Parkinson Society Singapore

Celebrating The Odds

32 stories of ordinary people
with extraordinary courage

30th ANNIVERSARY
Empowering Lives, Enhancing Care

Parkinson Society Singapore

Parkinson Society Singapore
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Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) was formed on 16 December 1996 by a group of doctors and caregivers to help persons living with Parkinson. The Society was registered as a charity on 28 January 2000 and is a member of the National Council of Social Service.

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Illustrations by: Rose Lee & Felice Ho
Print and design by: App Content & Concepts Pte Ltd

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Contents

Foreword

Celebrating the Odds: 30 Years of Resilience

For three decades, the Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with those navigating the complexities of Parkinson. This year, we soldier on with a voice to mark our 30th anniversary in serving the community.

We are proud to introduce ***Celebrating the Odds*** — the third and most poignant installation in our collective storytelling efforts, following *Beating the Odds* and *Embracing the Odds*. This collection brings together lived experiences, written by the very hands and hearts of our Parkinson Warriors and their dedicated caregivers.

Beyond the Diagnosis

Parkinson may be a progressive neurological journey, but it does not define the soul. While a cure is a hope for the future, a fulfilling life is a reality today. Through the right care, community support, and courage, our Parkinson Warriors continue to find joy, purpose, and connection to lead dignified and independent lives.

These stories offer a window into a condition, but also stand as a testament to the fact that **no one walks this path alone.** Whether you are a Parkinson Warrior seeking strength or a caregiver looking for a hand to hold, this community is waiting for you with open arms.

How You Can Move with PSS

As we celebrate 30 years of resilience against the odds, we invite you to be part of our next chapter. Your support ensures that no voice goes unheard and no Parkinson Warrior or caregiver walks alone.

- **Amplify the Story: Share** this book with your friends, family, and colleagues. Help us turn awareness into understanding.
- **Give Your Time:** Join us as a **volunteer.** Your presence at our events and specially curated programmes can be the spark that brightens someone's day.
- **Fuel the Future: Make a donation** to fund the essential programmes that empower our community to thrive for the next 30 years and beyond.

Together, we move forward one step, one story, and one heart at a time. Get your copy or connect with PSS today!

Section 1:

The Warrior Within

心中的战士

A New Journey Ahead

Chui Chow Lan, Yvonne

I was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD) in August 2025. I was shocked upon hearing it from the doctor, as I was healthy all along, not taking any medication at all. Once the shock stage was over, I wasted no time and contacted both Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) and the Parkinson Befrienders' Group (contacts given to me by my church worker and my sister, respectively) and registered myself as their member. The facilitators in both groups are doing a great job. We, as "Warriors", benefit a lot from their efforts. To name a few benefits we are enjoying:

1. The encouragement we get from them.
2. As ALL the members are "fighting" the same "war", nobody feels shy or ashamed, hence they are able to share their struggles and experiences openly, and we are able to learn along the way.
3. Both PSS and the Parkinson Befrienders' Group gave the warriors opportunities to meet and mingle, and to engage in meaningful activities (a good mix of both outdoor and indoor activities), such as weekly walks, pickleball games, Rummikub games, and karaoke, to name a few. In addition, PSS regularly organises excursions. One of which I attended earlier in December 2025 was the Singapore Maritime Gallery.

I'm very grateful that both PSS and the Parkinson Befrienders' Group are around to help us, the "Warriors", and we can truly say "we are not alone" in this long journey of battling PD, but help is always available to all of us. From my own experiences so far since being diagnosed, I have benefitted from:

- Daily exercises
- Diligently taking medications on schedule
- Keeping a positive mindset

Discovering Community through Parkinson

Belinda Charles

When I was first diagnosed with Parkinson in mid-2024, I wasn't sure what it meant beyond it being the diagnosis of the tremors I was experiencing in my right leg. The specialist prescribed me Madopar, and I assumed that was all I needed. At that time, I did not know anyone else with the ailment.

It was only in October 2024 that I connected with a long-time church friend, Vivien Yang, when another old church friend shared a write-up about Vivien's Art exhibition. One of my pastors also mentioned her. God was opening doors that I hadn't even known were shut, for Vivien likewise has Parkinson.

Having Parkinson became less of a lonely journey as Vivien introduced me to other Parkinson Warriors. Connecting with fellow "warriors" (not sufferers!) has been motivating, and hearing their stories has given me a new group I feel comfortable with, arising from our shared condition. It has also meant that I saw how Parkinson affected my fellow warriors in various ways. It has been very encouraging to see how different fellow warriors manage their condition with the help of family, certainly, but also with the help of friends. Their stories of how they cope, as well as how they help their family and friends understand what Parkinson is all about, bring home the message that we can deal with this condition and still live a fulfilling and meaningful life.

My Story

William Wong

I was blessed to work in two giant MNCs — a voice company and a data company. It gave me the opportunity to travel to several cities in Canada and the USA, and all 13 countries in AsiaPac.

However, I had no time for sports or exercise, and my annual health screenings showed very high bad cholesterol. Still, I did not take medication.

When I was laid off and out of the corporate world, I took up a taxi license and became a full-time Grab driver. My heart finally protested in 2019. An ambulance came, which sent all my neighbours into great anxiety for fear of COVID-19!

I survived, but shortly after, I was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD)!

Thank God for Google and Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS). I joined PSS as a member, visited PSS, and got to know PSS staff. Immediately, I signed up for Table Tennis and Chinese Calligraphy. Through the programmes, I became good friends with two instructors and got to know Mr Chua, Mr Pang, and Edward. I am greatly inspired by them!

Soon, people asked me what kind of support they could get. I replied that there are so many angelic beings here, and I am pretty sure they can find a listening ear and hope to see miracles happening here in PSS.

My favourite is pickleball. I self-declare I am the champion of pickleball in Waterfront Key! I started the inaugural game with three residents, one of whom works in MOE, and Betty, our volunteer. Subsequently, many of my ex-church buddies who heard about pickleball joined in and got hooked. We bought two portable nets and turned one tennis court into two pickleball courts. Who says Parkinson Warriors cannot lead in pickleball?? Quek Yong is my regular playmate, and my nieces are coming to join us too!

Reach out to me if you find Bedok is not that far after all.

Finding My Second Family: Living Well with PD through PSS

Leong Weng Wai

My name is Weng Wai, and I am a Parkinson Warrior (PW). I am 55 years old and was formerly an air defence weapons and systems officer in the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF). I last held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) and was a Branch Head (Deputy Director equivalent in the Civil Service). In this article, I would like to share some of my personal experiences navigating the Parkinson Disease (PD) journey in my earlier days, from my first diagnosis to my present involvement with Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) and the important and meaningful work they do for the PD community.

The term "warrior" was aptly used to refer to our brave PD patients who live a different life from others, suffer the adverse PD symptoms and effects, and fight the war against PD and overcome it, sometimes alone and without help. For a new PW, just diagnosed with PD, it is a scary thought to have to walk the PD journey alone. I hope after reading

the stories in this book, you can gain a better understanding of PD and assurance that you will not be alone in this journey, and that help is available to make it a smoother one.

PD is a progressive movement disorder caused by the degeneration of nerve cells in the part of the brain that controls movement. These nerve cells or neurons die or become impaired, losing the ability to produce an important chemical called dopamine. Without enough dopamine, one or more of the following symptoms will result:

1. Tremor (trembling in the hands, arms, legs and jaw);
2. Rigidity (stiffness and weakness of the limbs);
3. Slowness of movement; and
4. Impaired balance and coordination.

PD patients may also have mental and behavioural changes, like:

1. Sleep problems;
2. Depression;
3. Memory difficulties;
4. Fatigue;
5. Irregular blood pressure;
6. Decreased movement of food through the digestive tract; and
7. A sudden drop in blood pressure when a person stands up from a sitting position.

I was diagnosed with PD in 2016 (9 years ago). When my doctor first informed me of this diagnosis, I was in a state of denial and refused to acknowledge that I had PD. In the subsequent year-and-a-half, I defaulted on my medical consultations with my doctor and physiotherapist, as well as all the medications that were prescribed for me. I still harbour thoughts that this is a mistake. For me, I could not accept that this could happen to a seemingly healthy, fit and active person like me who was in my prime, 46 years of age, serving in a physically demanding job, and who was subjected to a medical examination once a year. I could not help but keep asking myself: Why me? Why am I so unlucky? How did I contract such a dreadful disease which has no cure...?

It took me about one year to "lift" myself out of this sorry state and recover from the mild depression I developed during that period. I went on to seek a second opinion about my PD condition at another hospital.

The doctors put me through a battery of tests. They too confirmed the previous doctors' diagnosis (that it was early PD). This young doctor sat me down for almost two hours to "deliver" the "bad news" and took great pains to share with me what I need to know about PD to have the highest quality of life like before. I remembered he reiterated that currently there is no cure for PD. But having PD with no cure does not mean it is the end of the world or a "death sentence". There are PD medications, therapies and surgeries that are effective in treating PD. As PD is a neurodegenerative disease, it will only get worse with time, but the downward progression of PD could be altered, noting that PD is highly individualised.

After the initial denial period, I have come to terms with PD and acknowledged that I have this medical condition that will be a part of my life henceforth. Every day, when I wake up, my body will be battling with PD to be in control. I will need to focus my energy and attention to overcome PD, live my life to the fullest each day, and pay it forward by encouraging and helping others understand PD, PWs and caregivers better. It also benefits us when we need help and people near us are ready to extend help because they know the "whats", "whys" and "whens" of PD.

PSS was established in December 1996 to support and partner with PWs and caregivers in their life journey with PD, by helping to fulfil their biological, psychological, social and spiritual needs (BPSS). Deriving from such frameworks, PSS would custom-make services needed for our future life journey with PD, as PD will present new challenges for us. There will be obstacles and uncertainties. The future life journey may seem daunting and lonely, but let us not fear, because we will not be alone. This is where the setup of PSS and the role it plays will determine how successful we are in maintaining a positive outlook on things. PSS is my second family, and I wish to share this one-stop safe haven with others so they can receive the much-needed support and information.

Going forward, PD will become a part of my life, together with the PD medications that I have to consume once every few hours to get my body functioning normally (in the "ON" state), without which I will experience the adverse effects of PD symptoms ("OFF" state: when the medication has yet to kick in). Almost all drugs have side effects. The same is true for PD drugs. Medication adjustments take a long time, to know what works for you and what doesn't. They have to be carefully managed so that they do not create a new set of problems for the patient. The journey for PWs is like a long and winding, never-ending path, a relatively complex and lonely journey if warriors are left to face challenges on their own. For many patients, acknowledgement also means being ready to accept the medical condition and "walk" the new life together with our warriors in PSS. However, this acknowledgement does not mean that we are giving up.

Moving forward, I hope that PSS will continue to tap into these areas — biological, psychological, social and spiritual needs. By actively participating in programmes, we will gain a positive outlook and an active lifestyle. Socially interacting with the other members keeps us going and connected. Every patient can choose the quality of life he or she desires and how to achieve it, and for me, it is through PSS.

为什么我会得帕金森

Nam (阿南)

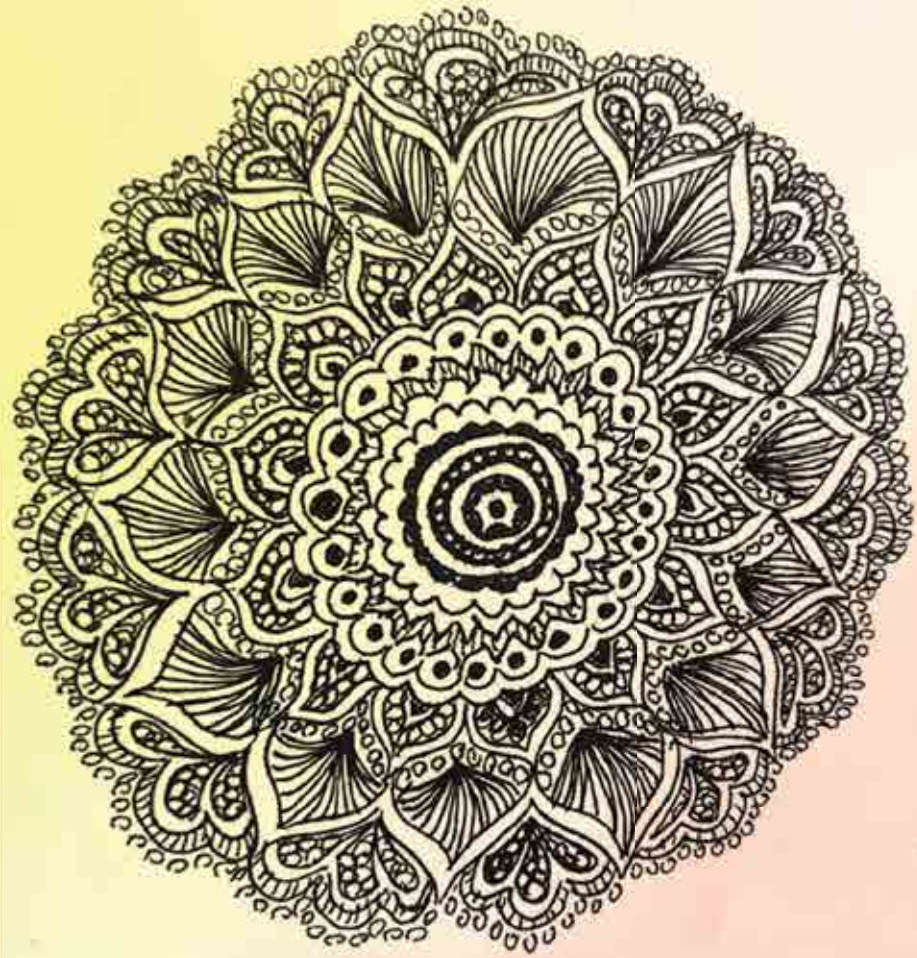
很多事情的发生，并不是偶然。回想过去，生活没有好好规划，身体的问题也就浮现——骨质疏松、感染过COVID-19、肢体反应变慢，以及精神状态变差。

三十多年的小贩生涯，对我的身体造成了很大的消耗。每天从凌晨两点半忙到晚上九点，长期劳累。我也曾依赖酒精，一次喝三四瓶麻醉自己。帕金森是在这一年半才确诊的。现在，我必须依靠药物，同时透过运动，让手脚保持力量与平衡。

我告诉自己，要不断向前冲，永不言败，不要灰心，高高兴兴过好每一天。我们都是勇士，希望靠自己的努力去突破。

在新加坡帕金森协会（PSS），我参加了物理治疗（PT）、乒乓和每周一的匹克球活动。PSS对我们的帮助很大，不仅让我们学到很多，也让我们结交了许多朋友。在这里，我们可以抒发情绪，一起讨论如何突破自己的极限，也能彼此陪伴。

我们都是勇士，一起向前，不要灰心。我们可以活得更有意义。



Section 2:

The Ones Who Hold Us Up

支撑着我们的后盾

Together Through the Journey

Lisa, Michael's Best Friend

Being a caregiver to someone with Parkinson is an act of love, resilience, and quiet courage. It is waking up each day not knowing exactly what it will bring — some days calm and steady, others more unpredictable — but learning to meet each one with patience and grace. It means standing beside someone you love as they navigate a body that doesn't always cooperate, and finding beauty in the small victories.

