

Being part of your community

What is in this fact sheet

- Tips and hints for everyone
- Tips and hints for the early stages
- Tips and hints for later on
- Tips and hints for family and friends

Key points from this fact sheet

- Being part of your community can help you keep well in several ways
- The people you meet can be potential sources of help for your HD

Tips and hints for everyone

Being part of your community brings together elements that make a difference for everyone's health and wellbeing.

- It helps you feel that you have a purpose in life
- It is also another way of doing something that is useful and is appreciated – whether it is paid or unpaid
- Volunteering is another way of meeting people, as well as making a contribution and learning new skills
- Some people find that having a routine to their day or week is a good way to keep well
- Being part of your community brings you into contact with a wider range of people. Our social contacts are also a good source of information, they know people who do useful jobs, or know about community groups that can help. When people have a wider social circle, they get access to more resources.

A community is not just a geographic community. It can also be a 'community of interest'. You could become a volunteer or help to organise one of your hobbies, or campaign on an issue that you care about. It can also mean getting involved in SHA or another organisation that is about HD.

Tips and hints for the early stages

If you are involved in community activities, keep these up.

If you don't do these sorts of things, start building a few of them into your life. They will be a good source of support later on.

You can always find out about classes, local groups and ways to volunteer in places such as libraries, churches, community centres, local newspapers and even the local shops.

There is usually a volunteer centre in each local authority area which will have information about more formal volunteering opportunities.

Think about whether you tell the other people who are involved about your HD. It may depend on the types of activities you are doing and what sort of roles you undertake.

Tips and hints for later on

The suggestions about making changes to the types of paid work you do can also be useful when thinking about unpaid work, such as volunteering. For example, you may want to give up things when you begin to find them difficult but do other activities that make best use of your skills and experience as well as work well for your health and wellbeing.

There are schemes where people volunteer to help others get more skills confidence around work. Volunteers who have recently retired or given up work for health reasons have skills and experience that can help other people a lot here.

- One contact is Lead Scotland:
www.lead.org.uk
- The Employment Support team at your local authority may know of local projects.
- You can contact SHA's own volunteer service for advice on volunteering in general (01418480308 Option 1)

Tips and hints for family and friends

Being part of your community is good for all of us. Think how you can get involved too.

Encourage the person with HD to try new activities as well as thinking about how to keep up existing ones.

There may be things you can do together because you share similar interests. You may be able to help with the practical aspects here, as with hobbies and other interests – such as giving lifts, getting the details on times and places, and so on.

This is another situation where you can help the person think about what they want to tell other people about the HD, and help them plan or practice how they will raise it.