

**Patient
Information**

Emotional changes after a stroke

Introduction

This leaflet has been written to help you understand the emotional changes you may have after a stroke.

Emotional changes

Feelings of anger, frustration, anxiety and depression are common after a stroke. If you are having any of these feelings, it is important to understand that this is normal and we are here to support you. The feelings could be due to you trying to come to terms with the stroke. They may also be caused by the stroke's effect on your brain, which controls emotions. You may also find it more difficult to control your emotions and find yourself crying or laughing for no reason.

Supporting you

While you are in the Stroke Rehab Unit, the staff are here to help and support you in being more independent after your stroke. This includes your emotional wellbeing along with your physical health, as both are equally important.

We regularly ask patients about their emotional wellbeing, including anxiety and depression. We do this to make sure that we give you the right support at the right time.

If, at any time, you feel you would like extra support with any emotional changes you are experiencing, please let a member of staff know so that this can be arranged.

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Department

**Health
Psychology**

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Some things people find helpful

- Talking about what you are feeling with those around you, such as family members, carers, friends or the Stroke Rehab Unit staff.
- Joining a support group for people who have had a stroke - it can be good to talk to people who know how it feels.
- Remind yourself that changes in emotions and behaviour are normal.
- Be patient; do not push yourself to be 'better' too soon.
- Listen to music you enjoy or take some time to yourself when your emotions get too much.
- Rest when you are tired. Feeling tired is very common and people often feel worse when they are tired.
- You might want to keep a journal to record your feelings.

The future after a stroke

It is normal to feel worried about what the future may bring after having a stroke. The specialists may not be able to predict how long your recovery will take or how much better you can expect to get. This can lead to feelings of frustration and can be distressing and confusing. It can be helpful to focus on your progress. One day at a time can be a useful way to think.

After discharge

When you leave the Stroke Unit, you may start to have - or still have - emotional changes and feelings of depression. If these feelings continue it is important to discuss this with the people who are supporting you in the community, such as your GP or professionals within the community rehabilitation teams.

Stroke and your family

A stroke may also have an effect on the people around you such as carers, family and friends. They may feel concerned and have different ways of coping with their emotions.

Family members may feel worried or suffer with low mood. It may be helpful for your family to seek further support for themselves if they are struggling to cope with the changes in their lives.

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Contact information

Stroke Services

Cheltenham General Hospital
Sandford Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7AN
Tel: 0300 422 4475

Health Psychology Department

Tel: 0300 422 8523
Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm

Further information and support

Please visit the following websites for further information.

The Stroke Association

Tel: 0303 303 3100
Website: www.stroke.org.uk

Different Strokes (for younger stroke survivors)

Tel: 0345 130 7172
Website: www.differentstrokes.co.uk

Reconnect

Website: www.reconnectglos.org

Headway

Tel: 0808 800 2244
Website: www.headway.org.uk
Local service: www.headwaygloucestershire.org.uk

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>