You learn to slow down. You learn that caregiving is not just about medication schedules or medical appointments. It is about preserving dignity, nurturing independence, and offering reassurance even when words fall short. There are hard moments, yes — frustration, sadness, exhaustion — but also deep, quiet joy. It is in these moments that love shows up most clearly: steadying a hand, waiting a little longer, celebrating every bit of progress.

One of the greatest blessings on our journey has been Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS). We have been part of this wonderful community for several years, and it has truly been a lifeline. The staff is extraordinary — empathetic, kind, generous, and always happy to help. They communicate with such care that you feel deeply seen and supported. Every programme feels carefully designed, not only for the patients, but for the caregivers, too.

Each year brings new offerings, new experts, and new opportunities to learn and connect. Through PSS, Michael has made friendships and found a safe, welcoming place where he never feels alone. I cannot say enough about the team. They make this journey less daunting, and their compassion fills even the hardest days with hope. Michael looks forward to every activity and seeing familiar faces. PSS reminds us that we are not just managing a disease. We are living a life.

To other caregivers walking this path, be patient with your loved one and with yourself. Parkinson will keep changing, and so will you. Do not be afraid to adapt, to make changes, to ask for help. Also, remember to care for yourself along the way.

Lean in and try to find purpose in each day, and help your loved one find theirs — because purpose is what keeps us moving forward. And above all, do not give up. There is still joy, still meaning, still love in every single day.

When Caring Becomes Life

Mr Chekira

My wife was diagnosed in 2023, and I am the sole caregiver to her.

The awareness level of Parkinson Disease (PD) is generally low; not many people know what it is like to live with PD, or even hear of it.

I used to work at an aged-care home in Australia, and was a chef for 18 years. Initially, we had been looking to go back to Australia. However, as my wife was diagnosed with PD, there were many changes, and I had to put her needs first — as a caregiver and her husband. As her husband, I always want to give her the best I can. That was when my wife and I did our research and found Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS).

Coming to PSS, I did not have any expectations. I only want her to be comfortable and supported throughout her journey with PD.

It is not easy to be a caregiver. There are times when we tend to get angry and frustrated. However, we have to be wise with our actions and words, as the care recipient may keep it in their heart and hide their feelings and needs.

Caregiving is not an easy journey, but it is what it is.

Voices for the Silent: A Caregiver's Fight for Advocacy

Eliska

For Chiew Meng and me, Parkinson Disease (PD) was like a distant friend of ours, living very far away from us. It took a significantly long time for Chiew Meng to be a confirmed Parkinson Warrior, and it was a pretty dark period for us.

The journey of diagnosis was arduous. As a caregiver, I had to step up and bring my husband to consult various doctors (western and traditional) and other healthcare professionals — only to be met with further uncertainty and "sorry we are not able to diagnose him" about what was actually causing him to be in pain and having erratic BP episodes. No one could give us an answer for a very long time. He was first diagnosed with essential tremors. However, as the tremors only happened on the left side of his body, it got me thinking further. Chiew Meng and I love cycling, but every time we do, he falls for unknown reasons. Things started to get more worrying when he had a silent stroke.

The year of COVID in 2020 was the period when Chiew Meng deteriorated further with more advanced symptoms. This was also when he was confirmed to have PD during a Zoom consultation. As of today, he has had more fall episodes, which also means that he is progressing to Stage 4 on the Hoehn and Yahr scale. PD is very complex and affects all parts of an individual. He has also developed other conditions, such as atrial fibrillation and an enlarged heart, and is currently in a wheelchair because the pain gets unbearable at times.

We came to Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) through a referral from St Luke's, as a centre which specialises in PD care would be more beneficial for Chiew Meng. Since then, it has been about four years in PSS, and we have made a lot of friends. At PSS, there is camaraderie. For example, in the Tai Chi class that Chiew Meng has been in for about two years, we show concern for each other by checking in whenever we notice that someone is not there. PSS is a melting pot of different experiences from different caregivers, and some even bring new ideas and are willing to experiment with new technology!

For caregivers like myself, doctors' appointments are almost like a "test" of how well we know our care recipient. Caregivers are the advocates when something goes wrong with the care recipient, such as advising the doctors to adjust certain medication and where best to refer the warrior. Instead of the doctors, caregivers have to be the ones to notice and flag out everything because if we really do follow the "see you in one year's time for the next follow-up", things will not work out.

Prior to caregiving, I worked as a nurse. I consider this a blessing in disguise as this grants me the skill to be able to discern certain medical information, especially the side effects and symptoms of medication. It is very important to read and understand it. I would also like to advocate for the pharmacy to provide PD patients with more information, as I realised that most new members are not aware of certain information. For example, how Madopar actually lowers BP and should not be taken with food or meat. It would be great if the new members could have a better idea of what PD care looks like.

Faith keeps Chiew Meng and me going, empowering us to stay bright and happy. We are thankful for the prayers and concerns that we have been receiving, and we are still fighting. Don't give up. Even though Chiew Meng has PD, we still travel overseas. I don't want him to feel that just because he has PD, that's the end of his life. He still can enjoy life to the fullest with some adjustments.

As a caregiver, you have to be the advocate and not wait for the doctors to tell you what to do. When something is not right, you have to go forward and find the solution. Don't sit and wait. There is a lot more to come!

A Journey with PD

Ong M. Huat (Caregiver of Mr Lim Kong Oen)

In 2020, my husband Kong Oen was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD), which made me uncertain about the future. It took me a while to think about how I can help him and best take care of his mental and physical well-being. At that time, I had little knowledge about PD. We both realised that we should come to terms with the situation and live life as normally as possible, especially since PD has no cure at this moment. We have to learn new things and try not to let the condition deteriorate fast.

It has been a long journey that we have both experienced together, and we have been supporting each other throughout.

As a caregiver, I have to be mentally and physically strong and draw on the support of my family, friends and community.

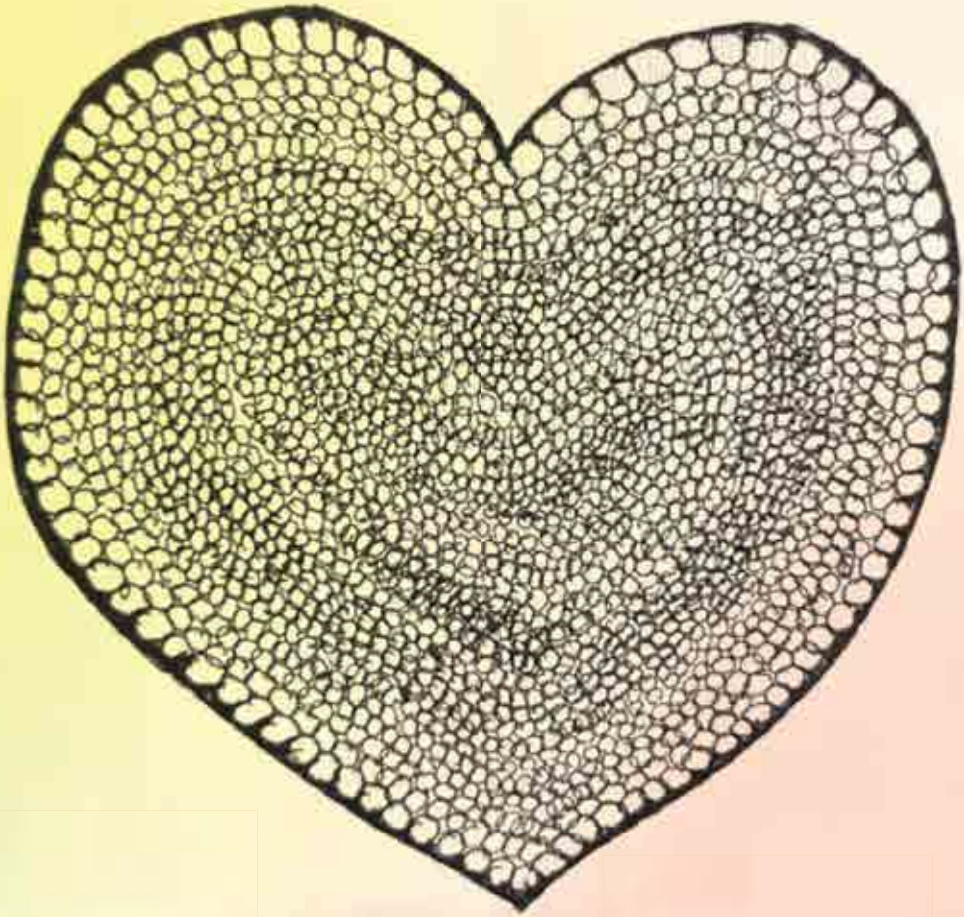
We have benefited a lot from Parkinson Society Singapore. Kong Oen attends physiotherapy regularly and music and movement sessions weekly. He even attends talks and sharing sessions, sometimes right after participating in outings.

Yes, it is stressful sometimes, but I am blessed to still be able to take care of my loved one, and I know I am not alone.

As a caregiver, taking care of oneself is important. We have to practise patience and empathy, learn new skills, participate in activities, and connect with people (friends) to relieve our stress.

Positive thinking always helps us look forward and look at the bright side of life.

Wishing everybody — keep healthy and stay safe!



Section 3:

When Love Becomes the Anchor

当爱成为支点

My Journey with PD: Live with Positivity, Embrace the Challenges and Beat the Odds to Triumph over PD!

Martin Ng Kang Huat

Why do you drag your feet when you walk?

Why aren't you swinging your left arm while walking?

Before my diagnosis in January 2015, my wife, Aileen, would frequently be frustrated with me as I couldn't give her answers to these two questions.

Along with dragging my feet, I started feeling tremors in my left hand. Finally, after several tests at the National Neuroscience Institute at Tan Tock Seng Hospital under Prof Louis Tan, I was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD).

At that time, I didn't know much about PD. My reaction was to stay quiet and not speak much about it, only confiding in Aileen. She began researching more about PD. Then she shared one important message with me: PD is not life-threatening. You can still live and enjoy life fully. With her unwavering support and strong encouragement, my life as a Parkinson Warrior (PW) began.

Back then, other than taking medication for my PD symptoms, my lifestyle didn't change drastically. I continued to enjoy my weekend walks and take long holidays abroad with Aileen. I still engaged in activities like trekking and outings with the Aranda Country Club, even helping others during those trips. As I was still working, I couldn't commit to classes at Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) or other similar programmes.

It wasn't until my retirement in October 2019 that I could fully embrace activities to help with my condition. I enrolled in Tai Chi classes at Bishan Community Club, and later added Physiotherapy and Kickboxing classes at PSS. I found these exercises not only physically beneficial but also helped me mentally.

My so-called "honeymoon period" lasted about five years and ended with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid 2020. Almost all classes and outdoor activities were suspended for around nine months.

My PD symptoms worsened. I experienced increased tremors, stiffness, and slow movements during the "off" periods. My handwriting became smaller, and my speech softer. I also realised that my body would stiffen frequently when I was in crowded areas, and the symptom would emerge whenever I was in a similar situation. This put a fear in me to avoid crowded areas. Then, in March 2024, I had my first significant freezing episode. Luckily, with the help of my supportive PW friends, I learned techniques to "unfreeze" or reduce the freezing time.

PSS has become a safe haven I visit regularly. Here, we PWs form a supportive community where we can interact socially, connect and understand each other. We are reminded that we are never truly alone. It is here that I've enjoyed playing Rummikub and table tennis with my fellow PWs. I also attended various interesting programmes, talks, workshops, and festive events organised by PSS. Many helpful initiatives like yoga, pickleball and Pilates have since been introduced by the Society. I have taken up pickleball and now play it at least three times a week. Recently, in February 2025, I also joined the Pilates class. Additionally, I join the weekly and holiday group walks at Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park organised by the PD Befrienders Support Group (PBSG), as well as the monthly PSS walks.

To further stay in good health, I practise qigong every weekday morning via Zoom. On Sundays, my wife and I also practise qigong at a Senior Centre, where we also assist other seniors with their practice.

Living with the "ON" and "OFF" stages of PD has not been easy. I feel blessed and am grateful to my wife, who, besides being my caregiver, is also the primary caregiver to her bedridden mother, suffering from dementia. Aileen has given me her unwavering support, making countless sacrifices along the way.

I also want to express my heartfelt thanks to PSS and their dedicated staff for their hard work and incredible support.

To all my fellow PWs, let's stand tall, remain positive, and face this journey with courage. Together, we will embrace the challenges, beat the odds, and triumph over PD.

A Caregiver's Journey: Being Understanding, Supportive and Encouraging

Aileen Neo Ah Tin

Towards the end of 2014, I began noticing subtle changes in the way my husband, Martin, walked — a distinct dragging of his feet and his left arm no longer swung as naturally as it once did. I remembered being frustrated when he couldn't give me an answer for that.

Then, in January 2015, Martin was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD) after several tests were done at the National Neuroscience Institute @ Tan Tock Seng Hospital under Prof Louis Tan.

Neither of us knew much about the disease. Martin's natural instinct was just to keep quiet and keep his worries to himself. I began researching more about PD. I realised that, while PD can be challenging, it is not necessarily life-threatening. I then encouraged Martin to adapt and accept the condition with courage. We could still live a fulfilling life together, with him taking proper medication and having more exercise.

In the early stages, life didn't change drastically. We continued with our weekend walks and took long vacations. He continued his activities (trekking and outings) with the Aranda Country Club. At times, I could only see some small changes — he was slower, his movements were more deliberate. Sometimes he became frustrated with himself. Reacting to that, I reminded myself to be more understanding and patient with him.

Martin took up Tai Chi classes at Bishan Community Club, and later joined Physiotherapy and Kickboxing sessions at PSS when he retired in October 2019. These exercises seemed to help him both physically and mentally, and he was really committed.

Then the pandemic (COVID-19) struck in mid 2020, ending his honeymoon period of about five years. His symptoms worsened with more tremors, stiffness, and the "OFF" periods grew longer. His handwriting shrank, and his voice became softer. Martin stiffened and struggled to move in crowded areas. In March 2024, he experienced his first serious freezing episode. I knew then that Martin would require more attention from me than before.

