

Emma Anderson (00:00)

Hello and welcome to today's Movement in Conversation podcast. Today I'm joined by Amanda McKay from Parkinson's UK. Amanda, hello and welcome.

Amanda McKay (00:14)

Hi Emma, thanks for having me.

Emma Anderson (00:15)

Hi,

Good to see you. Parkinson's UK has been a, I'm going to say a founding member if you like, one of the original members of the Movement for Health coalition in Scotland and already does excellent work within the physical activity and movement spaces for people living with Parkinson's. And Amanda is joining me today to talk about that in more detail. Thank you, Amanda. If we could start off then by talking a little bit about

Parkinson's UK and the work of the organisation please.

Amanda McKay (00:49)

Yeah, that would be great. Okay, so Parkinson's UK, we're actually a UK charity, so across the nations, we obviously have specific work that we take forward in Scotland and I'm part of that team. But basically, the charity is here to support people living with Parkinson's and to support them all throughout their journey with Parkinson's. There's a saying that we hear quite a lot, working with people with Parkinson's, "There's not two people the same".

And if you've met one person with Parkinson's, you've met one person with Parkinson's. It's very complex condition. Unfortunately, there isn't a cure. It's a progressive condition. And actually, it's the fastest growing neurological condition in the world. So we are really there to support people living with the condition who've recently been diagnosed and to help support them throughout that,

that process of living with Parkinson's and also helping with funding research as well. We do want to see a cure, we need to understand why Parkinson's actually happens which is something we don't really know at the moment so a lot of our efforts and fundraising goes into helping with research but also making sure that people today living with the condition today are better supported to face

Parkinson's and have a better quality of life, that's ultimately what our goal is.

Emma Anderson (02:20)

I didn't appreciate it was the fastest growing neurological condition. What are some of the symptoms that people might experience with Parkinson's? What does Parkinson's look like in Scotland at the moment as well at our population?

Amanda McKay (02:23)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah, so in Scotland we've got around 13,000 people living with Parkinson's and obviously it has a huge impact on family, friends and carers as well. So, you know, it's not a condition with, you know, lots of people like your Coronary heart disease and Diabetes but it really, I think that's probably part of the challenge that people don't really understand it too well unless they have a family member or friend living with Parkinson's. So that's definitely a challenge within itself.

Emma Anderson (02:45)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (03:07)

In terms of the symptoms, so the main symptoms that you would recognise someone with Parkinson's or usually how they tend to be diagnosed are around a tremor and that tremor is persistent at rest as well so it's not something that goes away, slowness of movement and rigidity in the body often you see people who don't have an arm swing for example. Not everyone has all three of those symptoms as well so,

Emma Anderson (03:18)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (03:37)

it is a very complex condition and actually we can categorise our symptoms into motor and non-motor symptoms. motor symptoms are things like how Parkinson's affects our balance, our gait, our ability to walk. People can have real problems with initiating movement and can have, almost experience what we call "freezing" where it's literally their feet feel frozen to the ground

Emma Anderson (03:39)

Mm-hmm.

Okay.

Okay.

Amanda McKay (04:05)

and they're unable to move which can cause a lot of anxiety and also falls. So yeah. Those are some of the main motor symptoms. Then we also have non-motor symptoms. And actually overall there's around 40 different symptoms for people with Parkinson's so to go back to that you've met one person with Parkinson's.

Emma Anderson (04:23)

Mm-hmm.

in person.

Amanda McKay (04:27)

Not everyone is the same and experiences at the same level or even the same number of symptoms. yeah, going back to kind of non-motor symptoms, sort of fatigue, pain, thinking about bowel movements, constipation, but also anxiety, depression, apathy. Yeah.

Obviously problems with communication and speech as well is a big one for people with Parkinson's. So there's many. There really is a lot to contend with.

Emma Anderson (05:04)

Hmm.

And as

you say, quite very wide ranging there and presenting very differently from individual to individual. And so what is your role within Parkinson's UK, Amanda?

