professional guidance, individuals with Parkinson's can navigate the complexities

of intimacy and communication, promoting a higher quality of life for themselves and their loved ones.

Additional Resources

- Sexual Intimacy and Parkinson's [[helpsheet](#)]
- Intimacy and Sexual Health [[view video](#)]

References

Bronner, G., & Korczyn, A. D. (2017). The Role of Sex Therapy in the Management of Patients with Parkinson's Disease. *Movement Disorders Clinical Practice*, 5(1), 6–13.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/mdc3.12561>

Johnson, M. (2019, April 16). *How to Understand and Build Intimacy in Every Relationship* (J. Brito, Ed.). Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/intimacy>

Parkinson's Foundation. (n.d.). *Intimacy and PD*. www.parkinson.org.

<https://www.parkinson.org/library/fact-sheets/intimacy>