Through PSS, Martin and I found a safe haven — one where the warriors and caregivers can interact socially and understand and share each other's struggles. To me, I am relieved that while Martin is in safe

hands in PSS playing Rummikub and table tennis with his friends, I can be away for a while running my own errands. When pickleball and Pilates were introduced at PSS, I joined him in pickleball, and now play three times a week. In February 2025, he joined the Pilates class. I too participate with him in the weekly walks by the PD Befrienders Support Group and the monthly PSS walks. Through all these activities, I've seen how everyone supports each other in ways I never imagined possible.

As a caregiver, the support that I received from this PD community has been vital for me as well. I attend PSS talks, workshops (especially the caregivers' workshop) and other programmes.

Martin, with his positive mindset about PD, is always looking for ways to stay healthy to address his condition. This highlighted to me that I, too, need to stay healthy to be able to take better care of him. Thus, I practise qigong with him every weekday via Zoom, and on Sundays, I attend qigong practice at a Senior Centre, where we also help other seniors with their practice.

Managing Parkinson is not easy with the "ON" and "OFF" periods. I'm proud of Martin's strength and resilience. Other than being his primary caregiver, I was also the primary caregiver for my bedridden mother, who suffers from dementia. It had been a great challenge to take care of both of them at the same time, especially when Martin had his first serious freezing episode in March 2024. To cope with the stress, I brought my mother (with her helper) to live with us under one roof, and I am really grateful for Martin's understanding. It had been a huge responsibility, but knowing that Martin is constantly fighting together with me and making sacrifices along the way makes it easier. With the passing of my mother in May 2025, I now devote more time to Martin.

To Martin — thanks for being so positive and being the warrior you are.

To PSS and the staff members — thanks for all your effort, support and dedication. Your hard work has made a huge difference in our lives.

To all the Parkinson Warriors and their caregivers, let's continue to stand together to fight this battle, support one another, and win.

Ironies of Life

M Elangovan

Life seems to be quite ironic, come to think of it. When disaster or war strikes a place, there are innocent mothers and children. I usually wonder where God is!

During my early days of working, I played badminton every week with my wife and colleagues at the Recreation Club.

I was slightly diabetic, and during one Sunday morning in 1997, when I was getting ready to follow my wife to church, my feet were cold and I was sweating on my forehead.

My wife took me to my general practitioner. He immediately called an ambulance to send me to the A&E Department as I was having a mild heart attack! However, I survived the ordeal without having any bypass or other surgery. I received medication under the care of a cardiologist. I had been under his care for many years.

It was only in March 2015 that I was diagnosed with Parkinson. I was referred to a neurologist at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, and have been seeing him for the past 10 years. He prescribed Madopar tablets to be taken half an hour before or after meals, four times a day. I do not know what my future will be. But by the Grace of God, I am still alive!

A Caregiver's Experience

Mrs Elangovan

My hubby, Elan (Short for Elangovan), was diagnosed with Parkinson by the National Neuroscience Institute in 2015. He is a diabetic as well as a heart patient, and he has been treated with medications for the conditions.

Dr Tay Kay Yaw, his neurologist, advised him to join the Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) as a support group since day one.

We attended most of the activities conducted at PSS, like yoga by Angeline Goh. There was also a pilot project called the "Enabling Music" programme, which both he and I enjoyed very much in 2016. We also participated in a fundamental dance movement pattern, sitting in a circle with music and instructions.

We made many friends during these classes. They are all in the same situation so it's comforting to see each other weekly.

Elan has his bad days when he fell about 15 or more times in the past.

Nowadays, with the help of my live-in helper, he does not fall, though his legs are quite weak and his confidence is lacking… Even getting into a car has become a problem as his leg is not able to move easily.

Sometimes, he needs to be transferred in a wheelchair, which is quite costly.

Hopefully, he will get better by God's grace!

My Parkinson Disease Journey……

Rosnah Awang

15 August 2024 was the bleakest day of my life… I felt like I had just been struck by lightning when I was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD). My whole world crumbled, and the days that followed were filled with blurry vision and uncertainty. Suddenly, my life went blank, I was stressed, and I lost interest in my daily routine. Madopar became part of the menu of my medication list.

My sister and I scrambled through the internet to find information on Parkinson. Professor Google has been very helpful because we get more than what we bargained for. 21 August 2024 was my initial visit to Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS), as I was anxious and could not wait for the hospital and doctor's referral, as my next appointment was scheduled in two months from my diagnosis date. I went to PSS with an open mind, although a little apprehensive. My sister and I were shown the premises and the various activity rooms. They shared their yearly, monthly, weekly and daily activity calendar with us. I was overwhelmed because I never knew such a supportive place existed. It was an eye-opening visitation, and I had found solace in knowing that I would not walk through my PD journey alone. My sister and I became PSS members on the spot!!

The weeks and months that followed gave me confidence in charting my own PD journey one step at a time. We attended many talks held by PSS in collaboration with healthcare professionals. The talks were very engaging and beneficial to assist Parkinson Warriors (PWs) and their respective caregivers in getting through their daily challenges at each stage of their PD progression. I made new friends among the PWs both at PSS and now at the National University Hospital PD support group.

3 October 2024 — my roller coaster ride began with ageing degenerative changes in both knees and back and neck, as though they came to keep PD company. A&E hospitalisation, along with sleepless nights accompanied by agonising nerve pain, became a new norm for me. I was prescribed medication for the varying levels of pain (level 1, 2 and 3) and now I have a basket filled with medications.

I have now slowly learnt to accept my PD and the accompanying ailments as part of my ageing process. My journey ahead is going to be long and winding, peppered with sunshine, cloudy and rainy days…but I know my family will be right behind to catch me when I fall.

Pejuang Parkinson: "Jadi lah seperti Bintang, menyinar indah di dalam kegelapan malam." (Literally translated: Parkinson Warrior: "Be like the Star, shining beautifully in the darkness of the night.")

One Day and One Step at a Time... Caregiver's Parkinson Journey

Roziah Lim

15 August 2024, that's when the idiom "desperate needs call for desperate measures" held true for me.

Exactly one year ago, my sister was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD). The waiting time to see the doctor that day was long, but the consultation was short and brief — "you have PD. I'll put you on a medication named Madopar and we'll see how it works for you. We will see you in two months."

My knowledge about PD then didn't go beyond the legendary Heavyweight World Champion Muhammad Ali and Actor Michael J Fox. I consulted Professor Google for answers to my burning questions.

Step 1: Getting Educated with Knowledge Management

A) What is PD?

B) Is it a debilitating, dreaded or deadly disease?

C) Is it treatable or curable, and if yes, how and what's the next step?

D) What is the impact on lifestyle and daily routine from disease progression? What is the next step?

Step 2: Finding a Parkinson Support Group in Singapore

Hospital PD support groups require a doctor's recommendation. Appointments are not readily available and will take time to be fixed. Again, I consulted Professor Google, who pointed me to Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS).

21 August 2024: Our real eye-opening Parkinson journey started at PSS. Our small kampong (my brother-in-law, my brother and I) came along with my sister to Bishan to have a closer look at the PSS premises and facilities and, most importantly, the activities and support group for Parkinson patients. We entered the premises surrounded by positive vibes. We were shown the centre's premises and their yearly activities calendar broken down by months, weeks and days. We met some Parkinson Warriors on site and felt very welcomed. Somehow, we found solace in knowing that she will never walk alone in her PD journey. We became PSS members on the spot!!

Step 3: Home Improvement and PD Engagements

The "Small Kampong" started to do home improvements like changing the toilet tiles and installing grab bars to facilitate movement and prevent falls. We also reviewed our LPA (Lasting Power of Attorney) and ACP (Advance Care Planning) that we had taken lightly in the past. The talks conducted by PSS with healthcare professionals were very engaging and beneficial to ease the challenges for both the patient and their caregiver. We made many new friends through the meet-and-share sessions with Parkinson Warriors, both at PSS and later at the National University Hospital PD support group.

Step 4: Roller Coaster Ride

The months that followed her PD diagnosis was a roller coaster ride. Age-related degenerative changes came along as though to keep Parkinson company. Sleepless nights accompanied by agonising degenerative and nerve pain, A&E visits and hospitalisation became a new norm for her and us, her caregivers. Albeit the positivity, some days are better than others. On good days, we baked to strengthen her hands and motor skills and share the bakes with our neighbours. In between the numerous appointments, physiotherapy, support group meetings and hospitalisation, we sneak in sister's lunch at our favourite makan spot. My journey in caregiving for PD taught me not to take life's little joys for granted. My daily mantra: "Wake up every day with a grateful heart. Don't overthink. Just take life one day and one step at a time…"

Our Baking Therapy…

Biscotti Cheese Cake, Tartlets and Frozen Yoghurt Squares

Pineapple Tart Balls, Cornflakes Cookies, Florentine Cookies and CNY Pineapple Tart Balls

Section 4:

Never Alone in This Path

此行无孤影

God is Merciful... Yes, He is!

Mdm Yong

My husband and I had lunch with our ex-pastor and his wife in May 2025. We had not met for over eight years. After lunch, the pastor commented that we both are still keeping well. I then shared that I have been diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD) for more than three and a half years. He was surprised and said: "God has been merciful to you!" I was taken aback by his response!! God's mercy for PD?? He said the fact that I could still function normally after three and a half years of PD is God's mercy and grace upon me. Upon reflection, I absolutely agree with the pastor. God is indeed merciful! ("The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Psalm 103:8)

I retired from the corporate world in 2013 at the age of 61 after working for 35 years. Retirement was fulfilling for me, spending time with family and friends, grand-parenting, travelling, joining exercise activities and serving in church.

One of the activities that I enjoyed most was Chinese dance under a teacher from Shanghai. In 2019, I noticed that I could not master certain dance steps. Getting up from the floor after exercising was difficult. My right arm and leg were not as agile as my left. Besides challenges in dancing, my movements were slower, and my handwriting was getting smaller and smaller. I informed the polyclinic doctor during my yearly review. The doctor on duty assessed that it was part of ageing and nothing serious. In 2021, I decided to consult a neurosurgeon. I was worried that I might have had a minor stroke on the right side of my body, as my right eye had poorer vision and my right ear could not hear well. I had an MRI done on the brain and the spine. Results showed that everything was fine, other than a minor degeneration in the neck and lower spine due to ageing. My right arm and leg were marginally weaker than the left. Physiotherapy could help. The consultant even joked that I could live to be 100 years old.

I had my first physiotherapy session at the polyclinic. The physiotherapist, somehow, by some divine intervention, agreed with me that something was not right. She checked and managed to arrange for me to see the doctor on duty. A referral letter to the National Neuroscience Institute was given. I was diagnosed with early stage PD a few days after my 69th birthday. I was shocked and heartbroken. But I self-talked to myself that as we age, it is one illness or another. What is so special about me? After all, I have been very blessed my whole life.

I shared the news with my family and close friends/ex-colleagues. They were all surprised as I had no visible signs, like shaky hands. My husband gave me moral and physical support. My children bought

me exercise gadgets, and Lego to build the Taj Mahal and flowers, to strengthen my fingers. My friends took me out for lunch and prayed for me. One ex-colleague even cried upon hearing the news.

After getting over the initial denial and worry, I consulted a friend in church who had PD for over 10 years. She gave me some valuable advice — "stay positive" and "be happy"; "take action to help yourself"; "pray to God for help". I am forever grateful for her advice.

Prof Louis Tan gave me a referral letter to Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) and encouraged me to join the activities at the centre. The staff at PSS are most helpful and warm. They really serve with their hearts and treat the Parkinson Warriors (PWs) like their family. I tried various activities, such as adapted tango, kickboxing, table tennis and physiotherapy sessions to see what I needed most. All the activities are beneficial. Now, I am doing physiotherapy sessions on a weekly basis. The sessions are designed holistically to build our muscle strength, balance, coordination, flexibility, etc. They are indeed essential. My leg strength today has improved compared to when I first joined two years ago. Doing the exercises with the other PWs is fun and encouraging. The spirit of camaraderie brings us together. We are not alone; we look out for each other.

I found a wonderful book, "Moving Towards a Brighter Tomorrow", at the PSS. It has all the valuable advice and resources for PD. I feel that every PD patient, caregiver and physician should have a copy. I have since bought over 30 copies for friends and relatives who are PD patients or know of someone who has PD. The books even went to friends and relatives in Kuching and Penang. I also find attending the PD seminars organised by the National Neuroscience Institute and PSS useful and informative.

I am currently taking a low dose of Seligiline and Madopar. Side effects include sleepiness and a dry throat. I stay active physically, doing physiotherapy at PSS, stretch band and line dancing at the Active Ageing Centre near my house, and daily morning walks with my husband. For mental health, I do Sudoku and play Rummikub with my husband three to four times a week and read books and newspapers regularly. We still make more than six trips a year, travelling far and near. I also stay active, planning the menu every day, preparing meals for our children's families two to three times a week with the help of our domestic helper. It is good to spend time and bond with our children and grandchildren.

Life with PD has not been smooth sailing. It is frustrating not to be able to do daily activities efficiently. Changing clothes is a challenge, especially after exercising. It takes a longer time to put on shoes; to go to the toilet, to shower and wash my hair; and to take money from my purse for payment (I often apologise for being slow). I buy clothes one

to two sizes bigger now, use bigger purses and elastic shoelaces, and try to make more time for various daily activities. I once cried myself to sleep during an overseas trip as I realised that despite all my effort to exercise, I could still slow down the group, especially when we visited the washrooms. I woke up and wrote a poem in Chinese, promising myself that I would not wallow in self-pity.

擦乾眼淚不自憐，	Wipe away tears and self-pity,
行動雖慢腦清醒。	Movements may be slow, but the mind is still clear.
謝主賜夫助我行，	Thank God for the blessing of a helpful spouse,
歡樂過日靠神恩。	Living each day joyfully through His grace.

I am positive today, perhaps because I am considered to be in the honeymoon phase. I just pray to God for His mercy and grace to sustain me and keep me from falling. To my fellow PWs, let us face the challenges courageously and positively. Let us all:

- Stay positive and be happy. Tell ourselves every morning that it is a good day, a gift from God to be rejoiced in.
- Stay active physically and mentally; stay positive emotionally.
- Look out for others rather than look inwards at our limitations. It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- Pray to God for His mercy and grace.
- Smile more :)

My Parkinson Story

Khoo Quek Yong

Seneca once said: "It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it… Life is long if you know how to use it."

Those words stayed with me, though their meaning felt distant at first. **Only later, as Parkinson slowly crept in,** did I begin to understand how precious time truly is — and how every moment must be lived with intention.

One day, while cleaning my house, I came across a cutout newspaper article on dementia. I wasn't researching, and I wasn't caring for anyone with the illness. I had just kept it. At the time, it meant nothing. But looking back, I realise perhaps life was quietly preparing me for this journey.

