

Mood Changes and Parkinson's

Mood changes, such as depression, anxiety or apathy (lack of motivation) can happen to anyone, but they may be more common in people with Parkinson's disease (PD). Here, find answers to common questions about mood changes in Parkinson's.



When do mood changes happen?

Not everyone with PD has mood changes. But those who do may experience anxiety and depression at different times. Some have mood changes years prior to movement symptoms; for others, they occur at diagnosis, or as movement symptoms evolve and disease progresses.

What can I expect?

Some people feel sad or irritable, some get anxious or tense, and others have decreased motivation. In some cases, a person may have suicidal thoughts. (This is a medical emergency and you should call 911 or the suicide prevention line with someone you trust at 800-273-TALK.) Loved ones often are the first to see personality or behavior changes, so consider checking in regularly. Be open to the possibility that others are seeing something you might not.



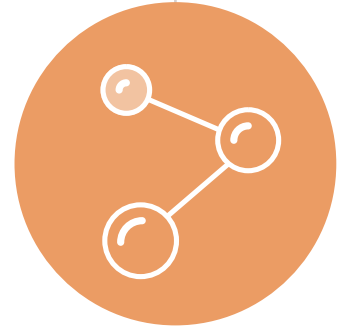
How are mood changes treated?

Many therapies, including medication and counseling (talk therapy) can ease mood symptoms. Regular exercise also boosts mood. You can tailor your workout to your symptoms — incorporating yoga and mindfulness to target anxiety, for example. The key is to see anxiety and depression as medical conditions, no different than heart disease or diabetes, and treat them as such.



How are mood changes linked to Parkinson's?

Anxiety and depression can be natural responses to a new diagnosis or progressing disease. But mood changes are not simply emotional reactions. Parkinson's decreases brain chemicals that impact mood, which means anxiety and depression are rooted in a biological basis.



How do mood changes impact Parkinson's symptoms?

Mood changes can worsen movement and non-movement symptoms — anxiety could bring out tremor or freezing, and depression can interfere with sleep. And Parkinson's can worsen mood changes — frustration doing usual activities because of slowness could lead to depression or anxiety. If PD seems worse or medication less beneficial, ask if mood changes may be playing a role.

Mood changes can impact your experience with Parkinson's and, outside of PD, your relationships and quality of life. You aren't alone — a lot of people, both with and without PD have mood changes. And there are many people, including all of us at The Michael J. Fox Foundation, who can and want to walk with you on every step of your Parkinson's journey.

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