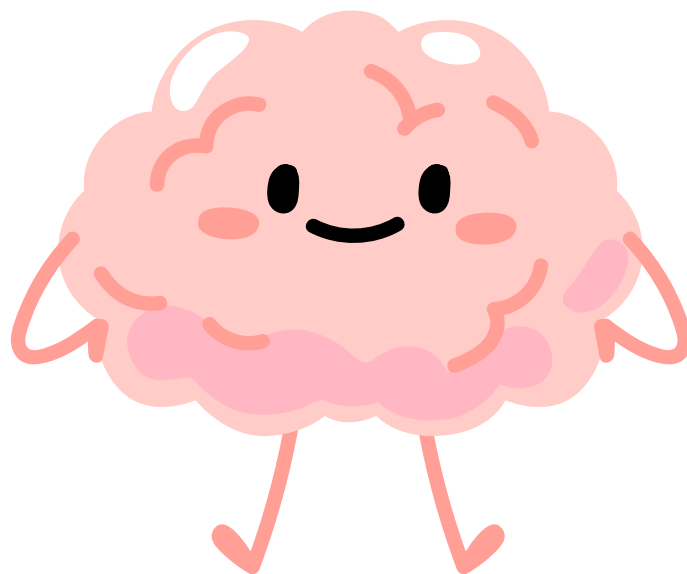


A Guide to Post-Stroke Coping and Adjustment

Recovering from a stroke can be a challenging journey, both physically and emotionally.

This guide aims to provide you and your loved ones with information about post-stroke coping and adjustment.



Common Experiences after Stroke

Below are some of the common experiences a person may have after experiencing stroke:

Grief and Loss

It is natural to grieve and/or feel angry or frustrated over the loss of previous functioning, independence, changes in roles and responsibilities as well as life plans. Give yourself time to feel and process your emotions.



Emotional Lability

This condition can lead to sudden, uncontrolled laughing or crying that doesn't match the situation.



Cognitive Challenges

Some individuals may experience difficulties with memory, attention, problem-solving and/or decision-making.



Fatigue and Sleep Disturbances

Some individuals may experience increased levels of fatigue, which can affect daily functioning. Sleep disturbances, such as insomnia or excessive daytime sleepiness, are also common.



Adjustment Difficulties

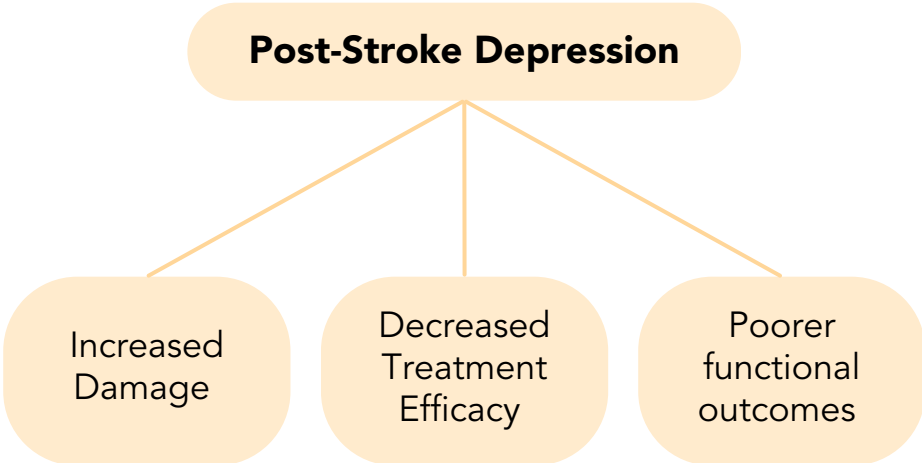
Adjusting to life after stroke can be challenging. One may experience anger or frustration over difficulty adjusting to different physical changes (e.g., difficulty swallowing or speaking, limb weakness, use of wheelchair/walking aids).



Be aware of changes in your emotions and behaviour. Look out for persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, mood swings, or changes in sleep and appetite. If you notice any significant changes in your mental health, do not hesitate to reach out to your healthcare team. Early intervention can make a significant difference.