Parkinson arrived quietly: a fading sense of smell, a little numbness, a little stiffness. Nothing dramatic, until the diagnosis made it real. It hit me hard. I fell into depression, wondering if I would still be myself, if I could remain independent, or if I would one day become a burden.

Daily Struggles

Parkinson is often associated with tremors, but it is the countless daily struggles, unseen by most, that quietly wear us down. People often see me during my "ON" state, when the medication is working and movement becomes easier. In those hours, I can walk more freely, smile more easily, and even enjoy a meal without choking. What they do not see are the "OFF" periods — when my body stiffens, and even getting out of a chair feels like climbing a mountain.

Simple daily activities such as dressing, brushing my teeth, or even standing up can become difficult. There are also challenges such as freezing while walking, insomnia, and fatigue. Crowded places can trigger anxiety and worsen symptoms, making it harder to move or ask for help.

Nights bring their own battles — cramps, restless legs, and insomnia that leave me drained before the day even begins. Even simple tasks, like brushing my teeth, pulling on a t-shirt, or walking to the toilet, become uphill struggles.

One of the most difficult moments in my journey was a fall that resulted in a broken wrist. Although the bone eventually healed, the pain and fear remained. That fear slowed my recovery and made daily life even more challenging.

The Light of Support

A major source of support in my journey has been Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS), which I joined in April 2025. Through activities such as Pilates and Standing Tai Chi, I found not only ways to stay active, but also a community of people who understand.

What began as a support group became a lifeline. There, I met Edward Pang, Ruddy, Paul, James, Liddy, John Ling, Karen, Iris, Helen, Vivian, Kim Eng, Teck Koon, William Wong, and many more. Once strangers, they became my comrades and cheerleaders.

I am also deeply grateful to the staff of PSS, especially Phyllis and Jason, for creating a safe space for us to gather, learn, and support one another.

I would also like to thank the medical team at Singapore General Hospital, especially Prof Prakash Kumar and Dr Tan Siok Bee, for their compassionate care through the hardest times.

Lessons and Advice

Despite the challenges, Parkinson has taught me important lessons. It has reminded me to slow down, appreciate the small joys in life, and cherish the people around me.

Too often, we assume we have time. But life does not always wait.

If there is one piece of advice I can give, it is this: Don't delay your living. Treasure what you have. Don't postpone joy.

Closing

Seven years into this journey, I continue to face both good days and difficult ones.

There are days of despair, when the "OFF" periods grow longer and the struggle feels unending. What pains me most is not just my own suffering, but the sadness of not being fully there for my family.

Yet even in those moments, I remind myself:

I am still here.

I am still standing strong.

My Parkinson Journey

Walter Wu

My journey as a Parkinson Warrior started after taking the COVID-19 injection and experiencing a stroke — things that I would sometimes want to blame for my Parkinson Disease (PD) diagnosis and symptoms, such as muscle stiffness. In December of 2016, I was met with a very mild stroke, but life went on normally. Prior to PD, I had a full-time job in the construction industry. I was doing IT-related work and was very good at my job. I eventually left my job prior to my PD diagnosis, and then COVID-19 came about.

One day, I had a fall and went to a General Practitioner, who then referred me to a specialist. That started what felt like an endless stretch of waiting — waiting for appointments, waiting for answers, waiting for a diagnosis. I was in denial when I was diagnosed with Parkinson. I kept thinking, why me? I was healthy before all this. I wanted to blame it on the injection because it felt unfair.

In the beginning, Parkinson was something new to me. I was struggling to regain control of my right leg, but overall, I was still healthy, and

happily in the "honeymoon stage". The only difficulty was climbing the stairs, which was still manageable.

For the first three years living with PD, it was still manageable. I was able to go on walks every day, covering long distances of up to 22 km. However, in January 2024, everything changed. The distance I walked became shorter, and shorter. I was falling more often — not backwards anymore, but face-down. The worst was when I fell at Coney Island. I was all alone and surrounded by trenches. From then on, whenever it rained, I became more cautious and fearful that I would fall again.

In 2025, my condition worsened. I was only able to walk 1 km. I was struggling a lot when walking from Potong Pasir to Bishan and back — shopkeepers would help me, people would assist me to get taxis, and I had to hold onto every lamp post I walked by to support myself. It hit me how much my life had changed.

I still go to the gym to keep myself active. However, it also became a reminder of my decline. When I go to the gym, people say things like, "Wow, you survived!" Something that used to be normal for me is now seen as an achievement, and others are impressed by it. It stings, because it reflects how much I have lost.

I still try to go for walks. I once read a book regarding a man, John Pepper, a British man diagnosed with Parkinson in his 60s, who does not take medication. He shared that walking 90 minutes a day, the brain will produce dopamine. When stressed, walking around helps increase dopamine. I do try to follow his example, but the reality is difficult. Enduring even 200 metres already makes me feel faint. The neurologist told me to increase the medication dosage from ¼ tablet to ½ tablet twice a day, but I did not feel it working, nor do I feel it doing any good. Every day feels like an uphill battle. I just want my energy back. I want my old life back.

In the midst of this, a friend reminded me about Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS). I live nearby, and my friend accompanied me to register. Through PSS, I joined physiotherapy classes and monthly walks. I really admire some of the strong walkers there — I aspire to be like them again someday.

I strongly recommend PSS to anyone with Parkinson, because their activities are truly designed for us. But I also hope the government can provide more financial support. Some people don't join simply because of financial difficulties. The government often says it will support seniors more, but Parkinson always seems to fall through the cracks. At our age, we're already at the "tail end of life". We don't have many years left, so even a little more support would go a long way for us.

Despite everything, I try not to give up. My advice to others like me is: Stay active. Don't give up. And sleep well — because every time I wake up after a good rest, I feel a little better.

My Parkinson Journey

Mary Tan

Life is not easy as a Parkinson Warrior, let alone the journey to being diagnosed. Initially, I was looking for a doctor for my high blood sugar. There were a lot of food items that I did not dare to eat. From then on, my body became weaker and I started to shake a lot. Initially, I had only been consulting my traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) doctor, and when I finally consulted a general practitioner, I was asked to pay a visit to Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH).

Subsequently, I was referred to the neurology department of TTSH. There were a lot of doctors who told me that my symptoms did not resemble those of Parkinson Disease (PD), even the TCM doctor said that as well. In 2017, I was already taking medication and seeing a neurologist who specialised in PD. Finally, in 2018, when I met Dr Au, that was when I was officially diagnosed with PD. At that point, I was already in a state of confusion as to whether I was actually coming down with PD.

From 2017 to 2018, I did not think so much and still made it a point to do the usual things (even when I felt like I did not have much physical strength) that I would do prior to seeing a neurologist. When the news broke in 2018, I could not accept the fact that I had PD. I was very sad, kept crying every day, and felt like I was very useless. It took me a long time to finally get out of that state, and I always remind myself of the support system behind me — my daughters, sister, huge extended family and colleagues.

I finally came to join Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) as a member in 2025, even though I had already known of its existence when I was diagnosed. As my PD was not so serious at that point in time and I was still working, I just enrolled myself into St Luke's and exercised instead of joining PSS. However, deep down, I knew that it was because of my fears when looking at members who have progressed further than I. I chose to not know what would happen to me in the future, as I was still in denial. Now that I have finally embraced PD, I have also deteriorated much further. While this happens, my fears of death also started to surface, as I am scared of what will happen to my daughters when I am not around. My daughters are my life.

I enjoy my time in PSS, especially when interacting with the instructors and members here. I want to tell new members how good and welcoming this place is. If PSS had a second centre, I would definitely want to see more programmes that can help us to remain active and delay PD's progression. Special mention to Ann, who is in my physiotherapy class, the one who would hold my hand and encourage me to do the physiotherapy exercises together.

"Life is not easy, but you have to continue on no matter how tough it gets" — these were the last words of my mother. The PD journey may not be easy, but I will continue to fight as a Warrior.

勇敢求助、积极活动、好好生活

林战士

起初，我是因为上下床的时候，感觉到背痛才去看医生。之后，医生叫我来回走路给他看。他看着我走路的姿态，就和我说我可能有帕金森。

但是，医生帮我打针了之后，我就感觉到好多了。于是，我就没有去想我可能患上帕金森。但其实，不止这个医生告知我帕金森的可能性。我去看了另外一个医生，他也说了同样的问题。

之后，我的女儿告诉我新加坡帕金森协会（PSS）的存在。我加入PSS已经两年多了，也参加了不少活动。现在，在阐述这个故事的我，刚上完普拉提课。每一次上完普拉提课，我的手脚就会超级酸痛，有时候酸到走不了路，哈哈哈。

现在，我的手脚和以前比起来相对不灵活，思维也变慢了。在PSS的旅程，我也交到许多朋友。现在的我，走路的姿态也好很多了，手也少颤抖了。

谢谢PSS的职员和老师们的贡献，关怀与帮助。我想对战士们说，记得按时活动，好好利用自己的时间来练习和运动。

与“帕”共存

Chia Quee Yang

自2016年9月开始，我左边的手脚时常感觉抽痛，僵硬。

医生给我照了MRI，确认我患了帕金森症。

接下来的七年里，我都按照医生指示，服食所开的药物。药量随着病情逐年增加，有一些副作用，比如晚上时常会让我肌肉抽痛或僵硬而失眠。之后，我参加了太极班，静坐，散步，听音乐，来放松心情，希望能延缓病情的恶化。虽然挑战重重，但还是能支撑。

疫情之后，因我的病所需，医生增加了新药，这次不像之前那么顺利，其副作用太大了。有一次，我感觉胸闷，心跳加速，晚上不能入眠，又因时值周末和周日时段，收不到医生的回复，当时不知所措，心中充满挫折感，心情低落。百般无奈，于是自己上网寻找关于帕金森症的资料，对“帕”又多了一层了解。

据了解，帕金森的前五至七年是蜜月期，接下来的药物控制就不会如往常那么顺利了。

为了要多了解关于“帕”的资料与援助，我意识到不能孤军奋战，于是开始参加位于碧山13街的新加坡帕金森协会（PSS）的活动。

PSS可说是帕金森症友的联络站，是修复站，也是资料库。很多帕金森症友在这里做物理治疗。

这里时常请来自各大医院的医生，护理师等专业人士给大家举办帕金森症的讲座。除了一对一的辅导，也进行各种活动，如：韵律操，瑜伽班，太极班，书法，歌唱班等。你也可以跟几个病友一起下棋。这里有舒适的沙发，饮水器。就像一个小家庭，舒适又温馨。这里的每个职员都很亲切友善，很有耐心地对待每个人，看护者也可以参与活动。

这里的帕金森症会员，人人都积极参加活动。他们坚强不拔的精神和斗志，是我学习的榜样。

到了老年，谁没有病？失智，痛风，中风，癌症等，轮番挑衅，磨难重重。苦日子还是要过的，与其唉声叹气的过日子，倒不如达观的面对每一天，珍惜每天在为我们加油的亲人。朋友，以及PSS的职员和义工们，有你们的支持和帮助，我们并不孤单。

谢谢大家！

Section 5:

Still Able, Still Giving, Still Trying

依然可行，依然给予，依然尝试

Having Hope and Reaching Out

Zahara

At times, people forget that caregivers have to also fight their own demons, and these demons might not be easy ones.

Every day, I am trying. I am trying to cope with my husband's emotions when he faces his decline, trying to communicate with my husband through his mumbling speech, trying to be the caregiver that he needs. When we talk about self-care and me-time for caregivers, the guilt you feel when the care recipient is left alone creeps in. I too have my own health issues, be it going through a pancreatectomy or other forms of surgeries.

Whenever I look back at my husband's photos from before his decline, it makes me feel very happy. He used to do all the household chores and was the most smiley person whenever we had guests in our home. However, with my husband bedridden now, it makes me feel the complete extreme opposite. This is the same for my husband, who is equally frustrated with his own decline. There are also times when my family does not really want to talk about my husband, as it will make them sad.

Even though he is unable to form congruent sentences now, we communicate in our own subtle ways. I make sure to (1) look in his eye, (2) talk slowly, and this will (3) allow him to understand and concentrate on me. I learnt this through a counsellor, and it was not easy to take up counselling. Counselling has broadened my horizons, turning me from a closed-off person to someone who is more "human" — now flowing with emotions and solutions. Now, I empower myself to remain socially connected with others instead of staying at home and crying. Whenever I pray, I believe that God will help in all His ways. I also engage in crochet art, zentangle drawing, and take walks by myself to clear my mind. My friends will also reach out to me if I do not contact them. The Malay community and kampong spirit are very strong, and we must continue to stay as such together.

My husband stopped coming to Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) in 2023, but he used to be extremely happy here, learning and experimenting with new things. Until today, he still yearns to be back. As a caregiver, I deeply remember the PSS Renew and Restore Workshop and how the experience helped me a lot in expressing my emotions. Even though my English is not the best, I pluck up my courage to approach other caregivers.

My hope for PSS for the next 30 years and beyond is to have more caregiver workshops and classes, such as crochet weaving. I would like

to tell all caregivers that everyone is in the process of learning — even myself. Try to relax and remember to eat well. Try to make new friends and communicate with someone about your issues, such as a counsellor.

My Story

James Chew

This is a story of my encounter with Parkinson Disease (PD) and my ongoing unwavering battle to slow down the progression of this neurodegenerative disorder, in living life to the fullest now and the years God has accorded me before He brings me home.

I first started experiencing symptoms of severe bouts of fatigue and hand tremors in the second quarter of 2018. In particular, my right hand was experiencing muscular rigidity, and I could hardly lift it. My wife kept asking why I get tired so easily for unknown reasons, and I would nap or sleep a lot during the day and night. We went to Johor Bahru to consult a renowned traditional Chinese medicine practitioner. He told me to go back to the Tampines Polyclinic doctor to get a referral to see a neurologist at the hospital to assess my condition. During my periodic medical appointments to see the Tampines Polyclinic doctors for review of my chronic hypertension, I also highlighted my new symptoms to the doctor, but there was nothing conclusive from his examination. I researched my symptoms on the Internet and had an inkling it could be PD, but that needed medical test confirmation.

In my next visit to the Polyclinic, I asked the doctor again about my symptoms and whether it could be PD. The doctor appeared surprised and wondered why he didn't think of it earlier. He sent me for a test, and upon receiving the results, he immediately wrote a referral letter for me to see the consultant at the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) Neurology Department for further tests to confirm the diagnosis.

Assoc Prof Prakash was assigned as my consultant neurologist at the Neurology Department, SGH, and he ordered a battery of tests (scans, MRI, motor and cognitive tests) to assess and confirm my condition. The test results at the end of December 2018 conclusively diagnosed that I have PD. It was a blow receiving the news, and crossing my mind were the main questions — "What is the cause?" and "Why do I have PD?" I checked and found no family history from my ancestors downstream or any lineage having PD. I was put on medication for the treatment of PD, the main drug being Madopar, which converts into dopamine in the brain to help control movement. I was prescribed other drugs to take, and the drugs were changed during subsequent visits to the consultant. I felt the consultant was doing a "trial and error" exercise to narrow down to the "right" medication.