Amanda McKay (05:09)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah, so my role is delivery manager so my remit is for Scotland so we're quite niche in Scotland in that we were able to, we had some initial money from the Lottery which helped us really kind of drive this programme forward and now we've got a physical activity strategy within the whole organisation and that's allowed us to kind of fit this role within that programme so yeah it's really recognised both by the charity but

certainly by people with Parkinson's that physical activity is a key part of the management of Parkinson's. I think that's probably one of the key drivers of this organisation is that it is people led, people tell us what they want and need and we look to support them to make sure that we can deliver that, whether it's the research or the advice, the information, the support on the ground.

We're being led by people with Parkinson's and that's really key. So in terms of our physical activity programme, it then transfers into what people are looking for in terms of physical activity and where that need is as well.

Emma Anderson (06:33)

What are people looking for? What are people asking for? What are people finding works? As you see it presents differently with everyone so I'm imagining people's movements are very varied and preferences are very varied and they're for themselves as people but also depending on what their symptoms might be or how it's presenting for them. So tell us a little bit more about that offering.

Amanda McKay (06:44)

Yeah.

Yeah,

Definitely. think a lot of people who feed into the programme will probably read up on Parkinson's. Not everyone, but a lot of people if they go onto the internet they'll be looking at what research is around. Unfortunately there isn't one activity that you can say know, like you've just described. People have all sorts of symptoms so there isn't one magic thing that you can do. And I think in that, you know, ingredients

Emma Anderson (07:06)

Mm-hmm.

show.

Amanda McKay (07:25)

list if you like, know, we're all individuals and we all like certain things. So it's an additional challenge to find something that people want to do regularly. But yeah, I guess the key is, you know, we want to be making sure that, you know, 150 minutes of physical activity per week. We want to be making sure that there's definitely some strength training in there. So two days a week. We need to be making sure we're working on people's balance and encouraging them to challenge themselves.

As well as more specific things around Parkinson's around coordination, voice exercise, going back to coordination, sort of multitasking activities as well, but also

flexibility and mobility are really key areas for people with Parkinson's. Anything that we create or develop, we need to be thinking about those elements within it.

Emma Anderson (08:19)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (08:22)

But then you go back to the, it needs to be fun and not everyone wants to go to a gym or an exercise class. So how do we accommodate that within programmes? And that's really what we've kind of tried to look at with this work is, can we understand and what the challenges people face? And strengths are really key one to this actually, because there's research which now has shown us that

Emma Anderson (08:24)

Mm-hmm.

Mmm.

Amanda McKay (08:50)

vitamin D levels really plummet with Parkinson's and that obviously has a huge risk of a fall and how you recover from that and if you have a break. So making sure that you know programmes really do challenge strengths as a preventative measure for future falls for example. So those are the types of things that we want to make sure are embedded in programmes but

Emma Anderson (08:53)

Right.

Mm-hmm.

Hmm.

Amanda McKay (09:16)

think ultimately it comes down to what people want to do that are fun. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly.

Emma Anderson (09:20)

It's getting that balance, isn't there? Talking about balance, but that balance between what's fun, what's accessible and what works for me and my symptoms.

I'm wondering then if we can touch upon the programmes themselves and is this something that you, does your organisation create and offer these programmes or do you work with leisure trusts, et cetera, who are already in communities and do you offer training and support for their

their workforce, what does it look like?

Amanda McKay (09:52)

Yeah, so we've got a couple of different models. at the moment, I guess our main focus initially was to look at the leisure trust sector and what they provide. I think ultimately anything that we develop needs to be sustainable. And that's the challenge. It's making sure that these programmes are the norm. You know, a lot of the leisure trusts, you know, will have had instructors who've got some experience or some other training around Parkinson's, but it wasn't really in the

Emma Anderson (10:00)

Mm-hmm.

Correct. Yeah.

Amanda McKay (10:21)

the norm and they tended to have very few people with Parkinson's accessing those services and some of that might have been around communication and linking with health professionals and that kind of two-way process of them really understanding what the patient or the client would get once they get to an exercise programme. So we've really kind of tried to develop some training, exactly how you described that actually, for leisure providers and exercise instructors

Emma Anderson (10:43)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (10:49)

to really understand what those challenges are, what are the symptoms that people face, what does the condition look like for people with Parkinson's and you know it's okay, know we can say you know we can tackle strengths and balance and we can get people you know getting out of breath hot and sweaty and we can do all those things but ultimately we need to get them over the front door and when you're faced with such anxiety

and motivation that you know you just you can't control fatigue you haven't slept for a few days or limited hours at a time that can be a real challenge for people. So helping those trusts to understand some of those challenges and then working with them really closely to you know as I said there's 13 000 people in Scotland it's not it's not a huge amount of people but there are pockets where

Emma Anderson (11:27)

Mm. Mm.

