

Caring for the Carers

Care Partner Programs

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The person with Parkinson's or Parkinson's Plus is not the only one thrust into the Parkinson's journey. Care Partners walk along side their loved ones throughout the Parkinson's journey. Care Partners face their own unique journey supporting someone with Parkinson's. Parkinson Association of Alberta is here to support both people with Parkinson's and their loved ones. This article outlines some of the Care Partner specific support we offer.

We are pleased to offer four (4) support groups specifically for Care Partners. Support groups provide a space to share with, meet and connect with other Care Partners. Creating this space gives the opportunity to share your own knowledge as well as learn from the facilitator and other Care Partners. When attending a group, you can expect to talk, share, and learn in a safe and caring environment. We offer both online and in person care partner support groups. There are several regional groups that meet in person and two provincial zoom support groups that meet online.

Another wonderful resource is our one-on-one and family support. Our amazing Client Services Coordinators are happy to meet with you individually as a couple or family. This support can help discuss on going issues, needs or feelings. As well as connect you and your loved one to community and government resources.

During the pandemic we developed a variety of more structured programs specifically for Care Partners. These programs target different stages of the care partner journey.

Our Care partner Support Program (coming this March)

is a seven-session program that aims to help Care Partners navigate their Parkinson's journey, prevent burnout, connect with support and resources, provide connections with other Care Partners, and provide a safe and supportive space to share and discuss their struggles, emotions, and journey in a confidential environment.

Our newly created Transitions to Care Program (coming this March)

focuses on managing and navigating that time when you are no longer the primary care partner for your person. They have transitioned into care or are being cared for by others. This program will help you navigate this new stage, advocate for your loved one in care, as well as focus on rediscovering yourself, re-establishing relationships and taking care of your self and loved one during this time.

Our recently launched
Widow's & Widower's Program & Support Group

is a two-part program designed to help Care Partners cope with the loss of their spouse who had Parkinson disease. Part one is an 8 - 10 session program which will provide the participants: education on grief and loss, coping strategies, relatable stories, and relevant discussion topics. Part two is an ongoing support group in a similar style to a Care Partners support group.

While not just for Care Partners, we are also excited to launch our long-awaited **Ambiguous Loss and Grief Program** this March.

This program, for both Care Partners and people with Parkinson's, is aimed at exploring and understanding the emotional and psychological mechanisms of ambiguous loss / anticipatory grief, the function of grief, intersections of grief and loss in Parkinson's (think the life you planned vs life after Parkinson's), management strategies, and healthy grief.

Care Partners are an important part of what we do and an important support in the Parkinson's journey. Recognizing the role Care Partners play in their loved ones' lives and the journey they are on as well we work to support Care Partners throughout their journey. Our website offers additional information and resources for Care Partners as well. Check us out at parkinsonassociation.ca to register for any of the above listed supports or contact your local Client Services Coordinator or call us toll free at 1-800-561-1911.