In 2022, I decided to request a transfer of my treatment from SGH to the National Neuroscience Institute at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (NNI@ TTSH) to get a second opinion on my condition, to which Dr Prakash consented. I was assigned Prof Louis Tan. He continued reviewing my condition every six months and also conducted periodic assessments of cognitive and motor tests.

Over the last seven years, since my diagnosis at the end of 2018, I've vowed to fight PD to the end despite the onset of muscular rigidity and slower mobility. Exercise is a must to prevent deterioration of my body muscle, and it takes a lot of discipline to do it daily and be consistent. I made efforts to go for brisk walks and exercises, though the outbreak of COVID-19 disrupted my regular regimen. As a Christian, I believe God can heal my condition despite no cure being found so far by international doctors and researchers. I kept my trust in God despite my muscles being affected and my encounters with other symptoms, including pain in my hands and legs, toe cramps, mobility issues, altered moods and interrupted sleep. I also became more self-conscious of my postural and gait problems, especially in public, when I walked with a slight hunch and when my movement seemed uncoordinated due to the effect of the "ON" and "OFF" working of the medication.

I also encountered difficulty in dressing, especially in removing my T-shirt and had periodic tormenting backache. I was referred by Dr Louis to join the weekly one-hour physiotherapy session at the Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) premises in Bishan. The workout conducted by qualified physiotherapists is intensive and serves its purpose. However, the participants have to perform the exercises at home on their own to derive maximum benefit. I became friends with the Parkinson Warriors (PWs) attending the weekly physiotherapy sessions and the trainers too. I realised that when under pressure to speed up things, I get stressed and panicky easily. I get to understand what a PW undergoes through the stages of PD, and how what seemed a normal task for a healthy person becomes a challenge for one afflicted with PD. This calls for more understanding and patience among caregivers attending to PD patients, especially since they are the ones who spend long hours daily attending to their needs.

I learnt from the half-yearly consultation reviews with my NNI consultant to document (see my checklist example in the resources section at the back of the book) any new or current issues pertaining to PD and share them with the doctor at my medical reviews. This helps me to get answers for my issues, and the doctor kept abreast of my condition's progress. One important point is adhering to medication and meal timing for Madopar and other drugs to ensure they are taken according to the prescribed frequency and thus are effective. I use my mobile as a medication timer reminder for all my daily medication intake. The goal of the medications taken daily is to help me function normally each day and not just mask the effects.

Along my life journey in 2023, I was diagnosed with Atrial Fibrillation (AF) (with the help of Apple Watch! — another amazing story). This condition means my heartbeat is irregular. I underwent tests at the National Heart Centre Singapore and was put on blood-thinning medication for life. The medication also helps to prevent stroke and pneumonia, which can be life-threatening. This has not daunted my fighting spirit to press on in my fight against PD.

I also volunteered and participated actively in:

1. NNI@TTSH's clinical trials on the effects of Vitamin E on PD,

2. Use of game tools (Combat PD) for trial home exercise,

3. Singapore Institute of Technology's group study on the progress of the condition of persons with Parkinson by qualified research groups, and

4. Counselling sessions conducted by Executive Counselling and Training Academy student counsellors.

I join PSS outdoor activities whenever my schedule permits and also participate in Changi General Hospital's (CGH's) PD Support Group talk activities. The provided information and tips proved to be helpful and useful in managing my condition. I connected and forged friendships with other PWs and shared common issues faced with PD. I recently connected the person in charge of the CGH Support Group with a charity organisation that helps organise trishaw outings in the vicinity of Gardens by the Bay for persons with Parkinson and visits to the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest.

With the national focus on mental wellness and getting the young and the old to remain active, I am currently working as a part-time English Language instructor, teaching English to People's Republic of China (PRC) workers at a commercial aerospace company specialising in maintenance, repair and overhaul of commercial planes. I took an intensive eight-week CELTA course certified by Cambridge University to qualify to teach English to foreigners. When recruited by the company, I started from ground zero to develop the basic English curriculum by engaging the department's stakeholders to understand the PRC staff's key requirements and challenges faced in their job in relation to their English language proficiency. It means a lot of fine-tuning of the curriculum along the way as the lessons kicked off. It was possible also because of good support from the Training Manager and department heads.

I transitioned from a full-time Quality Assurance job to teaching English part-time towards the tail-end of my retirement years to fulfil my long-standing passion for teaching English. My one-year part-time contract was extended for another year as more Chinese workers were recruited from China by the company. So far, I have taught more than 100 PRC staff who underwent the Basic English Course (BEC).

Concurrently, I am working with stakeholders to develop the curriculum for the Intermediate English level, targeted at staff who completed the BEC and showed potential to proceed to the next level of English learning. The end goal is that the trained technicians must demonstrate competency in reading, understanding, executing tasks, writing, and finally sign off on the maintenance jobs assigned daily.

I also engaged in community volunteer work at the Tampines Park Residents' Network (RN), which serves the area where I reside. I serve as a Grassroots Leader and committee member in the RN under People's Association, primarily to serve the residents. It was encouragement from my daughter and son-in-law (Amelia and Kaiyang) who see my knack for writing, that set me on the road to volunteer in helping out at the weekly Tampines West's Meet-the-People Session activities, doing registration of constituents who come to the sessions seeking help from their Member of Parliament, Minister Masagos. This translates to payback time for me in returning to society what I have benefited from all those growing years. It's often a joy and blessing to give than to receive. The interaction with residents is eye-opening, and hearing their concerns and stories opens my heart to the issues they face in their lives.

I also participated in the NTUC Mentorship Ecosystem program in 2024 and 2025 to share my working experiences and knowledge with younger mentees in the workforce and foster meaningful connections within the mentorship community. I find it enriching and purposeful to share and network to grow the working community in partnership with NTUC, which champions the cause.

I recalled, when growing up, my fervent ambition was to be a writer. Though it turned out otherwise, I still advocate that one must dare to dream but **dream *BIG***, for dreams do come true! Don't just ***follow*** your dreams, aim to ***chase*** them instead, just like how my passion to teach English came true.

Despite all these challenges and struggles, I remain grateful and thankful for supportive loved ones, including my spouse (Sally), children, friends, colleagues, relatives, ex-colleagues and church mates. I have a good, longtime friend, Sebastian Koh, who often encouraged me to exercise and to never give up. I treasure such a friendship where he showed he cares and seeks the better good. He sums up the phrase *"That's what true friends are for"*. Another friend I am grateful and thankful for is Angel Lim, a language teacher, who unselfishly shared her knowledge and experience to help me develop the English curriculum. I always believe that networking is important in this connected world to get resources fast when the need arises, and it always pays off.

There is a saying: *"When you are young, travel far, and when you become a Senior, then travel near"*. The truth couldn't be further when ill-health can pose a challenge as we age, with some having to face a deluge of chronic and terminal diseases,

bearing in mind *"time and tide wait for no man"*. I have established my travel bucket list, and over the past two years, my spouse and I have been travelling more to holiday in those places and ticking them off the list. We enjoyed the beautiful nature scenery in the various provinces of China we travelled to and also the natural mountainous landscape and beautiful seas, lakes and waterfalls in New Zealand and Switzerland. What a beautiful, awesome world we live in!

I continue to look forward to each brand new day with faith, hope and optimism. I remain thankful to God for His provisions and will continue to champion support for PWs, especially their needs. I like to share positive and inspiring quotes to challenge people to exceed their potential, and have established my inspiring quote in descending order from six words to one word.

Here goes….

Be The Best You Can Be

Never, Never, Never Give Up!

Dare To Dream BIG

Make Extraordinary Happen

Do It

Now!

Another favourite:

People don't care how much you know,

till they know how much you care.

If I were to write a book about my life, my last line would be, **"I have lived my life according to God's purpose, to the fullest and I have finished the race, leaving a legacy in making a difference and being a blessing to the lives of people who crossed my path."**

我想知道得更多

张看护者

我不是一个擅长主动找人聊天的人，但我是一名很好的聆听者。

看护之前，我还是一名工作人士，退休后我还得帮忙照顾我一岁大的孙女。我的丈夫已退休了，生活起居没有什么大问题，能够自理。

起初我们先看家庭医生，再转到综合诊疗所，最后转介到国家脑神经医学院（NNI），才确诊为帕金森疾病。（之前在家庭医生，综合诊疗所 都以为是中风的现象）。开始时我们是通过中央医院的护士小姐告知我们新加坡帕金森协会（PSS）的存在。那时刚好碰到 已故内阁资政李光耀之女李玮玲医生逝世的消息，才得知PSS也提供病患与其看护者多方的援助。

现在，我的丈夫参加PSS的物理治疗课，互助小组，普拉提和各种各样的讲座。其实我的丈夫不太喜欢来参加活动，他需要很多鼓励和支持。好笑的是，每一次是我跟我丈夫说想参加讲座或工作坊对他有帮助，他都会说“好啦好啦，妳想参加 我陪妳来咯”。

我觉得这些讲座和工作坊对我们都很有帮助，学了这些知识后我也能自助。遇到别的看护者时，我也会听到他们不一样的看法，有时候他们分享的经验，也是我一个人想不到的。我比较内向，不擅长社交。但是当我认识了对方之后，我会主动和他介绍PSS。我很感谢尤其是会来主动找我聊天和述说最新活动的工作人员。

我想知道更多关于看护者的须知、贴士，以及如何更好地帮助身边的帕金森战士。有些时候，我们看护者难免会感到疲倦，烦躁和伤感。但是，我们还是要向前看，向前走，积极地面对一切。勇敢的走向前，继续为自己加油。

我的这一生

苏战士

帕金森之前的我，是一名收银员。

起初，我是因为骨质疏松症而去看医生。之后，身边的人尤其是我的姐妹，觉得我的行动越来越缓慢，半年后才查出我有帕金森症。当时我也遇到 COVID–19，中了病毒之后，我的病情也开始恶化。我陷入了迷茫，感到不知所措。我会经常问自己“为什么是我得帕金森”—— 但我也晓得没有人会知道答案。

之后，医生建议我参加新加坡帕金森协会（PSS）。我身边的人不断地鼓励我参加PSS，因为这里是专为帕金森战士设立的一个活动空间，而这种针对性的关怀和护理对我会有很大的帮助。

正如身边的人所说，现在，我参加了歌唱班，普拉提和物理治疗课。上这些课程之前，我走路和睡觉都有困难。现在，我的身体不会那么僵硬，睡眠质量和行走能力都变得比较好了。除此之外，我也坚持每一天早上五点起床运动。每天需要那么早起身不是一件容易的事情，但我会鼓励我自己，告诉自己如果我不运动，我迟早会坐上轮椅，只有我自己能帮助我自己，没有别人了。有时候在PSS里看到其他的战士们，我也会主动上前鼓励他们继续运动，保持健康。

我一直以来都希望我们的协会能扩张，开第二间中心。因为只有这样，更多的帕金森战士才能受益。我希望看到更多的帕金森战士来到我们的协会，让大家越来越好。我也想在有生之年，尽情旅行，看看世界。

记得照顾好你自己，按时吃药，填饱肚子，勇敢面对一切。

请你慢慢走，　我会陪着你

黄水莲

大家好，我是一位全职看护者，也曾经从事自己热爱的工作四十年。

自从丈夫在2017年确诊帕金森症，我选择提早退休，全心投入他的照护与陪伴。帕金森症不仅仅影响患者，更深深地牵动着整个家庭。我亲眼看着所爱之人从身体逐渐退化到情绪低落，这一路，我们都走得不容易。

作为看护者，我深刻体会到：照护的工作远不只是按时喂药、陪同复诊，更是日以继夜的情绪观察、突发状况处理和心理支持。我不是专业医护人员，却必须不断学习成长。从紧急应对到耐心倾听，我始终处于“‘随时待命”的状态。因为我知道，他不一定会听我的，也有自己的想法和情绪，有时候还不注意安全。下一秒，他可能因为双腿突然僵硬而无法迈步，或者突然失控往前冲，跌倒在地。

我的家人和朋友知道我长期照顾丈夫，因此大多不会主动约我，也尽量避免打扰。我理解他们的体谅与善意，但有时仍难免感到孤单与被隔离。

我并非无所不能的超人，只是一个普通的女人，也会情绪低落，甚至崩溃。有时忍不住对丈夫发脾气，说出伤人的话。但现在的我，通常能及时察觉问题，并主动道歉、寻求和解。我明白，那往往是因为自己已身心俱疲，需要休息、调整与放松。我也不断提醒自己：情绪需要被看见、被理解，而不是简单压抑就能解决。

我感谢有一个可靠的帮手协助日常家务，但“看护者”的角色，是任何人都无法完全取代的。尤其对我来说，我不仅是看护者，更是他的太太，而他是我们孩子的爸爸。我们的关系，不只是“照顾与被照顾”，而是几十年共同生活、风雨同行所建立的情感与承诺。我的照护，源自爱与责任，是日复一日、无休无假的守护与牵挂。这样的陪伴，是任何人都无法取代的。