Amanda McKay (11:45)

there are more people so what can we offer in an area that is going to be sustainable? So is it something that we consider as Parkinson's friendly? It may not be the full works of a session only for people with Parkinson's but it will provide elements of support within that? Or do we look at, we know that we've got a larger cohort of people that we can engage and can we do something specific?

Emma Anderson (11:50)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (12:13)

But guess the key is always making sure that it does all come down to money and capacity unfortunately. So how do we make sure that these services are available and that they can continue without ongoing support. So yeah, that's definitely a challenge.

Emma Anderson (12:25)

Mm-hmm.

It really is.

You've mentioned Amanda, their communications, working on communications and getting people over the threshold. It can be that first hurdle, getting them over that first hurdle, if you like, knowing it's for them and that it's a safe space for them. What about other types of barriers then in terms of, I had a conversation this morning on another podcast recording about rurality and access, physical access to things.

Amanda McKay (12:41)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (13:04)

And I'm assuming, making some assumptions here, just as you've described so eloquently about some of the experiences people might be living with with their Parkinson's, the feeling of isolation, of frustration, anxiety, I'm assuming a big impact on people's mental health on a lot of basis as well. just let's talk about those barriers that you guys consider when looking at working in specific areas.

Amanda McKay (13:21)

Yeah.

Yeah, I mean, just to give you an example, I went along to one of the walking football sessions that we set up with Glasgow Life and Celtic who have supported that session as well. And one of the gentlemen there has said to me until I had come to this session, I'd never met another person with Parkinson's. And, you know, he just described how he had buried his head in the sand. He'd been diagnosed about two years before that and really just didn't know

Emma Anderson (13:37)
sure.

Amanda McKay (14:03)
what to do. What think was quite interesting was in maybe, know, West of Scotland, know, males, football, you know, that was the thing, that was the hook for him. And if that hadn't happened, you know, where would he be now? Because, you know, that activity has not only introduced him to walking football and something that he can do on a weekly basis, you know, hopefully soon twice a week.

Emma Anderson (14:13)
Mm-hmm. That was the thing. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (14:31)
but has also introduced him to a really good social support network who have opened other doors around physical activity. So some of the members or some of the players who went along were doing Table Tennis or they would go to a Pilates class or a yoga, you know, and that support, you just can't, we just can't give that to people. Like, you know, it's so important to be able to engage with others and he would have never thought that was going to be

Emma Anderson (14:52)
No.

Yeah.

Amanda McKay (15:00)
the outcome of that.

Emma Anderson (15:01)
Yeah.

Amanda McKay (15:01)

Similarly with, you know, I went along to a Table Tennis session. So we've been doing some work with Walking Football Scotland and Table Tennis Scotland to try and, you know, make sure that these sports are available and accessible to people with Parkinson's. Again, doing some similar awareness training and just helping them be more accessible to people. But

Emma Anderson (15:17)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (15:26)

going along to a Table Tennis session and hearing from a carer again who had never met other carers of people with Parkinson's and the support that that then gave her not just at the group but it extended and they became really good friends and the doors opened again to other activities. It is and other...

Emma Anderson (15:46)

that ripple effect that

we talk about, isn't it? you've done that initial work, you've made that safe, informed, accessible space for people to meet and then the growth of that isn't necessarily needs us anymore, necessarily either. It organically can grow and especially with a condition that is a bit more rare, in terms of it's less common.

Amanda McKay (15:50)

Yeah.

Yep.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (16:16)

than other long-term conditions, where isolation and as you say, maybe never having met someone before. I think obviously that 13,000 number though, and you're saying that it is the fastest growing neurological condition, obviously we're living a lot longer as well. And so I do feel that that number will change. But it's wonderful to hear how that natural connectedness can organically grow from

Amanda McKay (16:16)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (16:45)

a charities project essentially. I think Walking Football has such a great culture around it as well, think it has met a real need within males in society, especially I would say, as a space that feels like it's for them to connect in as well, think is so important. And sports

Amanda McKay (16:47)

Yeah.

