



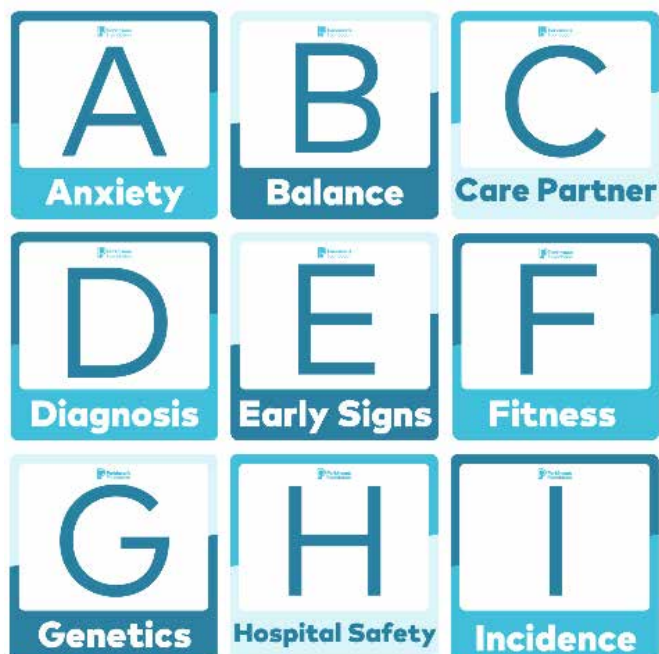
The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

April 1, 2024

Parkinson's Awareness Month

<https://www.parkinson.org/parkinsons-awareness-month> All you need to know about Parkinson's disease — from A to Z.

This April is Parkinson's Awareness Month and they're partnering with Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma America to help people understand the complexity of Parkinson's disease (PD) and recognize its symptoms. Explore the #ABCsofPD and tag them on social!



Anxiety: Parkinson's symptoms not related to movement are more troublesome and disabling than movement symptoms. Non-movement symptoms can include anxiety, depression, vertigo and more.

Balance: More than half of people with Parkinson's will experience a fall in the next year. There are many tips and ways to prevent falls.

Care Partner: Like Parkinson's, there are several stages of the care partner journey. Explore free articles, tools and courses designed for you.

Diagnosis: Finding out you have Parkinson's can be a lengthy process. A diagnosis is made through a combination of in-office tests and diagnostic tools.

Early Signs: From small handwriting and loss of smell to trouble sleeping, know the 10 early signs of Parkinson's.

Fitness: People with Parkinson's who exercise for 2.5 hours per week experience a slowed decline in quality of life. Find the exercise that works for you.

Genetics: 12.7% of participants in our study have a genetic tie to Parkinson's. PD GENERation is a global

initiative that provides genetic testing and counseling to people with Parkinson's, at no cost.

Hospital Safety: People with Parkinson's are at a higher risk of hospitalization and longer hospital stays. Know how to prepare and advocate for yourself with our Hospital Safety Guide.

Incidence: Nearly 90,000 people in the U.S. will be diagnosed with Parkinson's this year.

Job: "How long will I be able to work with Parkinson's?" This question is especially important to people with young-onset Parkinson's.

Knowledge: Find the information you need now — from tools that help you work alongside your care team to resources that empower you.

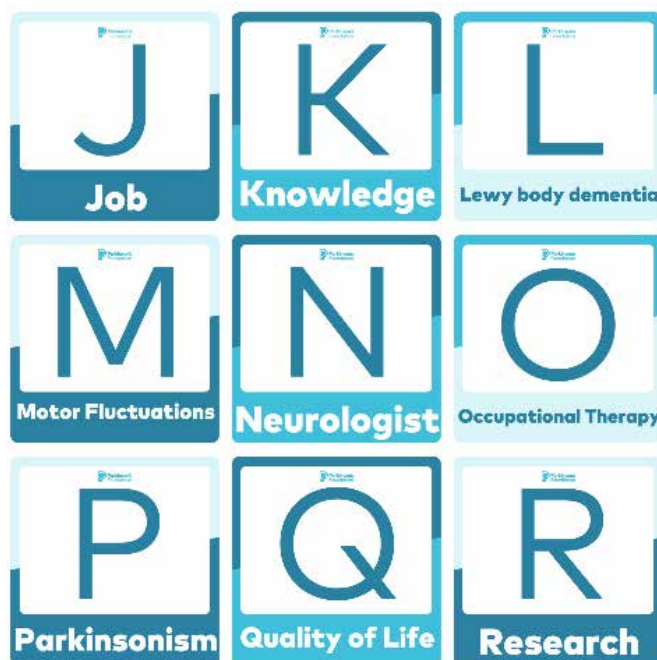
Lewy body dementia: Robin Williams brought awareness to the life-changing, prevalent disease known as Lewy Body Dementia, a progressive brain disorder where cognitive decline is an early symptom.

