



Background Letter - Yes, And...eXercise! Festival in Texas!

(a.k.a. YAX F iT!)

Date: April 1, 2023

Time: 10a-4p

Location: Thompson Conference Center, UT Austin

Improvisation is a transformative exercise, engaging your body and mind. A simple and elegant definition for improv is: "unplanned collaborative response." While it often elicits laughs, and it is fun, it's also much more. YAX improvisation has the power to transform and connect groups. There are frequent communication gaps between people with Parkinson's disease (PD) and their care partners, as well as medical and wellness providers. By bringing people together to see and hear each other as people, rather than disease states or titles, we increase understanding, empathy, communication, and quality of life.

Improv also helps to increase socialization in the PD community, decrease depression and reshape the thought process of those affected by PD. It helps us remember and understand that though we may have or be affected by PD, we need not be defined nor unnecessarily limited by it. In short, by playing and communicating at this level, the players are transformed.

MISSION: We provide a safe, fun and kind place for people with, affected by, and serving the Parkinson's community to connect, empower, and enhance their lives through improvisation.

VISION: To become the world's most used and joyful improvisation program.

YAX CEO and Founder, Robert Cochrane, PhD developed and tested two evidence-based programs at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences program as part of his dissertation. He has worked with the Davis Phinney Foundation, Parkinson's Foundation, PD Avengers, PMD Alliance, Young Onset Parkinson's Network and many other PD groups to develop and share this work.