

Relationships occur on many levels. Most people have a network of family and friends with whom they share their love, friendship, successes, problems, and concerns. Business or community relationships develop with individuals we rely on for information or services, including members of our medical team. Most meaningful relationships do not develop overnight. Time is needed to develop trust, and some relationships take more work than others to sustain. As you begin your journey with Parkinson's, you will use the support of past relationships and form new relationships along the way. Attention to building and maintaining healthy relationships is important in our daily lives.

### **Ideas for ways to sustain meaningful relationships:**

- Keep expectations realistic and accept people as they are
- Share openly, taking time to listen and ask clarifying questions
- Be flexible; change and growth are part of all relationships
- Take care of yourself; if you are depleted you have little to offer others
- Don't try to please everyone; stay tuned to your own priorities
- Share information, but be aware that too much information can be overwhelming for some
- Be dependable and follow through on your commitments
- In conflicts, avoid criticism; attack the problem not the person
- Recognize the rights of others to give their opinions
- Ask for help if you need it and try to be as specific as possible
- Say thank you; openly show your appreciation and gratitude
- Remember that relationships take time to develop and effort to maintain
- Forgive one another, don't expect perfection, and remember it's normal to experience disappointments
- Approach relationships as a learning experience
- Be creative; you may have to adapt activities that you enjoy doing together

### **Involving Your Team:**

Your medical team of doctors, nurses, rehab therapists, and social workers can help you live well with Parkinson's. Establish healthy relationships by learning about each team member's role and understanding how to access their services when needed. Ask questions and state your concerns to help each team member meet your personal needs.