照护的紧张压力让我时常感到疲惫、低落，腰酸背痛，甚至多次陷入忧郁。这些情绪不是一次就过去，而是反复出现。那时我才真正体会到：照顾别人之前，必须先照顾好自己。

我喜欢不断学习、接触新事物，所以只要时间允许，我都会参加各种课程，例如社工、美术、烘焙和急救等。在学习过程中，不仅增长了知识，

也认识了新朋友，更重要的是，让我重新找回了生活的乐趣与属于自己的快乐。

我也持续在家附近的老人院担任义工。透过这些学习与服务，让我找回自己的初心，也让我有更多力量与耐心，继续踏实陪伴丈夫走下去。

我很感恩我有信仰，给予我内在的力量；也感恩丈夫还在我身边，陪我一起经历成长与磨合。

帕金森症确诊初期，我们曾尝试过几家物理治疗中心，但效果都不太理想。直到我们自己找到并接触到PSS，一切才开始真正改变。

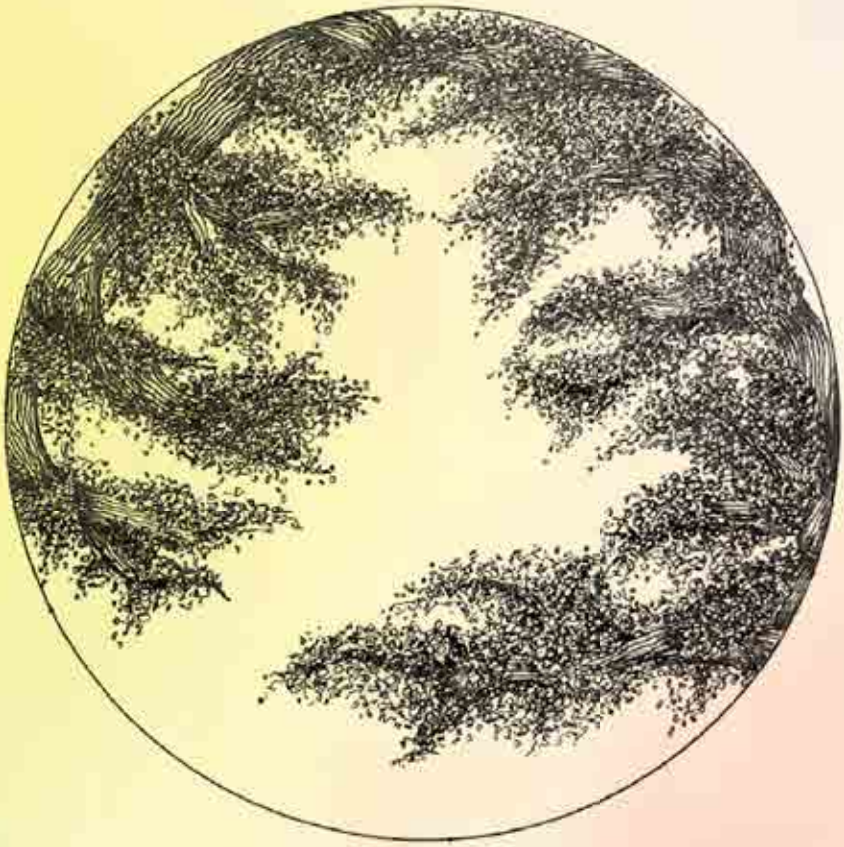
起初，我们只是希望找到一些物理治疗课程，没想到PSS提供的资源如此丰富：从身体训练、语言沟通、情绪管理，到认知锻炼与社交活动，几乎涵盖了患者生活的每一个层面。在这里，我们不仅锻炼身体，也找到了一个适合长期参与的好地方。看护者之间彼此扶持、分享经验、一起学习，不再是孤军奋战。

PSS不仅是专业的复健中心，更像是我们的第二个家。最让我感动的是，在这里，我们无需多做解释，每一位看护者和患者都能被真正理解、被包容接纳。

这条照护的路，不容易。但也因为有了彼此的鼓励，我们才能一步步坚持走到今天。

我衷心感谢PSS，也向每一位默默付出的看护者致敬。你们的爱，有时比药更有力量。

写下这些，不只是为了记录我的故事，更希望每一个正在照护路上的人，知道自己并不孤单。



Section 6:

Finding Hope After Parkinson — Deep Brain Stimulation

在帕金森后寻找希望 —— 深部脑刺激手术

Dared to Challenge

Gargi Mukherjee

Some journeys in life don't begin with a choice — they begin with a moment that shakes the ground beneath your feet. Today, I want to share mine.

If you know me, you probably know the woman with the camera — the one chasing light, chasing stories, chasing beauty. I've built a life I love here in Singapore…as a photographer, a wife, and a mother to a little girl who is my brightest joy. But behind the frames I capture, there has been another frame — one most people never saw.

Twelve years ago, in my twenties, I was diagnosed with Parkinson. Hearing that word at an age where you're supposed to be unstoppable…it felt unreal, unfair, as if someone pressed pause on everything I thought my life would be. For years, I learned to perform two versions of myself.

There was the version everyone recognised — steady hands, creative instinct, a smile ready for the world.

And then there was the version no one recognised — the one navigating tremors, stiffness, exhaustion, medication side effects, and the quiet fear of "What happens next?"

I became an expert at hiding the parts of me that were falling apart.

Six months ago, my body stopped negotiating. My routines turned into battles, even simple tasks demanded courage. The medications — the same ones that kept me functioning — started draining the colour out of life. That was when my husband, Anindya, stepped into a role no one prepares for. He started reading medical journals, finding specialists in different countries, crossing countries for opinions and holding on to hope on the days I couldn't. Our search eventually led us to something I had never imagined — Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery.

Try to picture it:

Electrodes placed inside the brain, wires routed through the skull and neck, a small pacemaker fitted into the chest… and a device that reprogrammes the abnormal signals in your mind. It sounded like science fiction — only this time, I was the protagonist. The night before the surgery was one of the longest nights of my life, not because I was afraid of pain, but because I didn't know who I would be when I woke up. There's a kind of fear that sits quietly beside you. I had that.

And then…

After two days of surgery, monitoring, adjustments, and prayers, something shifted. I felt lighter, clearer, and present. I was not healed instantly, but restored in a way I had forgotten was possible. The day I left the hospital, I caught my reflection and didn't see a patient. I saw a woman returning to herself — no heaviness, no shrinking, just energy… and a strange sense of peace. I hadn't felt that version of myself in years.

This is why I'm writing this.

Because too many people live with Parkinson in silence. Because DBS is still a mystery to most, when it could be a hope for many. Because the journey is not just medical — it's emotional, mental, spiritual, and because if my story reaches even one person who feels "less"… I want them to know they're not. The last few weeks have been a reminder that resilience is not about being strong all the time — it's about choosing to rise again, even when the climb looks impossible. I'm still healing, learning, finding my rhythm. However, I know this much — the next chapter of my life is going to be lived fully, loudly, fearlessly. If you're walking a similar path, I hope you find your second wind too. The brightest chapters are not behind us, they're the ones we're about to write!!

It's Still a Beautiful Life

Karen Ong

Background

Hi, my name is Karen Ong, 55 years old, formerly a procurement manager. I was diagnosed with Parkinson 17 years ago when I was 38 years old. Initially, I noticed a slight tremor in my hand and my handwriting getting smaller. I was then referred to see a neurologist and was diagnosed with Parkinson. I did not know anything about Parkinson then, besides that it usually happens to old people, and I was terrified. I called my best friend and cried.

I was prescribed medicine to control the tremors, which was not so obvious until 2018. I got used to them, and they allowed me to carry on with my daily life. Then I started to experience freezing. Sometimes at work, I would go to my boss's office and start freezing. My thoughtful boss would ask my colleague to bring my laptop to his office and continue my work from there until I could move back to my seat. My boss also allowed me to work from home whenever I was feeling uncomfortable, which was quite rare during that time.

My symptoms gradually worsened and I started experiencing slight dyskinesia, besides freezing. This made everyday tasks increasingly challenging. Following this, my doctor advised me to undergo Deep

Brain Stimulation (DBS). After much discussion with my husband, I decided to go ahead with the surgical treatment. In February 2019, I quit my job and prepared myself for DBS, which was performed in September 2019.

Managing My Symptoms

During the process of DBS treatment, I met multifunction specialists and came to know about the Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS). I began my journey to know more about Parkinson through this process, and the advice given by the medical staff that stuck with me was about being positive. An important source of positive energy in my life would be my husband, who is always advocating the benefits of exercise, reading and mental wellness. I used to believe that Parkinson is incurable and symptoms would get worse over time. While this may be true, there are also ways to manage or improve these symptoms. The best way is through exercise and staying active, which I also learnt from the people at PSS.

I always try to do things independently to lessen the burden on my caretakers. I exercise regularly on the treadmill and sometimes follow YouTube videos to do aerobic dances. It has been six years since I started the DBS treatment. I still have to diligently take my neurologist-prescribed medication to help control my motor functioning and freezing, but luckily, I no longer experience dyskinesia.

Pillars of Support

My family, friends and domestic helper have always been positive and accommodating towards me. The medical staff in Singapore General

Hospital, such as the physiotherapist, speech therapist, advance practice nurse and doctors, also have become my lifeline. I can easily approach and depend on them for help.

In spite of my disability, my family and friends do not treat me like a patient, I still do things and make decisions independently. This helps boost my confidence and self-esteem.

Recently, my family went to New Zealand and I tried to take part in most of the activities with the support of my family. I did paragliding, kayaking, hiking, luge, speed boat, etc. By engaging in the same activities with my family, it made our trip more complete. My husband and my son chipped in by cooking delicious meals, and my daughters did the washing and cleaning, allowing me to have a relaxing trip. This trip, as in previous trips, has brightened and enriched my life.

Lifestyle

I picked up crocheting from YouTube, a new hobby that allows me to express myself creatively and find moments of peace and joy. I also donated some of my crochet bags and keychains to PSS to support their fundraising.

I also enjoy baking and running errands for my family during my free time. I plan our daily meals and engage in retail therapy to make sure all the things we need are in place. Being active-minded, I act as a hub to coordinate medical appointments and other activities for my family members and parents.

I always agree to going out with my friends and family. We will go out for meals and shopping from time to time, and I always have someone with me whenever I go out.

Coping with Bad Days

During the days when I feel aching and restless, I will sleep more and let my body recover. This makes me feel better. I have a fellow Parkinson sister whom I can share my feelings with, as well as regular advice sessions from medical staff. I feel better after talking to them.

Parkinson happens not by choice and we just have to live with it. Just stay as positive and cheerful as possible because these are the only things that we can do to say thank you to our loved ones and the people who have been supporting us.

My final thought is that we should **focus on the strength and ability that we still have** and use them well, instead of dwelling on all that already been lost, in order to continue living this beautiful life positively and meaningfully.

Challenging the Odds

Lawrence Yong

The year was 2002 when I noticed tremors in my right hand, and my typing speed was affected. Next came the lack of right arm swing while walking. After a second opinion from my neurologist in 2003, I was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD). My whole world came crashing down when I realised the overall impact of this incurable disease. Job security and financial independence were my foremost concerns. And so began the search for "where to turn to" and "what to do" to prolong the deterioration of the condition. I joined Parkinson Disease Society Singapore (PDSS) located near Dunearn Road. It was subsequently relocated to Bishan and renamed as Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS).

I realised that I needed to focus on the following — exercise, medication and attitude. And of course, most importantly, family support and faith in God as the overall manager of my condition.

Exercise

As I was still working, exercise took a backseat. But that changed as I realised the importance of exercise. I tried Tai Chi as it is recommended in the literature. It also gave me a sense of achievement as I challenged myself. My enthusiasm for Tai Chi got the better of me, and soon I was giving Tai Chi public demonstrations, including at Move to Beat Parkinson in June 2014.

Medication

As the years went by, the inevitable became a reality. My condition deteriorated and I had to resort to a gradual increment of dosage. Needless to say, I was very disappointed with myself. The prolonged high dosage resulted in side effects like dyskinesia, which is an involuntary shaking and nodding movement of my head whenever I attempted to talk or sing. So when I meant "YES" verbally, my head would shake left and right. That caused confusion. So much for body language! It also affected my balance, and exercise became a hazard.

That went on till 2022, when my neurologist suggested I go for Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS). Initially, I was apprehensive as the idea of drilling holes in my skull did not appeal very much. Furthermore, I was not sure of any side effects from the surgery. I tried a new and different combination of medication, but to no avail. After much pondering and prayers for discernment, I relented. No option could be worse off than my dyskinetic condition. I wanted to give myself and my family a second chance.

And so, after some pre-surgery suitability assessment, I went for DBS in 2023. After the surgery, it was clear that my fears were unfounded. There were no dyskinesia or any side effects. I still need to supplement it with oral medication, but at a very reduced dosage. In addition, I can adjust the voltage level of stimulation. Both of these variables helped to keep dyskinesia at bay. Here, I must give credit to the National Neuroscience Institute staff for their dedication to monitoring my condition and advising on the most effective combination.

Attitude

Initially, after being diagnosed with PD, I asked, "Why me?" I reminded myself that there is no answer to this. I had to change my attitude toward how I look at myself. This is easier said than done. At times, it can be a humbling experience having to endure the many stares from the public. However, there are kind souls out there who are ready to lend a helping hand. I remember once, when I was returning home from an overseas trip, I was stopped by an immigration officer, who offered to help with my luggage. On another occasion, while queuing up to check in at an airport, my wife and I were offered to "jump queue" and given priority to board the plane. I guess my "OFF" condition was obvious enough!

So, instead of wallowing in self-pity, I diverted my attention to self-improvement via weekly exercises. To fill up my time, I took up some new languages. Occasionally, I would play boardgames like Sudoku and chess. I daresay it's not easy, but it's fun and interesting, and that is all that matters.

Joining PSS was a decision that I will always cherish, and I thank my family for their dedicated support on this. Despite the amount of

workload, the staff at PSS remained warm and attentive. They have made PSS a vibrant community, with many activities catering to different individuals' interests. At different stages of my journey, I had the opportunity to do art therapy, volunteer work, kickboxing, karaoke, Pilates and attend different Zoom sessions for the various online talks. At PSS, I can be myself — it is a safe haven for fellow warriors and me to mingle and catch up on how we are coping.

My Life Journey Living with Parkinson

Djohan Kesuma

Many of us know that Parkinson is a disease of the elderly whose body, hands or feet shake uncontrollably. That's exactly what I knew when I was young and before I was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD). Actually, PD is more than just a tremor in the body. There are other terms, such as dyskinesia, bradykinesia, and dystonia, that might sound unfamiliar to common people. But for people with PD, these terms are part of the symptoms they have to go through every day in their lives.

Coming back to my experience with PD, I would like to share my personal testimony. It all started back in 2007 when I felt that half of my body was weakened, namely my right-hand side (my dominant side). Then, I went to see a doctor at Singapore General Hospital for consultation. At that time, the doctor said there were three possibilities:

1. I had a stroke
2. My nerves were pinched
3. I had PD

In order to verify, I was subjected to an MRI scan for diagnosis. After repeated checks and diagnoses, the neurologist concluded that I had PD. Upon hearing that verdict, I was so devastated. I couldn't accept the reality that I got PD. I talked to myself and to God asking, "Why me?" since none of my family members (my parents and or my siblings) has PD. I did a lot of soul-searching for the next six months and asked God another question, "Why now?" I thought to myself, I was still young and at my productive age (early 40s). There was still a lot of work and responsibilities I had to bear and do. I struggled with that thought and couldn't accept my fate for the next year, until I finally saw a breakthrough in my life. That was when I could ask the question, "Why not?" That was the turning point in my life. I told myself I have to live with it and fight this disease till the day I die.

For the next 15 years, I lived and experienced what it is to be a disabled and handicapped person, especially in the last two to three years when my Parkinson symptoms progressed to an advanced stage. I had to be in a wheelchair everywhere I went. My body, hands and feet didn't seem to cooperate with the instructions from my brain. It was very frustrating, for example, like an itchy body that couldn't be scratched.

