

*Depression and Anxiety-the side  
of Parkinson's we do not see!*

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# Objectives

- ▶ **What are the behavioral challenges most common in Parkinson's disease?**
- ▶ **What is anxiety, depression and apathy in PD and why so prevalent?**
- ▶ **What is PDP?**
- ▶ **Discuss why mood disorders in PD are concerning and what PWP's and their families can do something to address these issues**



# **Mood disorders are common in Parkinson's Disease**

**70-80% of patients with Parkinson's will suffer from anxiety, depression, hallucinations, delusions or behavioral disorders at some point in their Parkinson's journey**

- 25 % will experience a major depressive disorder**
- 30 % will experience panic disorders**
- 50% anxiety**

**These non motor symptoms are often much more worrisome to the patient and family than the motor symptoms**



# When to pay attention

- ▶ **When mood disorders become so predominant that they begin to interfere with your ability to do day to day activities, these mood disorders need to be addressed.**
  - ▶ **Joanne Hamilton, PhD  
neuropsychologist**



# What causes mood issues in PD?

- ▶ **Related to the disease process (changes in norepinephrine, serotonin and dopamine)**
- ▶ **A reaction to the diagnosis, altered interpersonal roles, disability and other psychosocial factors**
- ▶ **Interaction between the disease and dopaminergic treatments for the disease:**
  - ▶ **psychosis and dopamine meds**
  - ▶ **impulse control disorders and dopamine agonists**





# *Anxiety in Parkinson's*



# **Anxiety disorders in PD**

- ▶ **Anxiety disorders are more common in PD than in the general population**
- ▶ **Internal anxiety-all the “what if’s”**
- ▶ **Anxiety disorders in PD - social phobia, on-off episodes, panic disorders**



# Parkinson's plus anxiety can cause:

- ▶ **Worry about things out of their control**
- ▶ **Worry about being a burden**
- ▶ **Worry about the future**
- ▶ **Worry about cognitive decline**
- ▶ **Worry about falling**
- ▶ **Worry about their financial future**





# Anxiety....when to worry

- ▶ **Persistent worry**
- ▶ **Inability to relax**
- ▶ **Restlessness (inside and outside of the body)**
- ▶ **Irritability**
- ▶ **Muscle tension**
- ▶ **Sweating**
- ▶ **Shortness of breath**
- ▶ **Weight change(up or down)**
- ▶ **Difficulty sleeping**





# Panic as a part of anxiety...

**SOB, heart palpitations,  
difficulty breathing,  
internal “angst”**





# Depression in Parkinson's

- ▶ **A sad mood that is persistent, numb, day after day, weeks on end**
- ▶ **Intense loss of pleasure**
- ▶ **Inability to express joy the way they used to**





# Depression is more than just feeling sad.....

- ▶ **Disrupted sleep**
- ▶ **Lack of motivation**
- ▶ **Lack of energy**
- ▶ **Reduced libido**
- ▶ **Loss of pleasure**
- ▶ **Worthlessness**
- ▶ **Guilt**
- ▶ **Feeling fatigued**
- ▶ **Difficulty making decisions**
- ▶ **Sleep changes**
- ▶ **Weight gain or loss**
- ▶ **Fatigue-ADL's difficult**
- ▶ **Suicidal ideation**



# Depression has a negative impact on Parkinson's disease

- ▶ **Depression in PD is associated with:**
  - **Cognitive decline caused by anxiety, depression, PDP**
  - **Mood disorders affects QOL more than motor symptoms (2 x more!)**



# Apathy

- ▶ **Characterized by lack of initiation or motivation**
- ▶ **Brain no longer telling this person “you must get it done”**
- ▶ **Reduced or absent drive affecting interest or activity**
- ▶ **Emotion and interest IS there once you get them started**



# Apathy

- ▶ **Studies show that medication like Exelon may be helpful**
- ▶ **Provide structured environment**
- ▶ **Arrange for a few activities every week**
- ▶ **If you take them, they will go**



# **PDP (Parkinson's Disease Psychosis)**

- ▶ **Occurs in greater than 50% of all people with Parkinson's**
- ▶ **Starts with a “sense of presence”**
- ▶ **Most hallucinations are visual in nature, can affect all the senses**
- ▶ **Delusions usually follow hallucinations**
- ▶ **Usually can be successfully treated with Nuplazid (only FDA approved medication for PDP) or other atypical antipsychotics**



# Now the good news.....

**Most mood disorders in Parkinson's can be successfully treated with a combination of medications and behavioral therapies**





