

Community Outreach for Support Groups

Introduction

This Community Outreach Plan complements the Media Relations section of this *Parkinson's Support Group Manual*.

As a Support Group, the key to reaching out to your community is leveraging the links and common interests that already exist, rather than going it alone.

Regardless of whether you are a new Group or an existing Support Group trying to grow, a Community Outreach Plan will help you achieve your goals.

For more information and assistance with developing a Community Outreach Plan, contact:

Felicity Jones
Support Group Coordinator
T: 02 8051 1900
E: felicity.jones@parkinsonsnsw.org.au

How to reach out to people living with Parkinson's in your area

- Identify local clubs and community organisations whose memberships may intersect with people who may be living with Parkinson's. These may include:
 - Ex-Services Club members
 - Bowling Club members
 - Lions Club members
 - Rotary Club members
 - Probus Club members
 - Local Churches
 - Parish offices
 - Bible study groups
 - Social groups
 - Elder parishioner groups
 - Local retirement villages and residential aged care facilities
- Write or email to the Managers, Ministers, Priests and coordinators of these organisations to introduce your Support Group and its benefits. (See sample letter of introduction on following page)

Note: Contact details can be obtained by doing a Google search of the church, club or facility name. An online search of your City or Shire Council community services directory would also be useful.

Sample Letter of Introduction to a Community Organisation

<date>

<Name of addressee>

<Title of addressee>

<Address line 1>

<Address line 2>

<State> <Postcode>

Dear <name>,

Support available from a local Parkinson's NSW Support Group

I am writing to offer your <residents/congregants/members> peer support through the <name> Parkinson's NSW Support Group.

Given the ages of your <residents/congregants/members>, many may be experiencing Parkinson's already, at risk of being diagnosed with Parkinson's, or are supporting a loved one with Parkinson's.

Parkinson's NSW Support Groups like ours offer friendship, non-judgemental support and evidence-based advice for people diagnosed with Parkinson's, their carers and family members.

There are more than 70 Parkinson's NSW Support Groups and four Carer Groups in metropolitan, regional and rural areas across NSW. We have access to the full resources of Parkinson's NSW – the for-purpose peak body for the State's Parkinson's community.

We would be delighted to include your interested <residents/congregants/members> in our meetings, or to provide guest speakers for your meetings to discuss the challenges of people living with Parkinson's in our community, and the resources available to them through our Support Group and Parkinson's NSW.

I will follow up this letter with a phone call to discuss how we can best support your <residents/congregants/members>.

Sincerely,

<signature>

Leader

<Name> Support Group

Other actions

Also consider reaching out locally by placing notices on community bulletin boards.

These are hosted online by your local City or Shire Council, or in hardcopy format on the bulletin boards of local pharmacists, medical practices, libraries, community centres and supermarkets such as Woolworths, Coles or IGA.

See also the *Media Relations* section of this *Support Group Manual* for more information on generating publicity and effective community outreach.