

- Have regular contact with the participant with whom you are matched—either via phone/email or in person.

We will have periodic conference calls for Peer Support people so that we can discuss what has worked and whether there are any issues. There will also be a PARASS researcher available at any time to answer concerns that arise.

How do I sign up to be a PARASS Peer Support person?

For more information on providing Peer support you can contact Margo Hanlan at (617) 732-5153 or via email at mhanlan@partners.org.

Thank you for your interest in the PARASS Patient-to-Patient Program!



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*Patient-to-Patient
connection
Providing
RA Peer
Support*



Patient Rheumatoid Arthritis
Social Support Initiative
(PARASS)

Brigham & Women's Hospital



What is the PARASS Patient-to-Patient Program?

The PARASS Patient-to-Patient Program is available to any RA patient who would like to talk about living with RA with a fellow patient who has been trained

as a Peer Support

Peer support differs

from talking with a rheumatologist or nurse in that you connect with a fellow patient who can relate from personal experience and give you their insights to help you handle your individual concerns and situations, e.g., what to expect when you're initially diagnosed, ways to deal with fatigue, or side effects of medications or any other topic of concern—or simply to chat.

Why provide Peer Support?

Every year, more than 200,000 Americans are diagnosed with RA,

and more than 3,500 individuals see the 35 Brigham and Women's rheumatologists for various types of arthritis and other musculo-skeletal conditions. With the many diagnoses of RA that are

"I think it would be a great thing to be able to email other people—just somebody to talk to who is going through the same things."

made at BWH every year, there is a strong need for additional sources of support for these new patients. Established patients who are facing new challenges in life or disease management, such as joint replacements, changing work or family obligations, or new medications, can also benefit from the one-on-one interaction and empathy that a Peer Coach can provide.

"I go to my doctors for the professional assessments, but I really do need some nonprofessional, practical assessments on how to live with the disease, as well."

Becoming a Peer Support can provide you with:

- The satisfaction of helping a fellow patient feel more hopeful, less alone, and more positive about life.
- Training sessions designed to help you with mentoring techniques, RA-related issues, additional resources available at BWH, and more.

- An opportunity to be part of a community of like-minded people and to learn new ways of talking about RA with others.
- A relationship that can end up being as rewarding for you as it is for the patient with whom you are matched.

What is involved in providing Peer Support?

Peer support might be a brief one phone call encounter to answer a patient's questions or it might extend as long as 6 weeks. At that point, the Peer Support person and their partner can choose to continue or end the connection.



If you decide to be a Peer Support Person, we ask that you:

- Fill out a PARASS peer Matching Questionnaire.
- Attend one 3-hour workshop held at a convenient time at BWH.