

Mood & Mental Health:

Building Your Care Partner Self-Care Toolbox

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UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF BRAIN DISEASE®



What is Mental Well-Being?

- Emotional journey of Parkinson's, of caring
 - “Two-way street”
- Parkinson's care partner identity
 - Feeling like you have to be “strong,” “keep an even keel”
- Mood & mental well-being outside of Parkinson's
- How we talk to ourselves, about ourselves
- “How are you?”



Stigma

- Mental health stigma
 - Embedded in historical treatment of mentally ill, of women
 - Internalized
 - Major barrier to participation in mental health services
 - People not recognizing/sharing, providers not asking
- Parkinson's stigma
- Leading to:
 - Marginalization, isolation
 - Pathologizing of the human experience
 - Under-recognition and under-addressing

Know the Signs

- Depression
 - Frequent crying
 - General sadness
 - Decreased pleasure in previously enjoyed activities
 - Thoughts of hurting yourself or others, death, or suicide
 - Frequent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness
- Anxiety
 - Preoccupied worrying or negative thoughts, that may also cause sleeplessness
 - A sense of panic, including heart racing, trembling, and sweating
 - Avoidance of certain situations or settings that cause anxiety or stress
 - Increased sense of general fear

Know the Signs

- Signs of burnout can include:
 - Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
 - Not attending to your physical health
 - Short-temperedness

Checking In

- How am I feeling? Like, *really*, feeling?
- What are my triggers?
- The most stressful aspect of caring for someone with Parkinson's is:
- The most rewarding aspect of caring for someone with Parkinson's is:
- These three things bring me the most joy:
- A part of my mental well-being I need to pay more attention to is:
 - What is needed to make that happen?
 - One small change I can make just for me is:

Make a Plan, Gather Support

- Find ways to manage your stress
- Asking for and accepting help
- Connect with others
- Have someone check in with you
- Tell your health care provider, if they don't ask you
- Seek professional support for mental health if needed
 - [Psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)

Tips From My Parkinson's Support Group

- “Medications and therapy”
- “Finding time away from Parkinson's”
- “Daily walks, connecting with nature”
- “Learning how to breathe”
- “Chatting with a friend”
- “Safe space to talk about it... instead of trying to fix it”



Self-Advocacy

- “Here is how you can support me”
- “That’s not what I’m needing right now”
- Defining what mental well-being means for *your* life
- Changing conversations around mood and mental health



Courage and Permission

- To feel all the feelings, to name them
- To be vulnerable and know that is ok
- To learn from this experience
- To listen to your needs, to know when you need help
- To recognize your own capacity
- To show up for yourself





