

My Experience with Parkinson's Disease

Note: I do not profess to be an expert on Parkinson's disease (PD). However, helping folks with PD has become a passion since coming to know my friends and clients in the Flagstaff PD Support Group. Another inspiration is the fact that my grandfather died of PD in a time when there was no help for this disease. Due to requests for information on what to do to prepare for a Parkinson's client, I decided to share one of my recent email responses to a student. My thanks to Alexia Monroe (my Bowenwork Instructor) for all her encouragement and to my Bowenwork buddy Marti Huzarski who inspired me through her Bowenwork PD presentation in Prescott, AZ.

Parkinson's Basics

I have learned through various sources and my personal experience that the symptoms experienced by a person with PD vary with each individual and the stage of the disease. Symptoms that develop in the early stages of the disease in one person may not develop until later or not at all in another person. So, I tell all my clients, "Every person is a new research project and you must research to find what works for you. Bowenwork isn't all you need, but it has been shown to help."

Indeed, every client is different especially with PD. Also, it depends on how many years they have been on medications (meds). I have seen some people move into fibromyalgia symptoms because of all the pharmaceuticals ingested over the years (that is why we say exercise and hydration is so important for flushing the lymphatic system). One of my clients almost died from an overdose of her prescribed meds! Therefore, on the first visit less is definitely more.

A naturopathic doctor addressed our Flagstaff PD Support Group. He had a lot of good information on what vitamins are lacking for PD clients. This doctor also talked about toxic overload of substances, whether

heavy metals or pesticides, that may initiate the onset of PD. I do not bring up these things, as I respect my scope of practice, but I encourage clients to gain more knowledge about PD from a Doctor of Naturopathy. The first thing I suggest they do is to purchase the book by Dr. John Coleman called *Stop Parkin' and Start Livin'*. Check out his website www.returnstillonness.com.au. You will find the book on Amazon.com or Half.com. Read it twice. Have an extra book on hand for your clients to buy. Purchase the one in large print as it is easier for some to read and cheaper. I sell the books at cost plus shipping because many clients do not have the skills or help to procure them.



Teresa Peterson (L) providing Bowen at NAU Go Big Walk/Run

The information in that book points out Bowenwork as the most helpful hands-on modality and teaches facts about what is important for everyone to stay healthy. The information you learn from his experiences will polish your professional persona as one who has done the research and cares.

You need to provide focused help for PD folks. That is, sometimes they forget from visit to visit the many bits of information you give them. Give little reminders from time to time that this is a very long process

and Bowenwork isn't all that is needed.

It is all about including exercise, diet, hydration, aqua hydration therapy and whatever else works into their recovery process. It will take persistent action. Remember even the rest and relaxation Bowenwork provides is so important. Most PD folks do not get much rest because of medications, tremors and other symptoms.

Some clients are really sensitive and if you work their upper and lower body together, they might report sensations of electrical charges shooting everywhere. So, remind them all to give you feedback if there is any activity going on in their body. If so, let them process longer. One time a client needed 20 minutes after one set of moves. When she felt "antsy" at that point, I knew her body had had enough for the day. I was only able to use part of a procedure at a time with her. But she was making progress and could feel the difference. I learned to address the upper and lower body separately. For other PD clients, it hasn't seemed to matter as much. I have found that if clients are being over-medicated, they hardly feel anything. Also, if they have surgically implanted brain wires, I have found that they hardly respond, but feel relaxed.

I see PD clients every two weeks, except in one case of a woman who felt better if I saw her sooner. I let them tell me when they need the work as time goes along. Listening goes a long way with all of our clients. Include the care-givers in your information sessions as oftentimes they will be the key to helping the client stay on their plan to recovery.

A last thought to pass along is to remember not all clients will recover. None of mine have to date. However, through tears, a client and retired doctor who had been diagnosed with early onset PD told me, "I didn't think there was hope until I met you." So, with that in mind, I

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remember it is all about hope to those we serve. Relying on our common sense that tells us we are merely here to provide Bowenwork as a part of their choice.

Tip: Start going to your local meetings and become active. Do not just show up for a presentation and be gone. Attend the meetings and events. Get to know your folks and they will respond in a big way. Everyone needs hope and how much you care shows when you show up. That's what life is all about, just showing up.

Note: <http://www.apdaparkinson.org/userND/ViewDownloadBooklets.asp>
Please go to the above link and log in to get access to downloadable American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) publications.

These pamphlets provide invaluable information regarding many topics. Pamphlets that may help you are:
#13 Medical Management of PD and Medications Approved for Treatment of PD in the US.

Teresa Peterson is a Professional Bowenwork Practitioner in Flagstaff, AZ where she is active with the Flagstaff Parkinson's Disease Support Group, Hospice and Pre-hospice clients. As the American Association of Bowenwork Practitioners (AABP) Developmental Marketing and Website Chair she is hoping that as a team its members, working together, may help make Bowenwork a household name in the U.S.

In the adjacent column are details of the press release dated 11/9/2010.

Flagstaff, AZ –The Northern Arizona University Physical Therapy Class of 2012 held the 4th Annual Go Big for Parkinson's 10k run and 5k /2k run/walk on Oct. 9. NAUPTSA held the event to promote awareness of and raise funds for the LSVT© (Speech and physical therapy for Parkinson Disease) BIG Program. Prizes were awarded during a raffle and to race winners. The Flagstaff Parkinson's Disease Support Group manned a table to sell specially designed t-shirts and member Bowenwork Practitioner Teresa Peterson provided free Sports Bowen to attendees. Peterson also provided information regarding Bowenwork and benefits for those with Parkinson's.

The students announced at a follow up PD Support Group meeting in November that they doubled the funds raised at this year's race compared to last year.



Bowtech Instructor Piero Muraro (far right) was the official Bowen therapist for the Italian male and female rafting teams. Italy took first place in the European Championship in Val di Sole in North Italy.