Working toward one meaningful goal after stroke

Choose one activity the stroke survivor wants back. Breakfast at the kitchen table, for example, can bring movement, self-care and communication goals into the same rehabilitation plan.

Stroke recovery has come a long way because of widespread education on how to identify strokes as they're happening to help people get care faster and specialty care and rehabilitation. Now, more than seven million people survive strokes each year.

The level of recovery each person can expect depends on different things: where in the brain the stroke happened, how much of the brain was affected, how healthy the person was before their stroke, the amount of rehabilitation they participates in and how much support they have from loved ones.

Most people see the biggest improvements over the first three to four months following the stroke, especially in a hospital setting, but it's not unlikely to continue recovery up to two years later. Here is what you can expect.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is key for stroke recovery. No two strokes are the same, so patients will require different levels of care to regain their health and quality of life. Post-stroke rehabilitation can include:

- Physical therapy – helps with regaining strength and ability to get around
- Occupational therapy – helps a person relearn motor skills and how to do daily activities again
- Speech therapy – assists with the ability to speak clearly
- Nutritional care – creates a nutrition plan to stay healthy through recovery
- Patient/family education – provides information on the care plan to both the person in recovery and their loved ones so they have the skills they need to make the most of the journey

Caring for a Loved One After Stroke

It's important to be an advocate for your loved one when they're regaining their independence. Try to monitor their behavior and abilities for any negative changes, and notify the care team if you notice any warning signs, such as:

- Dizziness or imbalance that leads to falls
- Difficulty with daily activities or hobbies they used to enjoy
- Mood swings or trouble controlling emotions
- Depression, which occurs in 30-50% of people in recovery, which can affect rehabilitation success
- Change in your loved one's abilities that appear as a setback in abilities

Experiencing a stroke can be alienating as a person adjusts to their new normal. Ask your case manager, social worker or discharge planner for community support groups and resources that could help your loved one to feel like they aren't going through this journey alone.

The Good News

Did you know that up to 80% of strokes are preventable? By lowering your blood pressure and incorporating a healthier lifestyle you can reduce the chances that you may suffer from a stroke.

Stroke rehabilitation can take place in different settings at different points in recovery. Ask which option fits the survivor's medical condition, ability to participate and home support:

- Long-term acute care hospitals
- Inpatient rehabilitation hospitals

Early Intervention

Immediate medical attention is essential to improve the odds of recovery. Know the signs of a stroke and call 911 as soon as possible. The acronym FAST is easy to remember and outlines the main signs of stroke:

F – Face drooping

A – Arm weakness

S – Speech difficulty

T – Time to call 911

For more information about stroke warning signs, prevention and support, visit the American Stroke Association.

For questions about a possible stay, call Lakeview Admissions at (262) 534-8509. During a stay, ask the bedside nurse who can help with your question.

Patient information — https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/signs-symptoms/index.html

https://www.lakeviewsystem.com/inpatient-rehabilitation