

Tips For Care Partners

Coping after a loved one has a stroke

- **Role Changes**
 - Role changes are when a person takes on someone else's responsibilities. These changes can be temporary or permanent.
 - Role changes can be difficult. It is normal for a person to feel anger, guilt, and/or frustration. Often these feelings arise due to the subsequent inequality of the new roles people take on in order to assist a family member following a serious injury or illness.
 - Things that can help:
 - Try to get back into a family routine.
 - Create lists of different tasks and allow family members to choose the tasks for which they will be responsible.
 - Find a balance between rest and responsibility.
 - As much as possible, share decision making between the caregiver and stroke survivor.

Tips for facilitating **communication**:

- Ask yes/no questions. Example: Would you like to play checkers? And not what would you like to play?
- Position yourself so that you can speak to the person face-to-face.
- Use a normal tone of voice.
- Talk to the person like you would any other adult.
- Speak in short, simple sentences.
- Provide clear feedback as to whether or not you understood what was said.
- Be patient.

Tips for coping with **behavior changes**:

- Offer safe, appropriate choices (e.g. "Do you want me to drive you? or would you rather take the bus?")
- Provide positive, verbal feedback (e.g. "You handled that situation really well. I could tell that you were using your strategies.")
- Set necessary boundaries (e.g. "I can see that you're upset right now, but it's not okay for you to yell at me like that.")

Tips for **home modifications to promote safety and accessibility**:

Ask your rehabilitation therapists for specific suggestions.

General Suggestions:

- Keep the house free of clutter to eliminate potential hazards, such as loose wires, toys, papers
- Remove throw rugs, if the rugs must be kept, apply non-skid rubber backing to keep them secure.
- Ensure stairwells have handrails on both sides.
- Improve lighting throughout the home.
- Use non-skid decals in the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars/ hand rails near the tub, shower and toilet.
- Bed, chair and toilet seat should be high enough to get up from easily.
- Assess the position of the bed and need for safety rails, or position one side against a wall.
- A bedside commode for the night prevents having to get up and walk when tired.
- Chairs that have a firm seat and two arm rests make them safer than a low, soft sofa seat.
- Remove unstable furniture or anything with castor wheels.
- Get a 'Medical alert system monitoring service' allowing a person to push a button if a fall or emergency occurs.
- Keep frequently used items within easy reach, avoid high storage shelves, etc.
- Program a cell phone with speed dial for family members.

REMEMBER: Things can improve. Many of these skills can be regained with therapy and over time.

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