When I slept, I had to sleep in an upright position. I couldn't turn around or sleep sideways; my body was so stiff. I even peed and wet my bed during the night. I couldn't get out of bed on my own. At bedtime, I would need someone's help to cover me with a blanket. During that period, I couldn't wear long-sleeved shirts or long pants buckled up with my belt. To my embarrassment, I couldn't even wear underwear. I wore boxer shorts instead, which allowed me to easily pee whenever the urge came on. Also, I had difficulty passing motion (constipation). I would need someone to help me when alighting from a vehicle (car or train). My eating time had to be very strict, i.e., I had to eat half an hour after taking medication. I was also prohibited from eating high-protein foods such as eggs, cheese, tempeh, and beef, as it would affect the efficacy of the medication. I had to be diligent about doing exercise half an hour after taking my medicine. If I dined out, I had to go home quickly. Otherwise, I wouldn't have the strength to walk and would have to be pushed in a wheelchair. I couldn't go to the cinema as it was not convenient to bring my wheelchair into the cinema. If I went travelling by plane, I would have to be assisted in a wheelchair. At night, before sleeping, I had to wear diapers. Also, I couldn't type using my computer (it was difficult to work online). I couldn't write, let alone sign. Not to mention, the feelings of depression, loneliness and jealousy seeing other people's travelling photos, oh how happy I would be if I were healthy.

Indeed, PD does not make us die, but it makes our lives very miserable or, in other words, makes our lives difficult (like being imprisoned). I felt like I was being confined, not able to move.

But now all these hardships have eased up. It's like a dream to me. I am now free from bondage, and God has given me a second chance at life to live and enjoy. I cannot thank Him enough.

The following are the things I would like to do after Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery:

1. To get up from my bed on my own in the morning. (No need to wake my wife up to assist.)
2. To go to the toilet at night by myself. (No need to wear Pampers.)
3. To put a blanket on my own at night…
4. To go to our whirlpool on my own.

5. To be able to cook.
6. To be able to ride a bicycle to Sembawang beach.
7. To get started with a cell group at home.
8. To be part of and involved in a local church.
9. To reach out to the community through the church mission.
10. To visit the orphanage, disability centre, etc.
11. To participate in a Parkinson support group via Zoom.
12. To join the physiotherapy class at Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS) in order to make friends and network.
13. To become a member of PSS and share my life testimony to motivate others.
14. To be able to travel again, e.g., to Malaysia (KL, Genting), Bangkok, Jakarta, Australia (Perth), Korea, China, Turkey, Italy and the USA.
15. To go back and forth between Singapore and Indonesia.
16. To teach English in Indonesia.
17. To take online classes, e.g., videography, hair cutting or cooking using SkillsFuture credit. These skills are useful and equip me to do mission work, e.g., community outreach.
18. To be able to drive again and coach my son, Brian, in playing the guitar.
19. To help out with household chores like sweeping the floor, hanging clothes, etc..
20. To get help from an electrician to rewire the switch of the lamp at our dining table at home.
21. To fix and arrange my daughter's bedroom.
22. To take back the responsibility of being the head of household. i.e., to be the leader.

What then have I learned throughout this ordeal? The following are several positive points I learned from Parkinson, which have become my principles in life:

1. Do not hesitate to make a move.
2. Focus the mind in doing one job at a time. Do not multitask.

3. Take one step at a time in doing a task.
4. Think positively in every situation, even if it is bad.
5. Be more cautious when making a move.
6. Be disciplined in routine activities like getting up, reading the Bible, exercising, eating healthy food, studying, etc…
7. Do not procrastinate in doing a job.
8. Do not worry about tomorrow. Today is the gift from God, whereas tomorrow is a mystery. Just live happily for today.
9. Be grateful to God for everything that we have and are still able to do, like being able to wake up in the morning, having food to eat, being able to exercise, having the Internet, a TV, sleep, family, housing, etc… It's all by God's grace.
10. When down, do not focus on the problem, but on God, who gives me strength and help.

11. Be self-independent in doing a task as much as possible before seeking help. Learn to be patient when help is delayed.
12. Stay awake when making a move.
13. My purpose is to help and serve others, e.g., pray for others, encourage others by giving advice through WhatsApp, weblog, or YouTube.
14. Learn to laugh more when watching a humorous movie or video.
15. Learn to listen to classical music.
16. Invest more time in reading the Bible, meditating on His words, and listening to Godly teaching, for the scripture says, "Grass withers, flowers fade, but the word of God stands forever"
17. Become a more detail-minded person. Ever since my movement slowed down, I have become more observant of every event or task that I was doing or encountering. I felt that I could pick up a lesson (moral story) through a task, for example, when reading news, the Bible or people's testimonials.
18. Become more disciplined in my life by following the routine of Parkinson medicine intake every three hours.

19. Learn to be humble so I can always learn new things from others and new insights from problems. I realised that I could easily fall into being arrogant when I think I am strong physically (trusting in my own strength). However, when I remember I am weak, then I am strong spiritually (trusting in God's grace).

20. Remember that in every action, there is a reaction.

Although the battle is not finished, DBS has given me temporary relief. DBS therapy won't cure Parkinson, but it sure has helped to improve my quality of life. Hence, I intend to use my second chance at life to enjoy it and make use of it wisely by serving and giving back to the community, especially to the Society.

In closing, you will never appreciate what you have until you lose what you have. That's exactly how I felt when I sat in my wheelchair as a handicapped person. I am so grateful for another chance at life that God has given me, from being unable to move to being a person who can move. It's like the blind man in the Bible saying, "I was blind but now I can see." The feeling is indescribable. Thank God for giving me this opportunity!!! I can never pay Him back!! Last but not least, I am so grateful to my family who have supported me tirelessly through thick and thin spiritually, physically, mentally and financially, and family and friends who have helped me in one way or another throughout my life journey with Parkinson. The battle is not over yet… It has just begun... Together, we will fight PD and make an impact on the community for the glory of God!

Thank you,

Djohan

一个帕金森病患者的经历与感受

清晨

首先，非常感谢新加坡帕金森协会，让我有机会以一名帕金森病患者的身份，分享我的经历与感受。

我的笔名是"清晨"，患上帕金森已有十五年。刚确诊时，我感到十分茫然，因为从未听说过这种疾病，对它一无所知。后来通过医生的讲解和网络资料，我才逐渐了解，帕金森是一种慢性疾病，无法根治，并会随着时间逐渐恶化，长期服药也可能带来其他并发症。

我曾听过一句话："健康就像一顶皇冠，戴在健康人的头上，只有病人才能看见。"我花了整整九年的时间，才慢慢接受自己是帕金森患者的事实。

2017年，主治医生曾询问我是否考虑接受深部脑刺激手术（DBS）。起初我有所抗拒，仍抱着一线希望，希望通过中医药来治疗。然而多次尝试无果后，我最终在2018年接受了手术。术后，病情明显改善，我不再需要依靠轮椅，可以自由行动，药量也减少了一半，生活几乎恢复到发病前的状态。

医生曾叮嘱我，术后要每天散步。当时我天真地以为，“走去巴刹”就算散步，还对医生说：“有啊，我每天都有走去巴刹。”后来才明白，“走动”和“散步”其实并不相同。也因为当时的无知，我错过了延缓病情恶化的黄金时期。如今，我再次需要依靠轮椅，也出现了其他并发症。

幸运的是，新加坡帕金森协会为患者提供了丰富的课程与活动，让我们可以学习、运动，也能结识同样面对疾病的朋友。

我最大的收获，是从一些年长患者身上，看见未来的自己。他们不放弃、持续学习的精神，让我深受敬佩，也提醒我珍惜当下，认真而快乐地过好每一天。

今年是帕金森协会成立三十周年。在此，我要特别感谢创办人、所有支持协会的善心人士，以及每一位患者的家属。若没有你们长期的付出、关爱与支持，我们很难走到今天。

衷心感谢你们。

我与帕金森同行的故事

吴贵南

2015年，我开始察觉身体出现异样。那段时间，我常常感到全身无力，就连简单的转金纸也变得吃力。我担心是中风，于是先去看中医确认，但结果并非如此。随后，我前往私人诊所，再转介到综合诊疗所，最终被转至 国家脑神经医学院（NNI），在那里确诊为帕金森症。

2017年起，我开始每六个月定期复诊。医生为我调整药物，但新药带来了低血压的副作用，起身时常常头晕，这也让我意识到病情正在逐渐发展。

确诊后，我开始上网查找资料，了解帕金森及深部脑刺激手术(DBS)。后来通过其他机构的资讯，我认识了新加坡帕金森协会(PSS)。

2021年的一次复诊中，护士长问我是否考虑进行DBS手术。我没有征求家人的意见，因为我认为，无论他们是否同意，最终要面对病情和手术的人是我自己。我选择听从内心最真实的想法。

2022年，我接受了DBS手术。住院五天后出院。手术和恢复过程并不轻松，有疼痛，也非常疲惫，但我坚持了下来。儿子对我说的一句话，给了我很大的力量——“爸爸，你很勇敢。”

手术后大约一个月，我进入“ON”期，正好在农历新年前夕，症状明显改善。虽然四肢偶尔仍会抽动，但随着时间推移，我逐渐适应。最重要的是，我的行动比以前灵活了许多。

手术也带来了显著的改变——手术前，我每天需要服用大量药物；手术后，药量明显减少。这让我切身体会到 DBS 为我生活质量带来的提升。

加入 PSS 后，我的生活变得更加充实。协会的课程与活动鼓励我持续运动，也让我保持活跃。我每周到 PSS 两天，其余时间则到乐龄之友中心参与活动。在这里，我结识了许多朋友，也建立了属于自己的支持网络。工作人员的关怀与鼓励，让我倍感温暖。

我想对其他帕金森症友说：确诊后，要学会看开一点、放宽心。帕金森并不是世界末日，我们仍然可以选择如何面对它。如果你正在考虑 DBS 手术，不妨多了解。对我来说，它确实带来了改善——至少让我不再需要服用那么多药，生活也轻松了许多。

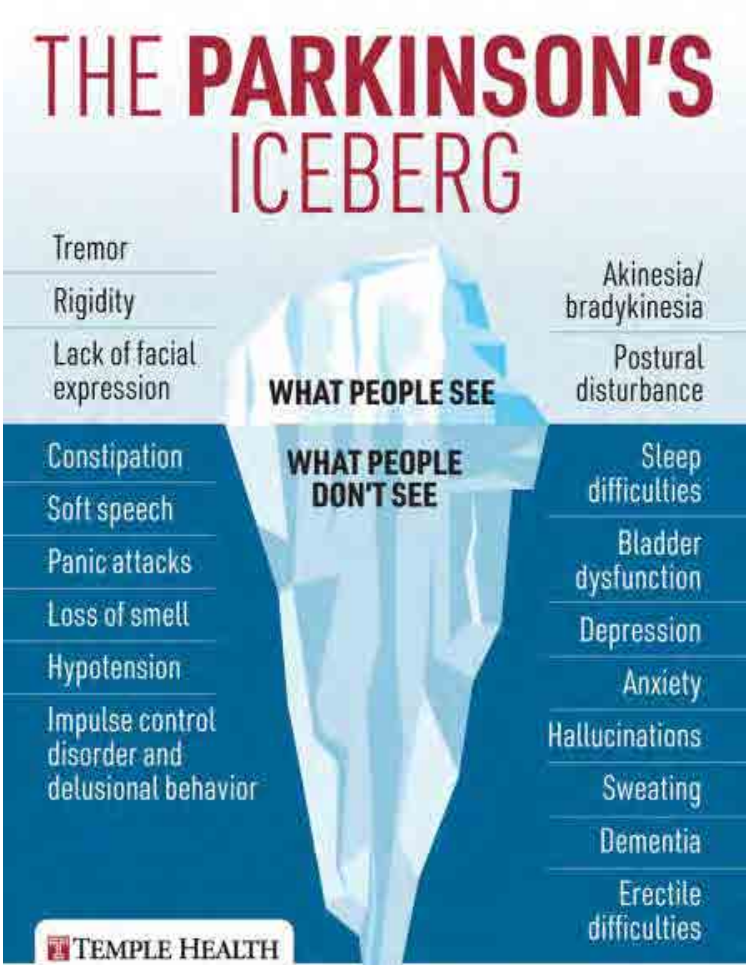
最后，我要感谢 PSS 的每一位工作人员。谢谢你们的用心，让我感受到支持与尊重。也祝愿所有与帕金森同行的朋友们：身体安康，心境开朗，在新的一年里拥有自己的目标与理想。

让我们一起努力，继续前行。

Resources Contributed by Parkinson Warriors and Caregivers

Parkinson Is More Than Meets the Eye

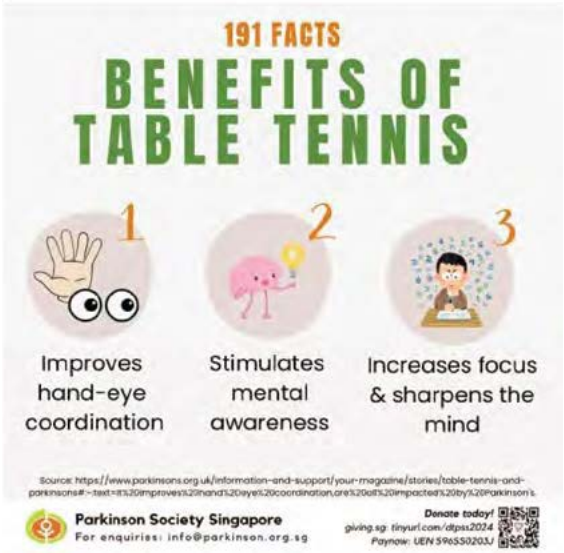
Eliska



This diagram illustrates what Parkinson involves. What you see and what you don't see but is happening inside.

