



# Capital Area Parkinson's Society

Newsletter, February 2022

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## ***A Word from CAPS President:***

Greetings, gentlepeople! I hope the new year is off to a good start and that you are healthy and safe.

CAPS is off and running in 2022. We are in the midst of identifying our priorities for the year so that we may provide better service and support to the Parkinson's community in Austin. In order to set the proper priorities, it is important that we hear from you directly.

Within the next few weeks we will be conducting a survey of the CAPS community with a goal of determining what services and support activities are important to you. Please respond to the survey that you will receive via email very soon. We value your feedback.

Providing caregiver support is and will remain a fundamental pillar of our Parkinson's support service. In this month's newsletter, we're sharing an article from Mir Care Consultants, Inc. titled [\*Friends? Who has time?\*](#) The theme of the article is about the well-being of the caregivers that provide so much support and assistance to those of us dealing with PD. I can assure you from my own experience that the support and understanding of family and friends makes PD much easier to deal with. As the article highlights, many caregivers felt isolated even before the pandemic struck us. It offers some tips on ensuring that those who provide such crucial support feel the support they need themselves. Check out the article. I believe you will find it valuable.

Just as a reminder the CAPS Virtual Care Partner Support Group meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 11:00 AM. For more info [www.capitalareaparkinsons.org](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org)

Take care and be well.

Victor

## **[Monthly VIRTUAL Meeting Saturday, February 19- Link will be posted on website](#)**



### **Exercise, Sleep Hygiene, Tips and Tricks for Parkinson's**

**Kara Doctor, M.S., PT**

Kara is a native Texan, she became a physical therapist in 1994. She was involved in starting the first Parkinson Outreach Program (POP) in San Antonio. She worked for a Movement Disorder Specialist in Austin for 10 years before joining Abbott Labs, formerly St. Jude Medical in 2017. She is currently working for FHC, Inc., a company that manufactures equipment used in deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's Disease.

Kara was certified through the National Parkinson Foundation (NPF) for Allied Team Treatment in Parkinson's Disease and later received certification in LSVT Big for Parkinson's Disease

## Friends? Who has time? [from mircareconsultants.com/newsletter/](http://mircareconsultants.com/newsletter/)



If you are like most family caregivers, your social life has dropped in priority as you juggle your loved one's needs. There just aren't enough hours in the day to keep up all your friendships in addition to your family responsibilities.

It may also be that friendships are now harder to keep. Many people don't understand the pressures of caregiving. They may tire of hearing about your challenges and drift away. Or you may feel awkward talking about your concerns, rendering relationships less fulfilling. That's its own kind of loneliness.

Even if you live with the person you care for, you may feel isolated. In fact, a prepandemic report noted that 29% of family caregivers who live with their relative feel lonely, as compared to 16% of those who live separately. The social restrictions of COVID have made that isolation even more pronounced.

### What you can do

- **Schedule regular social time on your calendar.** Treat it like a prescription and guard that time fiercely. Loneliness has been shown to elevate blood pressure, interrupt sleep, and intensify depression. Its health impact has been equated to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Spending time with others is not just fluff. It's a health priority. Even if you have to pay a caregiver so you get time off, consider it an investment in your health.
- **Keep it short and convenient.** Ideally, talk with at least one other person every day (besides your loved one). It doesn't have to take up a lot of time. Maybe you text a bit with a buddy. Or have a short phone call with someone who is good for some laughs. The goal is time that provides an alternative focus and genuine relief from the constant responsibilities of caring for another.
- **Seek quality companions.** Not all contacts have to be with trusted confidants. But you do need a roster of one to three people you can call on when the going gets rough. Maybe aim to find some new friends who are family caregivers themselves (voilà, instant relatability!). Consider joining a support group. Online groups are available and many communities have in-person groups as well.
- **Maintain an identity beyond "family caregiver."** This is important not only for your mental health now, but because "caregiver" is not a permanent position. There will be a time when you are no longer providing care. If you have given all of yourself to this task, you will be even more lost when it comes to a close. Keep up with a personal interest. And if there's a group you can join, all the better. That gives you an excuse to get out for some "me time" and a thread of continuity to carry you into the future.

#### **CAPS Support Groups (Virtual & in person)**

**Contact the office for more information**

- \***Women Care Partner Group** meets Tuesdays– bi-weekly
- \***People with Parkinson's Group** meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 3:00pm
- \***Women & Men's Care Partner Group** meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 11:00am
- \* **ATX Young Onset PD.** meets every month. Go to [Meetup.com](http://Meetup.com) to join the group and see what's happening

**Save the date for Amplify Austin Day!**  
**The #1 giving event in Central Texas.**

I Live Here  
I Give Here

**Amplify Austin**

**March 2 - 3, 2022**