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (17:15)

venues, arenas and sports clubs and societies we know play a hugely important part of our culture and our society and our heritage etc. But there's lots of other forms of movement as well and I was really lucky to have the Parkinson's Beats come join our conference last summer. Thank you so much for helping to organise that Amanda and I'd love a little opportunity to talk more about

Amanda McKay (17:34)

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (17:44)

that piece of work because I've seen it folks and it's very active. It's a whole body involvement or you can do it seated and there's lots of options with it but it's another form of movement I'd love to talk about.

Amanda McKay (17:53)

Yeah.

Yeah, so Beats really came from someone living with Parkinson's and during the Covid period where actually, and she's okay for me to share this, she had a heart condition which limited our ability to take part. They didn't quite know where to go and Covid had happened so even more of those opportunities were now closed down.

Emma Anderson (18:03)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (18:28)

And she had come and asked what can I do and unfortunately during that period as well she had broken her ankle so again it was another limit to what she could do but she knew she needed to be active to manage her Parkinson's to help her feel better,

have a quality of life, manage some of those symptoms, and she went along I think to a drumming taster and then you know got

got so much from it sort of mentally and energised by it that she just really saw the value of it and that's really what we tried to create through Parkinson's Beats she got some funding to test that in Elgin and that session now runs twice a week and people join across the UK and further afield as well as from the local community which is amazing and it's a really simple activity but

Emma Anderson (19:18)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (19:26)

and the power of music to make you feel good, but also that, you know, bringing in those elements of rhythm, coordination and then, you know, thinking about posture and flexibility and mobility. So that's kind of what we've kind of created with that. Since we've kind of last chatted, we've been taking Beats on a tour or Joe certainly has been taking Beats on a tour and has been really keen to make sure that, you know, people who want this.

Emma Anderson (19:28)

Mm-hmm.

balance. Yeah, yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (19:55)

get the opportunity to do it and try it. And I think obviously like most things it's much better when it's in person rather than online. And as a result of that we what we want to make sure is that the messages are not too diluted although we want to make sure things are fun, and accessible, you know we still we still need to make sure they're beneficial from a physical and mental point of view so you know

Emma Anderson (20:02)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (20:25)

Drumming, which just means maybe moving your wrists, that's okay but that's really not going to help Parkinson's so we wanted to try and make sure that if we were to

roll this out, can we really get some really good benefits from Parkinson's Beats by really working on those kind of challenging symptoms and as a result of that we delivered some training at the end of last year which really brought Parkinson's and drumming together. How can we

Emma Anderson (20:28)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

you

Amanda McKay (20:55)

deliver this in a way that best suits people with Parkinson's. As a result of that we've trained various exercise instructors across different leisure trusts but also a few volunteers as well to bring Beats to people. Again, like you say, it could just be that stepping stone to do something else. It can even be about engaging people in a support group, we provide quite a lot of

Emma Anderson (21:16)

him.

Amanda McKay (21:23)

support groups across the country that bring people together to share their experiences and learn and hear from speakers but that can be quite a daunting thing so something like Beats can just you know can open that door to people as well as other physical activities so yeah that's something we're working on this year is to take that across a few new sites or even show people how they can do it at home and you know it's something that can easily be done at home.

Emma Anderson (21:37)

Sure.

Yeah.

Amanda McKay (21:52)

We're looking at some options to make that available online as well. People can join in as part of World Parkinson's Day on the 11th of April. So it's part of the virtual hub, the village that the RBS do. So yeah, I think it's a really invigorating and one of the challenges I I touched on earlier about symptoms, one symptom that people

Emma Anderson (21:57)

Mm-hmm.

Lovely. Mmm, lovely.

Amanda McKay (22:22)

experience that kind of "masked face". But I think when I go to along to Parkinson's Beats, I suddenly, you can suddenly see people smiling, you know, it's, yeah, it's such a, I find that with quite a lot of the physical activities, people, you know, really kind of relax and some of that anxiety and masking, you can just see a little glimmer of, you know, how much they've enjoyed it, because that can be quite difficult to interpret sometimes.

