

HOW OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CAN HELP SOMEONE WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

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In two decades of practicing occupational therapy with a primary focus on older adults, I have worked with a multitude of people who struggle with Parkinson's disease. Over the years, I began to notice a pattern in their speech and motoric impairments.

Fortunately, I have been lucky enough to work with FOX Rehabilitation for 15 years. I am currently a Quality Assurance and Professional Development Field Specialist and a practicing clinician. Over the years, I have become immersed in our private practice, seeing all angles of our clinically-excellent care and how we approach Parkinson's disease.

Our practice provides speech-language pathology services which focus on clients' speech and language deficits. SLPs make it possible for our clients to communicate with people on every level from simple greetings to complex dialogue.

Knowing we have the speech problems with these folks fully covered, I direct my care toward movement, balance and coordination with the goal of improving safety, activities of daily living, and self-care performance.

HOW I TREATED PARKINSON'S DISEASE AT FIRST

Honestly, in the beginning, I was at a loss as to what to do.

Gradually, though, I learned to use verbal and visual commands to have my clients take bigger steps and move with greater intensity and speed.

Precisely why this seemed to produce better results was still the question. I wanted to know more. Why were my clients' movements too small and had little-to-no power?

HOW I WORKED TO PERFECT MY TREATMENT

Through the proverbial grapevine, I heard about an emerging PD exercise protocol called LSVT BIG. BIG was developed by Lee Silverman following his LSVT LOUD program which had gained attention in the therapy world.

Luckily, FOX was offering an LSVT BIG certification program. I jumped at the opportunity to take the two-day course. By doing so, I gained enhanced knowledge and certification, providing me with a new evidence-based treatment for my clients with Parkinson's disease.

This course was a game changer in terms of how I apply my abilities as an OT working with Parkinson's! Finally, with the evidence-based foundational research, I learned exactly why I had been asking my patients to move in a "bigger" way in order to improve their balance, coordination, and movement abilities.

LSVT provides the full framework for these Parkinson's interventions. It helps our clients understand the principles of calibration of movement and how this translates into everyday functional improvements. LSVT targets amplitude of movement with intensity and highest-possible effort.

And amazingly, it works!

This is the best protocol I have found in my 20 years of treating clients with Parkinson's disease. I now consider LSVT the gold standard for my PD interventions.

LEARN MORE

Visit the LSVT Global website to learn more about the specifics of the treatment, and contact us to learn more about having a clinician come out to your patient's residence for evaluation.

The FOX client and clinician featured in this image are not referenced in this article.



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