**EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

Just as the right diet and medications are key to living well with Parkinson’s disease (PD), maintaining emotional health is essential to your physical health. A person diagnosed with Parkinson’s often feels a flood of emotions, as do their loved ones.

Accepting and successfully navigating those feelings, whether anger, sadness, grief or even denial, is important. Stress can make PD symptoms worse. By focusing on your strengths, nurturing caring relationships, sharing your concerns, embracing healthy behaviors and your spirituality, you can better cope with the potential challenges of PD.

**Working Through Feelings**

PD symptoms and treatments can affect your mood. Depression and anxiety affect up to 50 percent of people living with PD. These mood changes can bring on worsening function, leading to a decreased quality of life. Tending to your emotional health keeps this cycle at bay. Tell your doctor, who can recommend the right medical treatments. But also consider counseling, for you, and your loved ones if necessary, and a local or online PD support group.

Counseling sessions — alone, as a couple, family or in a group — can provide support, understanding and education. A PD support group can offer a venue to share your experience with those on a similar journey. This can lift stress, foster new friendships and prevent isolation.

**Embracing Hope**

Taking a deep look at the positive aspects of your life and nurturing them so that they grow, can change your emotional outlook. Embracing these positives — family, friends or a new or favorite hobby — can offer respite when things are difficult.

Trust yourself to handle any challenges that a PD diagnosis may bring. Reflecting on past trials you may have weathered can give you confidence in your capability to withstand any future tests.

**Build a Network**

Do not underestimate the impact of a strong support network. It is important to share your feelings and needs. Family, friends and neighbors often want to help, but may need your direction.

The bigger your aid network, the better. Having people and groups to emotionally support you and those who can help with basic needs, such as transportation or meal preparation, prevents any one person from taking on too many responsibilities and becoming overwhelmed.

**Diet & Exercise**

Healthy behaviors, including attention to diet, meal planning and regular moderate exercise also can improve emotional well-being. The foods you eat and when you eat them, can impact how you feel. Having a meal plan in place can reduce worry and ensure healthy eating.

Regular exercise, including yoga, Tai Chi| An ancient Chinese martial art and exercise characterized by gentle, flowing movement couple with breathing. Has been shown to improve symptoms of PD.]​ and boxing, can improve PD symptoms and mental health.

**Spirituality**

Focusing on the deeper meaning of your life and embracing faith or moral-based core values can offer comfort. Placing your trust in a divine power or the belief in a greater outside influence or plan, may ease the acceptance of things you cannot control and free your mental energy to focus on the things you can.

Spirituality means something different for everyone. Though it sometimes includes religion, it doesn’t have to. Prayer, meditation and acts of service, such as volunteering, are some ways people with PD find strength, inner peace, happiness and a deeper connection to the divine or their community.

*Taking control of the things that you can will help you minimize stress. Simplify your daily schedule. Set short-term goals. Plan nutritious meals in advance. Focus on what you can do and ask for help where you need it. Be open and honest about what you are going through, rather than isolating yourself.*

<https://www.parkinson.org/>