

Practical Tips for Caring for Someone with Parkinson's Psychosis

If the person you are caring for is experiencing hallucinations:

- 1) Tell their doctor.
- 2) Stay calm and patient.
- 3) Increase lighting at night, which can help reduce shadows and the risk of visual illusions.
- 4) Talk to your loved one about his or her experience.
- 5) If the person has insight, explain that the experience is not real. If the person lacks insight, do not argue or challenge the person by saying "they are not real;" instead, agree and/or distract the person.
- 6) Educate others who frequently spend time with your loved one and allow them to help.

If the person you are caring for is experiencing delusions or confusion:

- 1) Tell their doctor.
- 2) Stay calm and patient.
- 3) Keep dangerous objects in secure locations.
- 4) Arrange furniture in a way that someone who is confused will not trip and/or fall.
- 5) Do not argue or challenge the person.
- 6) Educate others who frequently spend time with your loved one and allow them to help.

For more information on psychosis associated with PD, order the book Psychosis: A Mind Guide to Parkinson's.

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If your loved one becomes agitated or aggressive:

- 1) Provide space without crowding.
- 2) Keep dangerous objects in secure locations.
- 3) Talk calmly.
- 4) Provide reassurance: "You are safe."
- 5) Keep your movements to a minimum.
- 6) Ask how the person is feeling and his or her reason for being upset.
- 7) Listen to the responses and comments.
- 8) If your safety is threatened or you are concerned a loved one might harm him/herself, call 911.

How to prepare for a doctor's appointment:

Be ready to report any changes in the following:

- 1) Behavior
- 2) Medication
- 3) General health

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Caring for Someone with PD Psychosis

- Try to **UNDERSTAND** and acknowledge what the person may be experiencing. This can be challenging for a caregiver but may help you gain a better grasp of the situation.
- Try to actively **LISTEN** while staying calm and patient.
- Try to **TALK** about the experiences. A conversation that is open and non-threatening may reduce the anxiety everyone is feeling.
- Try not to take it personally. It is the disease talking and there is no reasoning you can offer to change that.
- Try to be encouraging and **SUPPORTIVE** rather than argue or debate. Neither challenging nor reinforcing illogical ideas is helpful to the person or their caregiver.
- Try to find neutral, simple things to talk about.
- Try to show **COMFORT** rather than discredit or tell them they are wrong.
- Try to be **PREPARED**. Know what situations are likely to trigger symptoms of psychosis and what the best remedy is for comforting the person you are caring for.
- Try to **EDUCATE** others who are frequently around. Recognizing these behaviors can relieve fear and make caring for people easier.
- Try to create a safe **ENVIRONMENT** and make necessary adjustments to lighting, objects, and distractions.
- Try to keep **SAFETY** first. Having a plan to seek emergency help in case someone is confused, agitated, or aggressive will ensure everyone's safety.

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