Motor Fluctuations: Also known as "on-off" times, these are changes in the ability to move related to medications. "On" times refer to good symptom control, while "off" times occur when medications wear off.

Neurologist: Doctors (and specialized neurologists called movement disorders specialists) who diagnose and treat Parkinson's.

Occupational therapy: Rehabilitation therapies — occupational, physical and speech therapies — can slow disease progression, address symptoms and enhance mental health.

Parkinsonism: The collection of signs and movement symptoms associated with several conditions — including Parkinson's disease.





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Quality of Life: Finding the therapies and lifestyle changes that work for you and building your support network can help you live better with Parkinson's.

Research can lead us to breakthroughs in treatment and care at any moment. Explore our currently funded research and how to join a PD study.

Stages: Parkinson's symptoms and progression are unique to each person. Knowing the stages of Parkinson's can help you cope with changes as they occur.

Tremor: 70-90% of people with PD experience a tremor. While most common in the hands, tremors can also occur in the lower lip, jaw, leg or internally.

Urinary incontinence: People with PD may experience bladder problems. The most common is a frequent and urgent need to urinate.

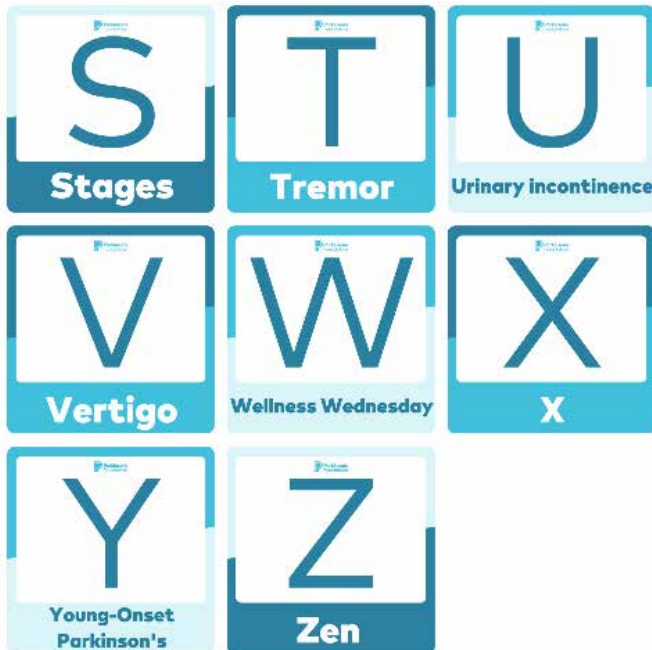
Vertigo: Dizziness (feeling faint, weak or unsteady) and vertigo (the false sense that you or your surroundings are spinning) are common signs of Parkinson's.

Wellness Wednesday: Access at-home resources through weekly online events. PD Health @ Home offers events that focus on wellness, exercise and mental health.

X: Join our online Parkinson's community. We're on X, and all social media channels! Follow us.

Young-onset Parkinson's disease occurs in people who are 50 years of age or younger, who often experience a different set of challenges.

Zen: Stress can make PD symptoms worse. Maintaining emotional health is essential to living well with Parkinson's and can help manage symptoms.



Learn more about Parkinson's disease on their website: www.parkinson.org

Fraud Prevention Month

Fraud Prevention Month: 4 steps you can take to safeguard your money from investment scams

March is Fraud Prevention Month, a national spotlight that seeks to help Canadians recognize, avoid and report fraud. One of the growing and most insidious forms of fraud are investment scams, where fraudsters prey on those looking for worthwhile opportunities or just the answer to challenging financial circumstances. According to data from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, the amount of money reported lost to investment scams has multiplied nearly 20 times from 2019 to 2023.

Fraudsters work hard to repurpose their investment scams and leverage connections they can make online and in person. While it may be hard to know and remember the latest investment scams, there are some great resources and tools provided by the Alberta Securities Commission (ASC) to help you better safeguard your hard-earned money.

Consult the ASC's Investment Caution List
To help inform and protect investors, the ASC created the Investment Caution List. This list outlines companies and individuals that the ASC has identified as appearing to be engaging in activities that either require registration under Alberta securities laws or may be investment scams. It is worthwhile to check this frequently updated list before working with any individual or firm to ensure that they are not present on the list.