Emma Anderson (22:24)

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah,

and I think, so I've heard it from like Paths for All Health Walks, certainly in the dementia work that we've done in the past, a lot of things, especially obviously connected with physical activity, but especially music, anything that involved music or anything else, it connects with a very different part of our brain. And all of a sudden, we're not our condition necessarily. Like you said, we haven't come to a support group to sit in a

Amanda McKay (22:56)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (23:14)

to talk to others about our condition, our symptoms or how we're feeling that day. We've come to drum or we've come to tap our foot or we've come to do a singing or just listen. There's a lot of work in dementia with it. You're listening and reminiscing, through music from different times. And I do think there is that, there's just a part of the brain that it connects with differently. And I'm sure that contributes to that change of

Amanda McKay (23:22)

Yeah.

do it.

Emma Anderson (23:43)

face that you're perhaps seeing there in that, you know, people are given a permission almost to not be their condition for that moment in time as well, which I think is really important.

Amanda McKay (23:45)

Yeah.

Yeah.

It's

funny, I remember we did a taster session last year, we had a, what you call a YP event, so young people with Parkinson's. And we did a drumming taster and I wasn't quite sure how it was going to go. It's a lot of, not all of it, but a lot of the time we deliver it's seated and you know, people, you know, not to say people who are younger don't want to sit down and do exercise, but you know, weren't quite sure how that was going to go.

Emma Anderson (24:02)

YP young people.

Amanda McKay (24:24)

And this young guy with Parkinson's took part and he got up at the end of the session and he just said, that was the best fun I've ever had, do you know? that's what it's about isn't it, is when people really enjoy something and yeah, they really take away. That was quite moving, quite humbling to hear that. They

Emma Anderson (24:35)

how lovely.

they had a connection,

had that human connection to something, that's great. That's great that he could find that and that you guys could deliver that. Do you deliver work, is it all across Scotland? Are there areas that you'd like to work in that you don't currently or?

Amanda McKay (24:48)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah, so I'm kind of working on a work programme that will have some kind of opportunity in every local authority area across Scotland and I've been kind of

working over that for the last, this is my fifth year now at Parkinson's UK. We haven't done very much work in the islands, we've done a bit of work in Orkney and that's definitely a challenge. I suppose I've been quite lucky in that the people who I've worked

Emma Anderson (25:13)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (25:27)

with in terms of leisure and sports providers have been really open to working with us and that makes our jobs easier because we're brought in together and sometimes it becomes the nature of the beast that you can't do everything all at one time as well so it's been a gradual process, but certainly the islands, like you mentioned the rural areas, they're much more challenging in terms of getting people to

Emma Anderson (25:50)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (25:54)

activities and we really need to consider how we do that because it's not specialized exercise sessions because there's not going to be enough people to make that worth being sustainable. It's definitely worth it but from a sustainability point of view. So that's definitely something we need to consider, do we work with other organisations and charities, other conditions?

Emma Anderson (26:03)

Mm-hmm.

Certainly.

Amanda McKay (26:22)

Do we have that Parkinson's friendly model. So there's a few things that we're learning from some work in Orkney. But yeah, that's even in the more rural areas of Scotland. This year we're looking to work over in Argyll and Bute and that's definitely going to be challenging in itself.

Emma Anderson (26:23)

Hmm.

Mm-hmm.

And do people have to find you themselves or is this something that they can connect with through their relationship with their GP or their care provider? Is it referral routing? Are there lots of different options?

Amanda McKay (26:58)

Yeah, there is different options but I think the key is making sure that this project won't work without the support of Parkinson's nurses and Parkinson's specialist physios or a physio with a Parkinson's remit. They've definitely been the key ingredients to this and I guess we've been quite lucky in that I have some colleagues who work really closely with NHS staff. We have an Excellence Network

which is for people working with people with Parkinson's in the NHS. So, you know, we've got some good coverage, good visibility within the NHS and that kind of helps build those partnerships and certainly the model that I've taken is, you know, to bring NHS colleagues and their leisure partners together to go, "OK, what do we need? What does it look like? How do we get people there?"

Emma Anderson (27:27)

Hmm.

