



FINDING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Stroke Support Groups

Stroke support groups help survivors and families cope with life after stroke. Support group members share experiences and encourage one another.

Why Are They Important?

Life after a stroke is often difficult. Talking to others who have been through stroke and recovery may help. Support groups focus on your strengths and successes. Some support groups invite guest speakers who are healthcare providers. Support groups are a good place to make friends.

They can help you and your loved one:

- Solve problems and get tips on caregiving
- Find local resources
- Get information on ways to improve health
- Learn about strokes and recovery
- Try new things, such as bowling or taking a dance class

What Do You Need to Know?

Stroke support groups are often run by hospitals, the VA or stroke-related volunteer groups. Many groups include members trained to answer your questions. There are different types of stroke support groups. Some groups include people with other medical conditions. To some, this makes the group more interesting. There are also support groups for caregivers only. Groups meet at days and times convenient for members.

How Do You Find a Stroke Support Group?

If you are looking for a stroke support group in your area, consider the following resources. Their contact information can be found in the "More Resources" section at the end of this fact sheet.

- Talk with your local VA social worker. Other healthcare professionals such as nurses, psychologists and physical therapists can help.
- Search the National Stroke Association's Stroke Group Registry.

For more information on stroke caregiving, visit the RESCUE home page:
<http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue>

- Call the American Stroke Association's "Warmline." It connects families with other stroke support groups.
- Check your local newspaper for announcements about stroke support groups.

How Do You Find Stroke Support Groups On-Line?

You may prefer an on-line support group. On-line support groups are often helpful if you lack time or can't leave the house.

You can find on-line support groups through these Web sites:

- The Stroke Network
- The American Stroke Association

The "More Resources" section at the end of this fact sheet has the links to each of these Web pages.

Helpful Tips

- You may have to visit several support groups to find the right one.
- Support groups do not take the place of medical care. Your healthcare provider knows what's best for you and your loved one.
- You can even start a stroke support group. Find a helpful booklet from the National Stroke Association. The "More Resources" section at the end of this fact sheet has a link to this booklet.

Remember

- It's hard to adjust to the changes after stroke. Stroke support groups offer help and encouragement. They can help people get back into social activities.
- Different kinds of stroke support groups are available. Your loved one and you may go to a local group. You also may use an on-line group.
- Stroke support groups do not take the place of medical care.

More Resources

The following resources contain internet links. The location of internet pages can change. Therefore the links provided may not always work. For the most current version of this list, go to <http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue/resources>. This page will be updated frequently.

Link Disclaimer: Links to information and Web sites outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs do not indicate an endorsement of products or services offered by the sites. In addition, these sites may have privacy and security policies that are inconsistent with those of VA.

For more information on stroke caregiving, visit the RESCUE home page:
<http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue>

American Heart Association

Web: <http://www.heart.org>

Phone: 1-800-242-8721

The American Heart Association has free Family Discussion Boards. You can share ideas and questions. Go to this link:

<http://myportal.americanheart.org/jiveforum/index.jspa>

American Stroke Association

Web: <http://www.strokeassociation.org>

Phone: 1-888-478-7653

The American Stroke Association's "Warmline" provides support and helpful information to stroke survivors and their families. Go to this link:

<http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2550>

Connecting for Care

Web: <http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org>

Phone: 1-800-896-3650

Connecting for Care provides resources and support for caregivers. Go to the following link to read "A Support Group Guide."

<http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org/pdfs/SupportGrp.pdf>

Department of Veterans Affairs

Web: <http://www.va.gov>

Contact a social worker at your local VA Medical Center to learn about the VA's home care program, adult day healthcare programs and long-term care housing.

My HealthVet

Web: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>

My HealthVet has information on VA services, strokes and caregiving.

Also visit the Caregiver Assistance Center on the My HealthVet Web site. This section provides more information on caregiving.

- Go to: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>
- Click on the button that says "Enter Here"
- Click on "Research Health" on the top bar, then "Healthy Living Centers"
- Click on "Caregiver Assistance"

For more information on stroke caregiving, visit the RESCUE home page:

<http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue>

National Stroke Association

Web: <http://www.stroke.org>

Phone: 1-800-787-6537

The National Stroke Association has a lot of information about stroke support groups, including how to start your own stroke support group. They also have a link to a directory called the “Stroke Group Registry” to help you find a stroke support group near you. They also have information on starting your own support group. Go to this link: http://www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagename=support_groups

Stroke Network

Web: <http://www.strokenetwork.net>

The Stroke Network has links to support groups, chat rooms and bulletin boards.

References: American Stroke Association. (2008). *Successful Stroke Support Groups*. Retrieved December 18, 2008, from: <http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3030354>; American Heart Association. (2008). *Stroke Support Groups*. Retrieved December 19, 2008, from: <http://my.americanheart.org/jiveforum/index.jspa>; National Stroke Association. (2008). *Stroke Support Groups*. Retrieved December 19, 2008, from: http://www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagename=support_groups.



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