



How to act around a person after a stroke (during recovery)

Stroke recovery happens as soon as the disease process is under control. The brain starts to slowly respond to the damage done to it and will alter or change its way of functioning to accommodate for the loss or death of parts.

Caregivers and patients need to understand that stroke recovery is slow and unpredictable. How the brain repairs itself is still largely a mystery. This is what makes each stroke survivor's prognosis different. Doctors, nurses, and therapists can only guess at how a patient will respond according to the location and severity of stroke. It is the support of the survivor's family, friends, and self that can make all the difference in recovery.

Recovery from stroke happens in a "two steps forward, one step back" process. There may be days of remarkable recovery for the stroke patient, and then there may be days of great loss. It is during this time that caregivers, friends, and family must find joy in the smallest of gains in your loved one. This uncertainty is hard for the patient and the loved ones. What will recover and what will not recover? Patients are going through a mourning process. Don't in any way play down on the feelings of the patient! Acknowledge the seriousness to what happened to the patient.

Every stroke is different; therefore every stroke survivor is different. Common impairments for stroke survivors are: Vision, balance, speech, hearing, and paralyzed on one side.

Treat me the same way as you did before my stroke – I am the same person. Don't treat me like a child or being incapable of making decisions.

When I am tired and/or frustrated, a lot of my basic skills (talking, handwriting, balance, vision and concentration) diminish. If I am more agitated than usual, I am probably tired or frustrated! Have patience and try to understand my current situation. Especially being a single mom and sometimes coping with immense stress situations. Just let me be mad, angry, sad or nervous.

I get easily tired in surroundings with multiple people and loud music. A serious conversation can exhaust me immensely. Keep it short and clear or make sure to take me to a quiet place without a lot of noise, people, bright lights. I would prefer a good laugh and airy conversation in busy surroundings.

I am having trouble concentrating on content dialogues. Please give me some time or let me make sure that the surrounding is not too noisy or busy for me.

When I am tired and in a busy surrounding, I can not find the subject I am looking for. It is because my brain does not register the subject. I will ask for help. Just understand the handicap without any judgment.

When I am not wearing my special glasses, I see double. When I am tired it can get a real handicap and make me feel disorientated or distracted. Take into account that I could do, walk and grab things in a different way.

With my special glasses I only use one eye. I am not able to see depth with a curb or I might not be able to grab something or play football in a appropriate manner.

Don't give me advice after asking me how I am doing. Just listen, feel my pain and try to give a compliment. I took care of my children on my own just 4 months after brain surgery! I work really hard and I do have a lot of really bad days. That is normal and I already do everything possible, to make the best out of it!

Thank you!