Common Mental Health Challenges

Apart from the common experiences that one may undergo after a stroke, some individuals may also struggle with mental health challenges. These may include:

Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-stroke depression refers to persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness or loss of interest in activities.• Symptoms also include changes in appetite, sleep disturbances and low energy levels.• Post-stroke depression is also known to cause greater damage to the brain, hence reducing the effectiveness of treatment and affecting the functional outcomes. It is thus important to treat post-depression condition as early as possible.  <pre>graph TD; A[Post-Stroke Depression] --- B[Increased Damage]; A --- C[Decreased Treatment Efficacy]; A --- D[Poorer functional outcomes];</pre>
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive worry or fear (e.g., fear of falling during walking, worries about recovery progress).• Symptoms may include restlessness, rapid heartbeat, sweating and difficulty in managing excessive worries.

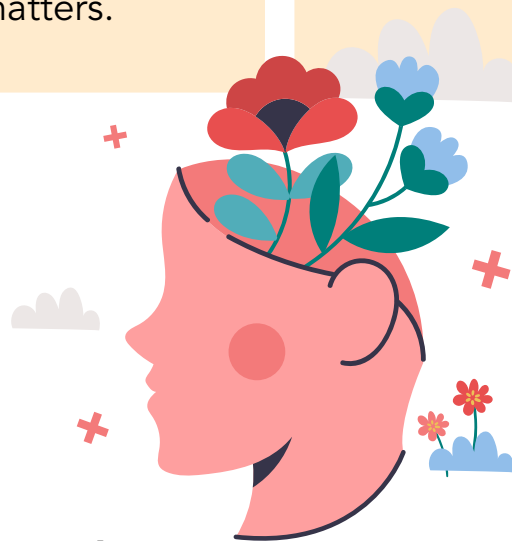
While it is natural to focus on the challenges and emotions that come with post-stroke rehabilitation, many patients also acknowledge the potential for positive change and new way of living. This might show up in the following ways:

New Perspectives

The experience of overcoming a significant challenge can lead to a shift in perspective. You may find a greater appreciation for life, a reevaluation of priorities, and a deeper understanding of what truly matters.

Greater Appreciation for Life

Overcoming significant challenges can lead to increased awareness and gratitude for the simple joys in life.



Improved Relationships

Going through a significant life event often leads to deeper connections with loved ones. It can foster a greater sense of empathy, compassion, and understanding.

Spiritual Growth

For some, it prompts a deeper exploration of spiritual questions or questions about life. It can lead to a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper connection to one's spiritual beliefs.

Available Support for Post-Stroke Psychological Issue

There are different forms of support to aid in your recovery from the psychological issue:

Professional Help from Mental Health Professionals

Psychological service is accessible upon team doctor's assessment and referral. Psychological support aims to equip you with tools for managing emotional challenges.

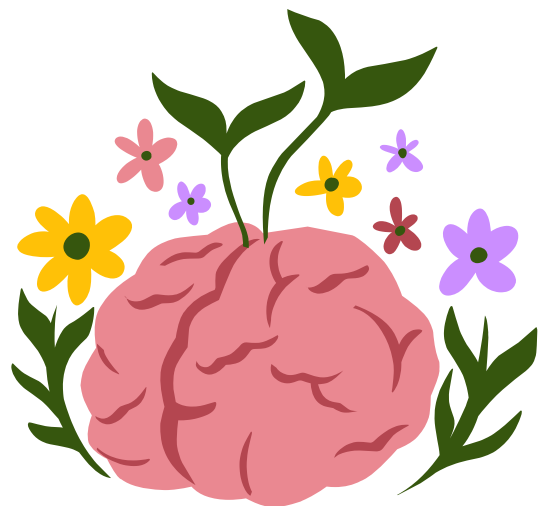
Peer Support

Connecting with others who have experienced similar struggles can offer a sense of community and understanding.

Medication

In some cases, medication may be recommended to address mental health concerns.

You and your healthcare provider will work together to determine the best approach for your unique situation. It is important to communicate openly with your provider about your progress and any concerns you may have.



Contributed by Psychology (Allied Health Service)

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

Information shared is accurate as of July 2024 and subject to revision without prior notice.



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