

# Psychosocial Aspects of Recovery

## Module 3

Module adapted from materials provided by Dr. Blaise Morrison, PhD, LP, CRC, LPC





# Schedule

- What does psychosocial mean?
- Depression after stroke
- Individual psychosocial challenges
- Family psychosocial challenges
- Community psychosocial challenges
- Things to consider
- Review

# Psychosocial Challenges

- **Psychosocial** refers to the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual parts of a person.
- Individuals with stroke often experience:
  - Social isolation and reduced activity levels
  - Decreased mental and physical health
  - Increased emotional distress
  - Poor self-esteem or self-concept
  - Substance use or other risky behaviors
  - Barriers to employment and community integration
  - Communication and social cue difficulties
  - Relationship problems and conflict
- These challenges **can also impact family and loved ones.**



# Depression after stroke

## Symptoms of Depression

- Persistent sadness
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness
- Loss of interest
- Decreased energy
- Fatigue
- Lack of motivation
- Poor concentration
- Low self-esteem
- Sleep difficulties
- Change in appetite
- Anxiety
- Worry about deterioration
- Irritability, restlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide

**If you or your loved one is experiencing any symptoms, talk with your healthcare provider.**



# Depression after stroke

It is common to experience depression after having a stroke.

The impact of depression on the person with stroke can include:

- Reduced quality of life
- Poor functional recovery
- Decreased rehabilitation treatment efficiency
- Poor social interactions
- Increased cognitive and physical impairment



# Depression after stroke

After a stroke, it is also common for family and loved ones to also experience depression.

The impact of depression on the caregiver can include:

- Decline in physical health
- Decline in emotional health
- Decreased sense of well-being
- Frustration and stress
- Overwhelming sense of burden and strain
- Decreased quality of life
- Isolation, fear, and guilt



# Individual psychosocial challenges

It is common to have difficulty adjusting to life after stroke.

- Some common personal challenges include:
  - Psychological adjustment and management, including depression and anxiety
  - Reduced self-confidence and self-esteem
  - Social isolation and a reduction in social activities
  - Trouble managing emotions
    - Anger outbursts, impulsivity, frustration, irritability
  - Changes in thinking skills
    - Trouble paying attention, being distracted easily



# Family psychosocial challenges

- It is common for families to experience psychosocial challenges after a loved one has a stroke.
- Some common challenges include:
  - Family adjustment and being over-protective
  - Changes in roles within the family
  - Changes in relationships and intimacy
  - Communication difficulties
  - Financial difficulties and stress with navigating insurance and rehabilitation
  - Increased feelings of worry





# Community psychosocial challenges

- It is common to experience psychosocial challenges in the community after stroke.
- Some common challenges include:
  - Difficulty returning to hobbies or work
  - Lack of local, accessible community resources
  - Limited support network and peers
  - Trouble accessing buildings
  - Lack of accommodations, stigma, negative attitudes, and misinformation

## Things to consider

- Discuss any of these issues with your rehabilitation team; there are experts who want to help you and your loved ones with these issues.
- **Don't feel embarrassed to talk about these issues; they are important to address!**
- Have open communication with your loved ones to reduce psychosocial challenges.



# Things to consider

- Find social supports and use them!
  - Family, friends, support groups, your STRIDE buddy
- Schedule pleasant, relaxing activities by yourself or with others.
  - Stick to the schedule! Consider it to be as important as a medical appointment, and do not cancel the fun activity!
  - Plan ahead to reduce frustrations
    - Know where the accessible entrance is, confirm meet-up times, ask for help when needed

## Review

- **Psychosocial** is the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual parts of a person
- Psychosocial challenges are common and should be discussed with your healthcare provider and loved ones.
- Depression after stroke can impact the patient and family members.
- Finding social supports and using the supports is important (friends, family, support groups, your STRIDE buddy).
- Psychosocial challenges can be personal, happen within a family, and happen within the community.

# References

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