

## Benefits of Peer Support

Living with Parkinson's or caring for someone with Parkinson's is full of challenges, but you don't have to feel alone. Fight Parkinson's currently operates numerous peer support groups.

A Peer Support Group (PSG) is an informal gathering of people who share similar experiences, situations or problems. Parkinson's peer groups are ideal for people living with Parkinson's, their carers, friends and family members. Meetings are informal and friendly and new participants are always welcome.

PSGs offer participants a chance to connect with others while offering each other emotional and practical support. Besides helping you feel less alone, a PSG gives you a chance to share your feelings and hear the experiences of others.

PSGs encourage knowledge-sharing. Learning from the experiences of others living with Parkinson's, as well as using professional resources, can help participants gain valuable insights and discover additional approaches to managing the symptoms of Parkinson's and overcoming challenges.

Peer groups can help you renew your sense of hope in dealing with changes to your lifestyle and offer you the chance to make new friends.

### What to expect

Fight Parkinson's PSGs use a self-help model and are not therapy groups. They are run by volunteers who may be a health professional from your local area, a person living with Parkinson's or a carer.

PSGs appeal to a range of people for a variety of reasons. While there are opportunities for people to be involved in the planning of meetings and activities, other participants prefer to simply enjoy the company.

The groups vary in their makeup, from the number of participants to the age and interests of the individuals. Some groups run in person, others run online and some use a hybrid model.

Peer group meetings typically involve:

- group discussions and sharing experiences, information, practical tips and advice on living with Parkinson's
- connections to the Fight Parkinson's Health Team
- social activities and day excursions
- guest speakers discussing topical and relevant subjects. These may include occupational therapists, social workers and doctors.

When you join a PSG meeting, you may meet people who have had Parkinson's for longer than you. You'll meet people who have had different experiences and symptoms from yours. Don't be afraid of these differences! No two people with Parkinson's are the same and it's important to remember that everyone's journey is unique.

To find out where your nearest Parkinson's PSG is, contact Fight Parkinson's.

Note: While participants may discuss their experiences of Parkinson's during meetings, it is important to remember that everyone has different symptoms and will respond differently to treatments. Professional advice must be sought before altering any treatment.



Fight Parkinson's is a leading source of specialised health information and advice services. Through research, education and support, we strive to improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's, PSP, MSA and CBS.

Any medial information provided is for general information purposes only. You should always talk to your treating doctor and qualified healthcare providers for personal medical and health-related instructions.

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