Subscribe to the ASC's Investor Alerts
Investors wanting to stay ahead of emerging fraud trends and market misconduct can also subscribe to the ASC's Investor Alerts, which are delivered directly to their inboxes. These alerts provide investors with up-to-date information on unregistered individuals and firms violating Alberta and/or Canadian securities law. ASC's Investor Alerts also help warn the public of common fraud tactics.
Strengthen your investment literacy with CheckFirst.ca

Whether you've just started investing or have been on your investment journey for years, the ASC's investor education website CheckFirst.ca provides a wealth of important information. You can find resources and tools to help you invest suitably for yourself, recognize the red flags of fraud and conduct registration checks on individuals or firms you plan to work with.



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Building your knowledge is an ongoing effort, which is why the ASC shares a new CheckFirst article each month covering an investing concept, misconceptions about investing, investment fraud trends and frequently asked questions. Even better, you can subscribe to the CheckFirst newsletter at CheckFirst.ca/Subscribe for the latest articles, investor alerts and upcoming investor education programs in the community.

Explore the ASC's 31 Days of Investment Fraud throughout March. In recognition of Fraud Prevention Month, the ASC recently started sharing its new 31 Days of Investment Fraud information. Every day of the month, the ASC will highlight a common investment fraud scam or red flag and detail how Albertans can safeguard their money.

Alongside this information, found on CheckFirst.ca/Fraud_Prevention, visitors can test their knowledge with the Don't be fooled by fraud quiz and download or print the complete 31 Common Investment Fraud Scams and Red Flags infographic. This infographic gives investors a comprehensive list of what to look out for when it comes to investment scams and how to best avoid them.

Building your investor knowledge and leveraging the free tools and resources provided by the Alberta Securities Commission can be a strong combination to protect yourself. Remember, if you are suspicious about an investment you were offered or believe you or someone you care for was a victim of an investment scam, contact the Alberta Securities Commission. You can contact the ASC public inquiries at 1-877-355-4488 or email inquiries@asc.ca.

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VAD Podcast

VAD is looking for members that want to participate in VAD's podcast project! This free promotion of your organization allows VAD members to know what services, projects and resources are available in the community. Check out VAD's podcasts at:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1678687/episodes>

Contact Teresa at vad@vadsociety.ca to reserve a podcast spot!



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Become a VAD BOD!

A board of directors is an independent governing body of a company. Those who serve on boards are elected by shareholders (aka the individuals and entities that have investment in the organization - VAD Members) to help to oversee its strategy and make decisions. The members of a board are tasked with giving organizational leaders advice and representing the shareholders' best interests. Their job is to be of service in a way that's consistent with the goals and values of the company. When it comes to non-profits, board members are often expected to help with fundraising through their own contacts or by volunteering at events.

1. **Safeguard the interests of the shareholders.**

Board members are responsible for protecting the interests of the stakeholders. All board members ensure that organizations have good governance. This looks like treating employees and volunteers fairly, and spending the money it raises in ways that are consistent with its mission and bylaws.

2. **Ensure that the leadership is right for the job.**

Board members are responsible for the functionality of the senior leadership team at the company or organization where they serve. The board also ensures that the company has a succession plan to replace them (even on an interim basis) if necessary.

3. **Show commitment.**

The commitment to serve on a board means showing up for meetings, as attendance is taken. The VAD board meets monthly; in between these larger meetings, it's common for smaller committees with more specific responsibilities — like reviewing the company's governance, compensation structure, and so on — to meet throughout the year and report to the full board at the monthly meetings.

Materials for board meetings are usually provided ahead of time, and board members are expected to have read all the information in advance and be ready to engage in discussions. These discussions occur between fellow board members and the company's leadership team. They're opportunities for board members to ask questions and share their advice and perspectives. The more informed a board member is, the more robust and mean-

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**NOTICE OF
ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING
VIRTUAL**

VAD members are invited to join Voice of Albertans with Disabilities for the AGM in May 2024. The date will be announced soon!

Members can register for the ZOOM link or request a PROXY Vote by emailing:
vad@vadsociety.ca

You must be a VAD member in good standing to attend.

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ingful the discussion becomes.

The board is responsible for the highest level of decision-making and legal authority in an organization. Governing boards have responsibility for:

- **Purpose**, by establishing and implementing the organization's mission and vision;
- **Continuity**, by providing continuity for manag-





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ing and implementing the organizations affairs;

- **Progress**, by setting the rate of progress that the organization takes in reaching its mission and vision;
- **Identity**, by securing the community support and appreciation for the organization's objects, beliefs, vision, mission, and long-term direction.