Amanda McKay (27:53)

and making sure that the professionals from the NHS understand what's on offer because you know it's building their confidence which is key to make sure we get signposting or referrals through. So no, they're definitely the key ingredients. In some areas, it's a little bit more challenging because people don't always have specific workloads. It's very ad hoc that they would come across people with Parkinson's but

most places do have a Parkinson's nurse within the NHS board. Some people don't see their nurses very often so it's making sure that all those channels are covered. But it has to be wider than that, even from working with the physios across Scotland, a lot of physios unfortunately see people when they have a fall. At that point it's a little bit too late. It's not the exercise or physical activities,

Emma Anderson (28:32)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (28:51)

you know, not good. It's just that we wanted to make sure that we get that intervention in as early as possible. So we really want to be trying to target people at the point of diagnosis. So that's really why we need to have the nurses and the consultants on board with the physical activity message and how we then translate that to - here's your local area, this is how, this is the services available and how people can access them. I think that's a challenge in itself in Scotland because there's,

Emma Anderson (28:53)

Mm-hmm.

You

Amanda McKay (29:21)

there's no one way for that so if you think about your health board then it's got three or five local authorities in one area and every area does things completely different. Sometimes I feel like I'm the little person in the box going "I know, I can't really change that". But yeah, that's definitely a challenge for health professionals to link up. But having said that, we've just done some work down in Dumfries and Galloway,

with Chris Topping and the team and kind of linked in falls prevention with our work with exercise and physical activity provision and yeah I think just having you know again there's a nurse service there but actually the physio service is seeing people a lot earlier and if we can you know if that happens it really does make a difference people are going to get much more benefit from the service.

Emma Anderson (30:16)

Absolutely, I think that's what with the Movement for Health work, we talk about prevention a lot and movement and physical activity being a real key to prevention. But we don't just mean prevention as in it will prevent you getting X, Y and Z. It will prevent certain things from happening or lessen your chances of certain things such as falls and it will also aid recovery from...

Amanda McKay (30:21)

can.

Thank you.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (30:41)

the stronger we are, etc. So I think there's that dialogue to explore more of as well collectively, because I think there is a bit of a misunderstanding when it comes to risk and reward and movement, especially if you're living with complex conditions and there's a propensity potentially to go into very protective gatekeeper mode for individuals who are already, know, life is already really tough.

Amanda McKay (30:48)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (31:11)

And yet we're actually saying, no, actually, if you move more and do this certain thing and at this certain time, it will help X, Y and Z. It's really helping those health care professionals to have that confidence, as you say, that that movement is the right thing to do and as early on as possible.

Amanda McKay (31:24)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah. And also how we educate, you know, in our example, people with Parkinson's that, you know, they can challenge themselves. That's one of our key messages. you know, physical activity based on the guidelines, we know that it can help manage some of the symptoms, can definitely support quality of life through that kind of mental and social aspect. But there's some emerging evidence that actually,

at a higher intensity, physical activity can slow down the progression of the disease. Now, that research is tiny, but it's emerging and there's more work that needs to be done around that. yeah, I think the more people do when they're able to do it, that's really important. We want to be, and we should all be doing that, you know, we should never...

Emma Anderson (32:11)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (32:21)

We should never be doing a physical

activity programme that's the same week in, week out. We should be challenging ourselves for our own health, know, neurons in the brain for ageing. We're all ageing, unfortunately. Speak for yourself Amanda So, yes, obviously, yes. I've aged a lot recently. But yeah, I think challenging people is quite hard, quite a hard kind of education.

Emma Anderson (32:25)

Mm-hmm.

Speak for yourself, Amanda!

Amanda McKay (32:50)

message to get across and how we do that but you know things like sport I think can really help with that you know we've got, we've been working on a few kind of tournaments or festivals with some with Table Tennis Scotland and Walking Football Scotland which have been amazing for people to experience you know "I got a Parkinson's diagnosis,

Emma Anderson (32:52)

Mmm.

Amanda McKay (33:14)

I went to start to play table tennis, I did it once a week and then I participated in an international tournament and won a bronze medal", you know? Just the enthusiasm that that gives someone, yeah, very humble and to hear that. And you don't need to win a medal but being part of that process really does lift people.

