

Caregiver Roles

Module 4



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Schedule

- Role of a caregiver
- Common difficulties
- Questions for your doctor
- Communication with your caregiver
- Review



Having a Caregiver is Normal

- Things you were once able to do now take a lot of time, energy, and effort.
- It is helpful to have someone there to assist you!
- As you recover, you'll likely be able to do more for yourself, but having a little help is OK.



Caregiver Roles

- Some things a caregiver might do include:
 - Managing finances and medications
 - Managing rehab schedule and transportation
 - Household chores
 - Helping with activities of daily living
 - Getting dressed, hygiene, going to the bathroom



Communication is Important

- Relationship dynamics will likely shift after your stroke.
- It is important to remember:
 1. Having a stroke is nobody's fault.
 2. The shifting of roles is not easy for you or your loved one/caregiver.
 3. Be direct in your communication.



The Transition Home

- The initial transition home is commonly the most stressful time for caregivers.
- The next slides introduce some important questions to discuss with your rehabilitation team to ensure effective communication between you, your caregiver, and your medical team.



Questions for the Healthcare Team

- What are the potential long-term effects of my stroke?
- What rehabilitation services will I need, and how do we access them?
- What factors contributed to my stroke?
- What risk factors may have contributed to the stroke? (High blood pressure, cigarette smoking, atrial fibrillation, etc.)
- What is the likelihood of having another stroke?
- How can another stroke be prevented?



Questions for the Medical Team

- What medications do I need? What do my medications treat? How do I take my medication?
 - Keep a list of medications including over-the-counter medications (aspirin) as they can interfere with the action of prescribed drugs
- What are your nutrition recommendations?
- How can I be as safe and independent as possible at home?



Communication Between Survivor and Caregiver

- It is important to have clear expectations with your caregiver.
- The next slide has some important questions to discuss with your caregiver.
 - Plan weekly check-ins to discuss how things are going.
 - Consistent communication creates an easy space to discuss any needed adjustments.



Questions to Discuss with Caregiver

- What are the things that are important for you to do for yourself?
 - Biggest priorities? (example: getting dressed)
- What would you most prefer their help with?
- Are there any times they are unable to help?
- Is there anything they are uncomfortable helping with or is there anything you are uncomfortable to have them help with?



Questions to Discuss with Caregiver

- How do you both feel about occasionally having someone professional to come and help?
- If there is something the other is doing that is bothering you, what is your plan to address it?
- How will you each practice self-care?
 - Taking time to have fun and doing things you enjoy is important!
- Are there any local support groups or resources you can use for extra help?

Review

- The role of the caregiver is to help you with tasks that take you a lot of time, energy, effort, or that you may no longer feel comfortable doing by yourself.
 - I.e. Driving to and from appointments, chores, etc.
- Nobody is to blame following a stroke.
- **COMMUNICATION** is key.
 - Communication between you and your caregiver
 - Communication between you and your rehabilitation team

Resources

- *Caregiver Guide to Stroke*. American Heart Association. (2020).
- Conaway, B. (2012, June 1). *Stroke Recovery: Tips for the Caregiver*. WebMD. <https://www.webmd.com/stroke/features/stroke-recovery-tips-for-the-caregiver#:~:text=The%20stroke%20survivor's%20health%20care,and%20doctor%20and%20rehab%20appointments>.
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- King, R. B., Ainsworth, C. R., Ronen, M., & Hartke, R. J. (2010). Stroke caregivers: pressing problems reported during the first months of caregiving. *The Journal of neuroscience nursing : journal of the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses*, 42(6), 302–311. <https://doi.org/10.1097/jnn.0b013e3181f8a575>

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