VAD is seeking Board of Director volunteers for the upcoming 2024-25 & 2025-26 term. Elections will be held at the VAD AGM in late May. VAD would like to have individuals that meet the qualifications and desire to take VAD into the future with a definitive direction and committed volunteers join our board. To qualify for VAD's board you must:

1) reside in:

- (a) That portion of Alberta which lies to the north of 54° latitude (generally to the north of the City of Edmonton);
- (b) That portion of Alberta which lies to the south of 54° latitude (generally to the south of the northern limits of the City of Edmonton) and north of 52° latitude (generally to the north of the southern limits of the City of Red Deer);
- (c) That portion of Alberta which lies to the south of 52° latitude (generally to the south of the City of Red Deer) and north of 51° latitude (generally to the north of the southern limits of the City of Calgary); and
- (d) That portion of Alberta which lies to the south of 51° latitude (generally to the south of the City of Calgary) and north of 49° latitude.

2) Have a disability or be an ally or family member of someone with a disability.

3) Be able and willing to commit to committee work, attend board meetings, and follow up with designated work as required or volunteered for.

Interested in becoming a VAD BOD member? Send your resume with contact information to vad@vadsociety.ca and the current board will contact you with more information about the selection process.

vad@vadsociety.ca
780-488-9088



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STUDENT'S CORNER

Hello once more! My name is Nikki, and I'm a first-year Social Work Student working with the VAD as part of my field placement. Coming to the end of my first year, I've been given the opportunity to look back on my education all the way back to high school.

I grew up in a small town fifteen minutes outside Leduc, surrounded by farmland and conservative views. It's where I spent my entire middle school and high school years. Growing up in such a small town filters out many real-world situations. Growing up, we were unable to have presentations centered around living with disabilities. We were not able to listen to someone's first-hand experience about the hardships they've been through; about the struggles they've faced or how badly society has failed them. For the majority of my life, I never grasped the true struggles that everyday life could be for someone living with a disability. Had I not chosen the path that I have, I may not have ever realized it. It seems like an anomaly of a situation, but unfortunately, I can't say I've heard of any school in Leduc having these presentations either.

Social work was not my first option. Before I had even graduated, I had applied to the University of Alberta for a bachelor of art in Sociology. My focus wasn't centered on the adversity plaguing not only Edmonton but all of Canada, it never registered as part of what I was meant to be learning. It was only after dropping out, taking a year, and talking with some relatives who've worked in the social work field that I realized I wanted to do that. After that, I began my journey. And part of that journey was working with the Voices of Albertans with Disabilities as a student. Since learning under the incredible advocates here, I've learned more than I ever imagined there was to learn. I've learned the harsh truths about the cacophony of problems lurking under the streets of Edmonton. It's been educational and eye-opening.

I will take this with me as I continue my journey as a student and a future social worker. The lessons I've learned and the people I've met have changed my core beliefs and values on a fundamental level. The people I've worked with have taught me more than any classroom could hope to do and I have plenty left to learn, but working with the disabled community has taught me that strength lies further than anything physical or mental. It's a way of life they live daily, living as their own advocate and fighting through systematic discrep-





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ancies in every aspect of life. It's inspiring to witness. So, as a student, I thank anyone who reads this for teaching me what my previous instructors failed to do. Perseverance, resilience and empowerment can be much more than a politician on television. It's someone who's found the will to get out of bed in the morning or another who's stepped outside just for a breath of fresh air.

And those are the lessons I will carry with me for the rest of my career. Thank you for the chance and ability to learn your stories, help you, or even just write this little portion. You've all taught me more than the public high school education system has about what being an advocate really means.

It's A New Fiscal Year for VAD - Have you renewed your membership?

As of March 31, all VAD memberships that have not been renewed are no longer valid. Please take a moment to go the VAD website and renew! Or call the office and talk to Teresa to renew over the phone!

www.vadsociety.ca



VAD Membership



I truly love the hidden benefits of Spring, so many of us fail to stop and realize. But let's do just that, Stop and Notice.

Spring is calling us all to rise out of our winter hibernation, notice the benefit of additional light, offered invitation in the open sidewalks, the sound and actions of the birds returning, temperatures warm enough we can open our windows and let the fresh air in. Spring provides invitations to unlimited new opportunities for us all to embrace, chances to get out and reconnect with friends, enjoying eating outside again, become Love-Struck or as Disney says in Bambi, "Twitterpated" and most impor-

tantly to become excited, open and willing to welcome change.

This is also an exciting time of year for those planning weddings, graduation or a new pivot within their life journey. Yet, for those of us living with disabilities fear can rise in these and other changes, but let me encourage you to step up and take a chance on yourself, shake that fear of and go for it!