Emma Anderson (33:19)

Amazing.

Mm-hmm.

Absolutely and being allowed to celebrate stuff like that, you know that permissions piece I think there's a lot of stigma around health conditions and living with health conditions that ~ 'you don't look unwell' or 'you're happy' and things actually no you celebrate those wins a hundred percent. Thank you Amanda. I wanted to ask about we've talked about sport and we've talked about some of the movements with beats, your Parkinson's Beats work.

Amanda McKay (33:38)

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Emma Anderson (34:06)

And I wondered if there was other areas that Parkinson's UK is involved with in terms of dance or any in the creative arts or anything like that. I've heard rumblings, that's why I'm asking.

Amanda McKay (34:20)

Yeah, yeah.

One sport that we've maybe not touched on or activities boxing again, these activities tend to be led by people with Parkinson's. So I think that's got a good connotation because, you know, it's about fighting Parkinson's, fighting fit, you know, it feels like they're, you know, they're putting up something against what Parkinson's is throwing at them. So I think that's...

Emma Anderson (34:26)

Mm-hmm. Mmm.

Mm-hmm.

sure.

Amanda McKay (34:46)

that's definitely an activity that we'll hopefully see more of in Scotland over the next year or so.

Emma Anderson (34:52)

And is that something

the organisation is looking at supporting more or is it happening as part of the community, if you like? Bit of both.

Amanda McKay (35:00)

Yeah, yeah, a bit of both to be honest,

Certainly UK colleagues have got some good contacts and kind of sport governing body around boxing and we're kind of having, hopeful that we might have kind of similar programmes or conversations to go forward this year but there's been a few, we've got a physical activity grants programme which we're just about to launch in a couple of weeks again and there's a few providers who deliver boxing as part of that.

Emma Anderson (35:11)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (35:31)

So we're definitely seeing an increase and yeah every time if I go out to a local group they'll tell me when when can we get boxing? You know, we want to be doing boxing so it's definitely something that the community want to see. But yeah and again using a similar model to you know really raise awareness with those coaches and think about risk and how you know how they support and adapt people around the activity for people with Parkinson's. But yeah dance is an interesting one we we

Emma Anderson (35:37)

All right.

Bye bye.

Amanda McKay (35:59)

We support Scottish Ballet with their Dance for Parkinson's sessions. Basically, this is actually an internationally renowned programme that they deliver and they've trained various staff members across Scotland to deliver that. So yeah, usually is a couple of dance instructors and volunteers support it and usually they have a live musician, which again go back to that whole music chat that we had,

Emma Anderson (36:02)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Amanda McKay (36:29)

that really does inspire people. It's costly and you know, and that's a difficulty from a sustainability point of view. But yeah, I know people really enjoy it and value it. Again, other types of dancing that we've, know, there's nothing off the radar with Parkinson's. think that's the thing. And people find their, you know, their own, their own thing, but certainly something that we've

Emma Anderson (36:32)

Mmm.

Excellent. Everything's on the menu.

Amanda McKay (36:58)

we've looked at is how dance can engage people into an activity that's not traditional. Also things like singing, the voice exercise as well. So bringing some of those elements of the theatre together to support people with Parkinson's. We've not got anything specific happening in Scotland at the moment but again going back to the Physical Activity Grant and what options there are for people.

Emma Anderson (37:02)

Mm-hmm.

Yep.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda McKay (37:28)

Yeah, that's definitely something that we can explore.

Emma Anderson (37:31)

Well, I look forward to hearing Amanda singing at our next conference. Amanda, thank you so much for joining us today on the Movement for Health's Movement in Conversations podcast. It's been a real pleasure and thank you for all your support over however many years being of the Movement for Health coalition now. And it's always a real treat to speak with you. So passionate about what you do, so knowledgeable as well. And thank you.

Amanda McKay (37:35)

Yes.

Emma Anderson (38:01)

Thank you as well for listening to today's podcast with Amanda from Parkinson's UK. We hope you've enjoyed it. If you have, please check out the rest of the episodes in this series where we've been speaking with members of the Movement for Health Coalition to understand a little bit more about how they support people to move more in Scotland. Thank you and goodbye.

Amanda McKay (38:25)

Thank you.