

## **KEEPING WELL IN CHRONIC ILLNESS: PARKINSON'S DISEASE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Parkinson's NSW has awarded a research seed grant of \$20,000 to staff of the Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Health, UTS, to conduct a pilot study promoting self-efficacy for self-management in persons with Parkinson's disease. The pilot is a second stage of a study conducted by Faculty members that identified the key role of self-efficacy in persons with chronic illness in supporting self-management of the condition.

Professors Lynn Chenoweth and Robyn Gallagher, and Dr June Sheriff of the Health and Ageing Research Unit, South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service will conduct the pilot in a pre and post-test design over 12 months. It will employ Action Learning with the aim of optimising self-efficacy for self-management in community-dwelling persons with Parkinson's disease. Self-efficacy is a person's judgement of their capability to organise and execute a course of action required to attain desired performance in an activity.

This study aim will be achieved through the following objectives:

1. Teach family carers strategies to help a family member with Parkinson's disease (PD) improve their capacity for self-efficacy (for self-management).
2. Support family carers to implement and evaluate the self-efficacy (for self-management) strategies for family members with PD
3. Evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of the carer-implemented strategies for the person with PD, and the impact of implementing the strategy for the family carer.

The education and support program will be conducted with volunteer carers of persons with PD who attend any of the clinics at the War Memorial Hospital, eg Walk Well, or Speech programs, and with family carer volunteers from the Bondi and Randwick PD Support Groups. The Program will be conducted for one hour once each week for 8 weeks and include teaching and modelling the following aspects:

1. how to encourage and support performance accomplishments- experience of success increases one's SE and regular failures contribute to reduced SE.
2. how to enable vicarious experiences- witnessing others perform self-management successfully is an important source of SE and a measure of one's own progress in SE and self-management, e.g. at the clinics
3. how to provide verbal persuasion in a non-challenging way- provides positive reinforcement and encouragement
4. how to encourage positive self-appraisal- estimation of one's capacity to achieve specific behaviour/s, employing information about one's physiological and emotional stressors to monitor symptoms and take appropriate actions, e.g. for pain, stiffness, fatigue, tension and anxiety.

If the pilot findings are positive for both the person with PD and their family carer, an application will be made to the Australian Research Council to fund a larger study. If

you wish to know ore about this study please contact Lynn Chenoweth on T 02-93690288, [Lynnette.Chernoweth@uts.edu.au](mailto:Lynnette.Chernoweth@uts.edu.au).