Just as you heard from our student Nikki, her vision and perspective grew as she chose to learn more about disability needs as a future social worker, she stepping up to find out and embracing the opportunity in her student placement with us this year. We are truly grateful that she felt called to place this experience in her toolbox as she moves on to become an amazing social worker for our community in the future. All learning and growth needs a first step, are you ready to change and make a positive pivot this spring.

Myself, Nikki and many others grasp hold of the powerful energy Spring ignites inside us to motivate change. One of these changes might be to decide to register for higher education that could aid in opening new doors to your future.

Today, students with disabilities make up 19% of the undergraduate population. That's nearly 1 in 5 undergraduate college students reported having a disability. Also 12% of graduate students reported having a disability. In 2022, the American College Health Association (ACHA) surveyed 54,000 undergraduate students and found:

- 15% of college students reported having ADD or ADHD
- 5% had learning disabilities
- 4% were blind or had low vision
- 3% were autistic
- 2% were Deaf or hard of hearing
- 1% had mobility or dexterity disabilities
- 1% had speech or language disability

Did you know that Dyslexia is the most common learning disability. According to The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, dyslexia makes up 80-90% of all learning disabilities and affects 20% of the population. Post secondary students with dyslexia may have difficulty reading, writing, spelling or recalling words but are not limited to these areas because dyslexia surfaces in many different ways. Disabilities are also more prevalent among LGBTQ+ adults than in their cis, straight peers.

No matter how you look at it we are part of the



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make up of student populations everywhere and need to be heard when it comes to the realities of our educational needs and ways that the educational organizations can work with us to reduce the tragic gaps that require illuminating. It would be so nice for all of us if the professors were trained about disability accommodations.

When I reflect back to my own university studies and the ways the system missed the mark to truly accommodate my learning challenges, there was definitely room for improvement. One example I can think of was a time I was asked to write an exam, because they had the room and person booked to oversee the process, yet I hadn't received the correct course material (written text vs online) to accommodate my learning needs which would assist me to absorb the material effectively. So I was set up to write the exam due to the scheduling needs of the school rather than my true accommodation requirements. Years later in this roll at VAD I come across many students that have a wide range of limitations, yet their true needs may not be listened to effectively. An example that came up this week was one lady who was asked to write the same test for the 3rd time, having a disability and English as a second language and failed once again without proper accommodation. Two years of her life invested, financial cost etc to be told she can't write the test again. Far too often the educational accommodation target is being missed. Although this is still a challenge out there for many of us living with disabilities, please don't give up, take time shake it off and embrace the uplifting power of Spring. A new course or program could be the seed for an amazing future. Never give up and continue to strive towards your dreams, challenges will always be in front of us, its our energy and motivation that will make that difference.

Spring can also bring on a feeling of needing to change or grow when it comes to getting a job or pivoting into a new career. Spring brings on that motivation to begin to look and gain confidence in yourself again. New opportunities are all around us it's our choice to grasp one and take the first step. Here's a few places to check out as you begin this new exciting adventure:

www.mcgcareers.com
www.gatewayassociation.ca
www.bredin.ca
<https://osp.ab.ca>
www.bgscareerventures.com
www.prospectnow.ca
<https://careersunderconstruction.ca>
<https://citinc.ca>
www.wecancooperative.ca

Spring can also be a great time to chose to begin a new exercise program or a social program that get's you out there and connected with others. Try something new this year and embrace all that Spring offers.

Kathryn Breau

MISSION STATEMENT

WE ACTIVELY PROMOTE FULL PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY AND PROVIDE A VOICE FOR ALBERTANS WITH DISABILITIES.

FULL PARTICIPATION

ACCESSIBILITY

EQUITY

VOICE OF ALBERTANS WITH DISABILITIES

Alberta's cross disability, non-profit organization of and for people with disabilities.

Guided by the principals of Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion.

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

- AISH Applications and Denials
- CPD Applications and Reconsiderations
- Disability Tax Credit Forms
- Leisure Access Pass Forms and much more

DISABILITY AWARENESS

- FREE School, Post Secondary and Business presentations

ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS

- Tips and Tricks that are easy to implement
- Assessments of Businesses
- Training and Support for Staff

LEARN MORE AT

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Disability Awareness Presentations for Businesses



Participants learn:

- the meaning of disability and impairment
- how to treat and act around a person with a disability in the work setting
- appropriate use of language when talking to or about someone with a disability
- understanding of people with disabilities rather than myths and misconceptions
- attitudes and barriers faced by people with disabilities



Contact Michelle:

presentations@vadsociety.ca

**BY CHANGING ATTITUDES, WE BUILD
SAFER AND MORE INCLUSIVE
BUSINESSES FOR EVERYONE**



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