

COMMUNICATION IN PARKINSON'S

FACTS

- Changes in speech, including a softer voice with lower or higher pitch and change in cadence to either slower or faster, can make communication with Parkinson's disease (PD) more difficult.
- Nonverbal communication is impacted when there is loss of control of facial expressions or dyskinesias, which result in uncontrolled movements of the facial muscles.
- Handwriting can become small and difficult to read. Typing may be limited by PD.
- People with PD may become hesitant to interact with others or frustrated about not being understood. This can lead to isolation.
- Cognitive issues, if present with PD, may cause difficulty with word-finding, leading to frustration.

STRATEGIES

- If something isn't understood, ask the person to repeat it louder.
- Nonverbal speech may not match verbal communication. Ask for clarification to avoid misunderstandings.
- Patience and encouragement on the part of the listener is very important.
- It can be helpful to let family and friends know the impact of PD on communication and share strategies with them as well.
- Speech may be improved with medications and speech therapy.
- Written communication techniques may be improved with occupational therapy.