# Many choices when it comes to antidepressants

- ▶ **SSRI's: Lexapro, Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft, Celexa**
- ▶ **SNRI's (selective serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors): Effexor, Cymbalta**
- ▶ **Tricyclic antidepressants: Nortriptyline, Amitriptyline**
- ▶ **Others: Wellbutrin, Remeron**
- ▶ **ALL take ~6 weeks to take effect: BE PATIENT!**



# Solution suggestions...

- ▶ **Antidepressant medication (it works!)**
  - ▶ **Effexor (Venlafaxine) SNRI**
    - ▶ **Generic and affordable**
    - ▶ **Best evidence for effectiveness**
    - ▶ **Addresses pain and depression**





# **Non pharmacological solution suggestions...**

- ▶ **Refer to specialty psychological services (study with NPF showed better outcomes than medication alone)**
- ▶ **Help with recovery**
- ▶ **Help reduce a reoccurrence of anxiety and depression**
- ▶ **Build skills for coping with stressful situations**



# Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- ▶ **Very effective for depression and anxiety**
- ▶ **Helps change thought patterns and set reactions to certain situations**
- ▶ **Behavioral piece: must exercise, agree to social interaction and do something you love every day**
- ▶ **Cognitive piece: how interpreting things in your life, change pattern of negative thinking, self talk**



# Exercise is Medicine!

- ▶ **Four weeks of treadmill training shown to improve cognition, mood, gait and executive function (Pacelli, 2016)**
- ▶ **Aerobic exercise improves executive function (Reynolds et al., 2016, Uc et al., 2014)**
- ▶ **Exercise that link mental and physical attention such as RSB, yoga and tai Chi**
- ▶ **During Covid-not moving as much..you would not stop taking your meds while stuck at home, don't stop exercising!**



# The impact of mood on Care Partners

- ▶ **Family members: tremendous amount of emotional strain**
- ▶ **May become frustrated, depressed or anxious**
- ▶ **May become fatigued, angry, overwhelmed and deeply saddened**
- ▶ **May fight with loved one to keep up activities**



# Care Partner Stress

- **Regular episodes of crying (taking on many new roles)**
- **Aches and pains that won't go away**
- **Trouble staying focused, remembering, or making decisions**
- **Grim feelings about the future**
- **Feeling guilty, helpless, or worthless**
- **Feeling irritable or stressed**
- **Thoughts of death or suicide**
- **Stomach ache and digestive problems**





# Take a personal inventory

**Answer the following questions “yes” or “no”:**

- **Do I get six hours of uninterrupted sleep most nights?**
- **Do I have a period of time alone every day?**
- **Is there someone I could/would phone if a problem arose any time day or night?**
- **Is there someone in my circle of family or friends who would give or loan me money in case of financial hardship?**
- **Does at least one other person fully understand the day-to-day trials I experience?**
- **Do I take regular planned breaks and mini-holidays away from caregiving responsibilities?**



*Navigating through the  
emotional challenges of PD:  
educate, get support, resources*



# Dealing with Mood Changes in your PWP

- **Limit distractions**
- **Limit choices**
- **Simplify your daily schedule - 1 to 2 events a day**
  - **daily exercise for your PWP**
  - **social activities for your PWP**
  - **schedule time you can be with your friends (small groups)**
- **Know that the psychological and emotional impact of mood changes can be profound**



*Care Partner's  
Motto*

*(repeat daily)*

our.giving.com  
INFINITY

**TAKE CARE OF  
YOURSELF FIRST**

**or you will have  
nothing left to give  
others.**

**SELF-CARE  
is not selfishness.  
You cannot serve  
others from an  
empty vessel.**



# Next steps:

- ▶ **Accept and get help** and support from family and friends
  - ▶ Ask family and friends for specific help (Lunch and the barber)
  - ▶ <https://lotsahelpinghands.com>
- ▶ **SPEAK UP!** Don't isolate.
- ▶ **Sleep** - IMPORTANT!
- ▶ Get **Professional help** if you need it!
- ▶ **Support groups**
- ▶ Create opportunities for “**care breaks**”





# Be open with Family and Friends





# Manage your stress:

- **Call a friend**
- **Get a massage**
- **Watch your favorite TV show**
- **Exercise!!!!!!!!!!**
- **Tend the garden**
- **Take 10 deep breaths**



# Resources for you and your loved ones:

- ▶ [psychologytoday.com](http://psychologytoday.com)
  - ▶ [parkinsonsassociation.org](http://parkinsonsassociation.org)
  - ▶ [southerncaeregiversresourcecenter.org](http://southerncaeregiversresourcecenter.org)
- ▶ Don't forget the mentor program through the Parkinson's Association of San Diego!



*Speaking about  
exercise, research  
and power over  
Parkinson's...*







KILIMANJARO 2011





*Thank you!*

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