

Using Technology to Manage Parkinson's

From tablets to apps to social media, Angie Hott, a self-described tech-phobe, makes it clear that it's not for the love of gadgetry that she uses these different technologies. It's about relationships. "We are a family that lives with Parkinson's disease every day, and we all use technology to connect in different ways," said the 48-year-old mother of four. "I'd feel so lost without it."



Dan and Angie Hott.

After her husband Dan was diagnosed with Young-Onset Parkinson's disease six years ago, at the age of 50, Angie started a blog called, "Excuse Me, Can I Tell You Something?" "For me, it was a way to sort out my feelings about his diagnosis," she said. "It's a great place to share information. When I write a blog post, I hope that it reaches who it's supposed to reach."

Living in rural West Virginia, Angie and Dan don't have access to a local Parkinson's support group where they can get advice and encouragement. So the couple turns to social media, Google and apps to get answers to their questions.

Through technology, I've found so many resources for me as a partner and for Dan and our kids, Angie said. At first, we were like this is terrible, but if you connect with people you can make your own support group and feel better about living with Parkinson's.

Interacting with today's high-tech world can be a daunting experience. But Angie encourages others to take the bull by the horns and take advantage of the different technologies out there.

"Once I got over feeling like a novice for having to ask my teenager to install NPF's app *Parkinson's Central* for me, I began reaping the benefits. So many doors have opened that allow me to learn more about this illness," she said. "What I love most about using technology is connecting with people all over the world who are just like me."

SCARED OF TECHNOLOGY? ANGIE SAYS DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY SOMETHING NEW.

- ✓ **Reach out.** "If you don't know how to use something or you're searching for a particular resource, just ask," she said. "People are there to help."
- ✓ **Be optimistic.** "Mistakes are just opportunities to learn more," she said. "Who knows, hitting that wrong button may lead you to a new connection."

To read other blogs written by caregivers, visit www.parkinson.org/caregivers.

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