

## Take Time

Parkinson's may have slowed the person's ability to respond or react. Be positive and reassuring and give ample time for the person to respond. For social situations, come up with and agree upon some cues that you can give the person with Parkinson's so that they can participate in conversation

## Encourage Exchange

Make conversations a two-way process that engages the person. Avoid interrupting or answering questions directed at the person with Parkinson's, which may discourage them from communicating. Assist with finding the right word if they seem to be struggling.

## Don't forget to consider hearing or vision problems

Make sure the person is wearing a working hearing aid and/or correct glasses, if needed.

## CONTENT FROM: PARKINSON CANADA

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[www.parkinson.ca](http://www.parkinson.ca)



Sources:

Communication and Cognition Challenges in Parkinson's. Angela South. Speech-Language Pathologist, London Health Sciences Centre. The Parkinson's Update, Parkinson Society Southwestern Ontario, Winter/Spring 2010, Issue 51.

Communication Tips for Caregivers. Day to Day Series. Communications: Alzheimer Society Canada. [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca).

Dementia and Parkinson's Information Sheet. Parkinson's UK Interacting with People with Dementia. Communication Tele-workshop handout. Alzheimer Society of British Columbia

# Parkinson's Disease: Communication Strategies

**FOR CAREGIVERS  
AND FAMILY**





## TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION:

### Choose the best time to communicate

Symptoms of Parkinson's can create communication challenges. Work with your doctor to time medication effectiveness with social plans.

### Set the Stage

It can be difficult to communicate if there are distractions. Turn off the TV or radio and avoid multi-tasking so you can focus on communicating. Also, simplify the environment; for example, find a secluded corner to have an intimate conversation. Avoid large groups when possible and encourage conversations with one or two people at a time.

### Get their Attention

Slowly approaching and facing the person, gently touching a hand or arm then waiting until he or she seems ready to listen. Making eye contact is very important. Sit or stand facing the person and maintain eye contact (unless this is culturally inappropriate).



### Speak Slowly, Clearly & Carefully

Speak to the person as an adult but make a conscious effort to speak slowly and clearly. Use simple words and short sentences. Also, say exactly what you mean. Minimize implied messages to make a point. For example, rather than saying 'it's raining again!' Say: 'It's raining so we can't go out for a walk'. Use real names instead of pronouns, to remind the person who you are speaking about. Also be careful with teasing or sarcasm which can be easily misunderstood. Make sure the person you are talking to understands the intent of your humor.

### Ask Closed Questions

Ask questions that can be answered "yes" "no" or "I don't know".

### Pay attention to non-verbal communication

How we say things communicates as much, if not more, than what we say. Be aware of your tone of voice and other forms of non-verbal communication such as your facial expression and body language. Do not however, rely on non-verbal communication to clarify the meaning of your message as the person you are speaking with may not intuitively understand what your tone of voice, body language or facial expression means. Always verbalize how you are feeling and what you are thinking.