My Journey with Table Tennis

Martin Ng Kang Huat

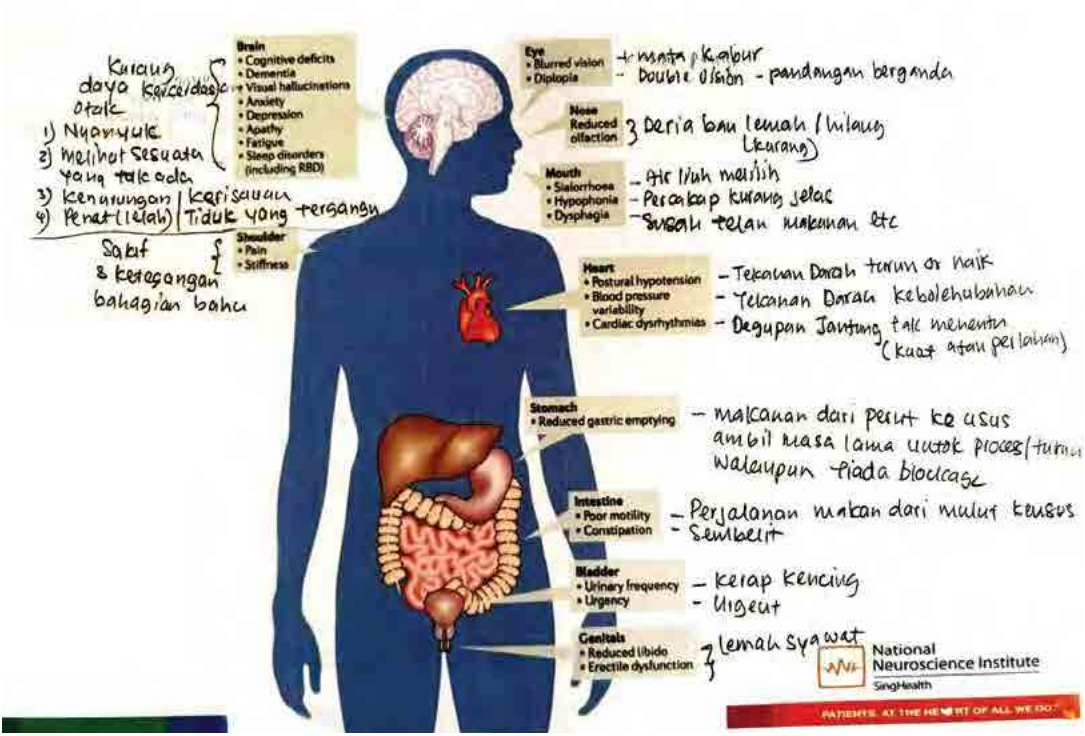


We Parkinson Warriors can do it, we can be competitive too!

The Human Anatomy (Translated Chart)

A guide for non-English readers,
for the Malay community

Rosnah Awang & Roziah Lim



Checklist for New Parkinson Patient

Rosnah Awang & Roziah Lim

*Based on my personal experience since my diagnosis on 15 August 2024.

1) The emotional roller coaster ride after being diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD) differs from one patient to another.

2) Once you get over the hurdle of accepting the reality that you have PD, you need to gather and gear up to find out more about the disease.

3) Identify your support system (family member, spouse, partner, children, best friend or trusted helper) who will walk with you in your Parkinson journey. He or she will be your companion through the ups and downs of your Parkinson Journey. It is very important for your support system to fully understand what PD is all about to be able to assist you in your journey (E.g., translating text or diagram information from English to their mother tongue to help them better understand, etc.)

4) Always remember you are not alone in your Parkinson journey, and help is just a "mouse click" away. Don't shy away from seeking help.

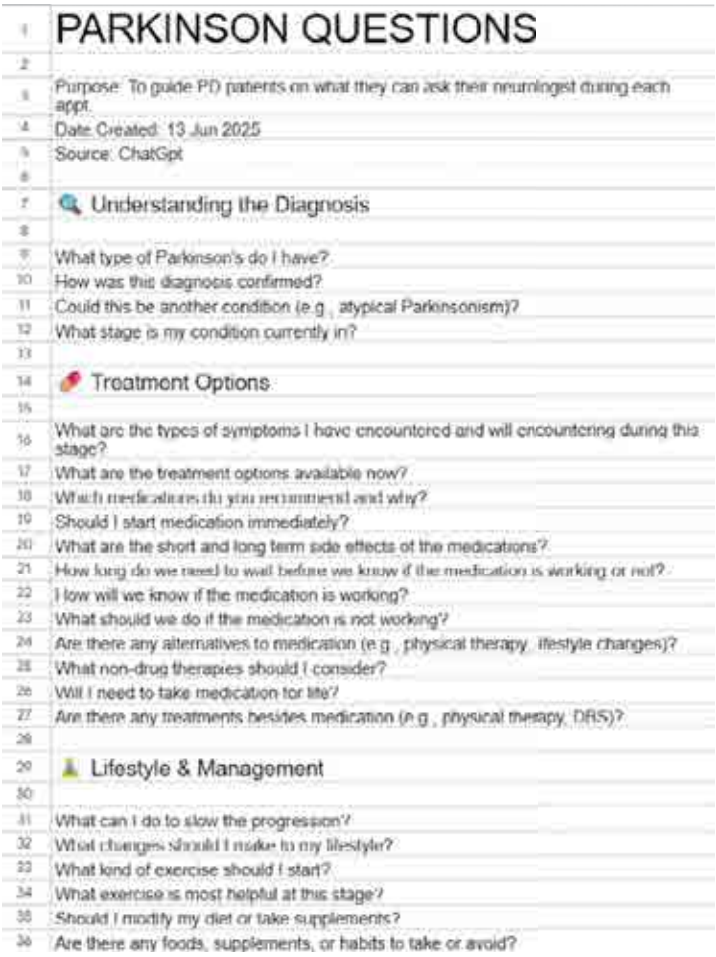
5) My personal checklist is as follows, and I hope they will assist in enlightening you in finding suitable options for your Parkinson Journey:
   a) Get a referral from your doctor to join a PD support group either at Parkinson Society Singapore or a designated hospital PD support group.
   b) Attend educational talks conducted by these support groups to equip yourself with the knowledge of PD, including the latest treatment options, the progression stages, and how to deal with them at each of these progression stages.
   c) Interact and make friends with patients within your PD support group and learn from these Parkinson Warriors and their caregivers about their coping mechanisms.
   d) Get a referral for physiotherapy sessions. You can always find one near your housing estate to ease your commute.
   e) Daily exercise and movement are key to "delaying" PD progression and require determination, consistency and hard work.
   f) Read, read and read… Knowledge is power.
   g) Keep yourself occupied with activities that fill your heart with joy (painting, craft work, baking, singing, or just chatting with a good friend).

My journey ahead is still long and winding, and with each passing day, I am discovering new things about PD and it's impact on myself. Tomorrow is never promised to anyone... so every day I wake up with a grateful heart, pray, and just take one day at a time…

My Very Own Parkinson Encyclopedia

Khoo Quek Yong

Scan the QR code to view my very own self-made PD resource depository!



PARKINSON QUESTIONS

Purpose: To guide PD patients on what they can ask their neurologist during each appt.
Date Created: 13 Jun 2025
Source: ChatGpt

🔍 Understanding the Diagnosis

What type of Parkinson's do I have?
How was this diagnosis confirmed?
Could this be another condition (e.g., atypical Parkinsonism)?
What stage is my condition currently in?

💊 Treatment Options

What are the types of symptoms I have encountered and will encountering during this stage?
What are the treatment options available now?
Which medications do you recommend and why?
Should I start medication immediately?
What are the short and long term side effects of the medications?
How long do we need to wait before we know if the medication is working or not?
How will we know if the medication is working?
What should we do if the medication is not working?
Are there any alternatives to medication (e.g., physical therapy, lifestyle changes)?
What non-drug therapies should I consider?
Will I need to take medication for life?
Are there any treatments besides medication (e.g., physical therapy, DBS)?

🧪 Lifestyle & Management

What can I do to slow the progression?
What changes should I make to my lifestyle?
What kind of exercise should I start?
What exercise is most helpful at this stage?
Should I modify my diet or take supplements?
Are there any foods, supplements, or habits to take or avoid?

Checklist for Half-Yearly Consultation Review with NNI Consultant

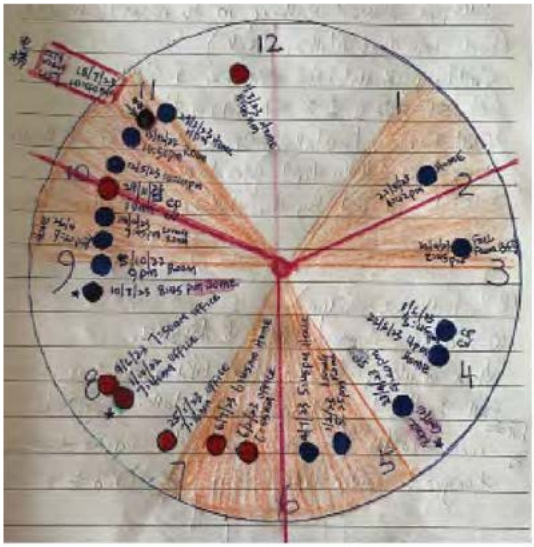
James Chew

Issues Faced	Frequency/Remarks
1. Sleeping problems	
2. Difficulty in turning the body side to side when lying in bed	
3. Feeling weaker in both arms & legs: how to strengthen them?	
4. Any fall in the last six months?	
5. Perspiration — normal or more?	
6. BP reading — up, down or stable?	
7. Pain in legs and toes, shoulder or other body parts	
8. Need for physiotherapy? Referral letter to AIC for physiotherapy sessions at PSS @ Bishan	
9. Correlate physiothereapy assessment results to patient's condition, i.e., improving, stable or deteriorating?	
10. Backache — which area & how frequent? How to manage it?	
11. Effectiveness of current meds, dosage, frequency & any side effects?	
12. Posture & gait	
13. Muscular rigidity, stiffness of muscle	
14. Appetite, bowel movement, etc	
15. Swallowing of food, any choking encountered?	
16. Slurring of speech, speech therapy needed?	
17. Drooling of saliva from mouth?	
18. Talking in sleep?	
19. Counselling required?	
20. Activities joined at PSS	
21. Any new symptoms or areas of concerns observed? (a) (b) (c)	
22. Any new clinical trial to participate?	

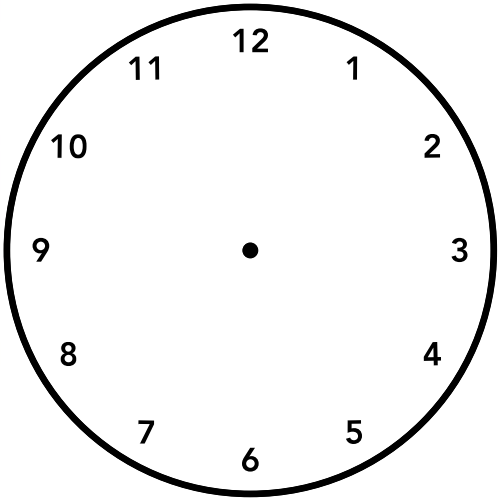
The Clock of Care

A 10-month record prior to the doctor's visit

黃水蓮



Create your own Clock of Care



- Red dots: Falls in AM
- Blue dots: Falls in PM
- Red shaded areas: "OFF" timings
- Red lines: Medication timings (6 am, 10 am, 2 pm, 6 pm, 10 pm)

There are times when Warriors have a hard time visualising the reality of Parkinson Disease, and as caregivers, we have to find creative ways to help our warriors in their journey of acceptance.

This tool helps, especially new Warriors and caregivers, to visualise the relationship between falls and "OFF" timings. Notice how the red-shaded areas coincide with the higher frequency of falls. This helps caregivers and Warriors keep a lookout for recurring fall timings.

We all are in the process of learning, even I; there are always new things that arise. This is a byproduct of my experience as a caregiver and my conversations with other caregivers. I am not the best, but I hope that this can be a good resource for everyone.

Zentangling My Way though PD

清晨

Zentangle art cannot cure or reverse Parkinson Disease, but it is often used as an auxiliary activity in terms of psychological adjustment, emotional stability, and maintenance of some functions.

Zentangle does not pursue right or wrong or results. It is repetitive, regular, and focuses on the present moment. It helps to:

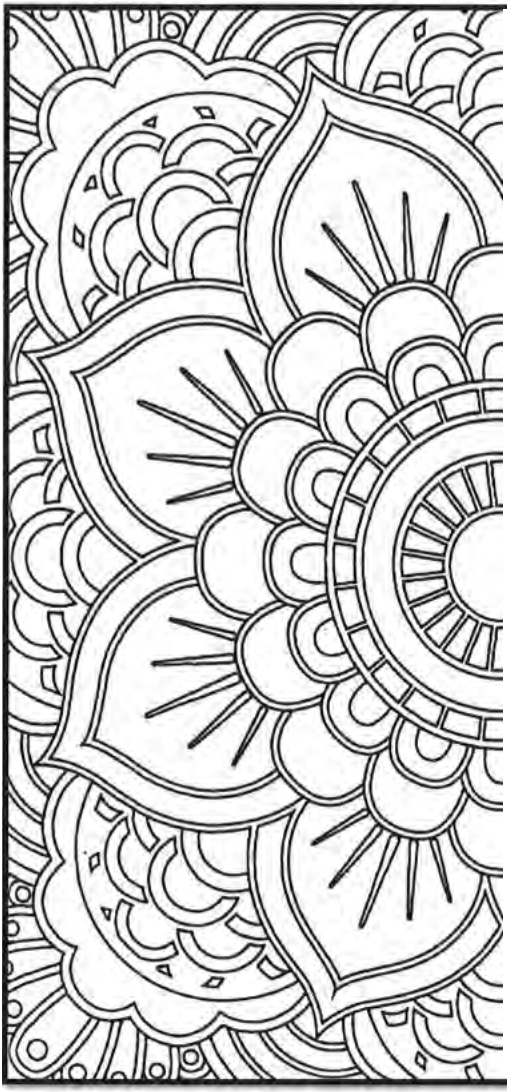
1. Reduce anxiety and tension
2. Help stabilise emotions
3. Enhance self-worth and a sense of accomplishment
4. Improve pre-sleep mood and reduce overthinking
5. Calm my mind down

My Art Journey through Caregiving

Zahara

These are my outlets of comfort and focus as a caregiver. It helps me to release stress and relax, even when my mobility does not allow me to. I hope that this reaches out to other caregivers and warriors who have the same hobbies as me.

Add Your Touch to the Zentangle



National Neuroscience Institute
SingHealth

Supported By:

Parkinson's Foundation

Managing Parkinson Disease

Parkinson Disease affects each person differently and symptoms can vary throughout the day. Keep your body and mind active with these guides - start by scanning the QR codes.

应对帕金森症

帕金森症对每个患者的影响各不相同，其症状在一天之内也可能起伏不定。请从扫描下方二维码开始获取讯息以保持身心活跃

All about Parkinson Disease

Learn about treatments and how to go about managing daily activities

帕金森症

学习如何治疗以及管理日常生活

Exercises for People with Parkinson

Exercises to help with Parkinson Disease symptoms

Consult a physiotherapist to customise the exercises according to your needs

帕金森症运动实用手册

通过运动改善关节灵活性、强化肌力、提升平衡力及活动能力

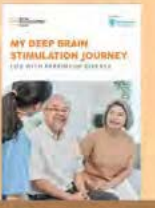
与您的物理治疗师商量，定制适合您的运动

Blood Pressure Monitoring

Monitor your blood pressure to detect changes and adjust treatments early

居家血压监测

学会如何测量血压，助于及早发现异常和调整治疗方案



Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)

Manage Parkinson Disease symptoms with DBS

深部脑刺激术

通过深部脑刺激术控制病情 (Deep Brain Stimulation)