

# Tips For Stroke Survivors

## Coping After a Stroke:

- Emotional changes:
  - Some people may have difficulty controlling their emotions. This can result in rapid mood changes and/or inappropriate emotional responses (e.g. crying when laughing is appropriate). Post-stroke depression is also common.
  - It is also important to recognize that various emotional reactions following a stroke are to be expected. Some of these emotions include frustration, anxiety, anger, and apathy.
  
- Strategies to address *emotional changes*:
  - Some emotional and behavioral changes can be treated with medication. Talk to your doctor to discuss options.
  - Stay as active as possible. Seek out family and friends.
  - Join a stroke support group.
  
- Strategies to address *memory deficits*:
  - Follow set routines daily.
  - Create schedules and place them around the house.
  - Use calendars, alarms, cell phones, etc. to remember appointments.
  - Seek out quiet times during the day to rest.
  
- Strategies to address *communication changes*:
  - Relax and take your time.
  - Say it in your own way. Use words, gestures, facial expressions, props, etc. to get your point across.
  - Use communication aids such as topic/cue cards, communication boards, and pictures.
  - Practice!

### Returning to Your Life

- Driving

- It is recommended that you do not drive until you have been formally assessed. Clearance can be obtained by taking a driving evaluation conducted by a Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS). More information can be found at

[www.driver-ed.org](http://www.driver-ed.org).

- Skills required: memory, concentration, attention to detail, problem solving, eye-hand coordination, reaction time, accurate vision and perception, safety judgment and awareness, and ability to maintain speed and position
- Other transportation options:
  - Rides with friends or family
  - Carpools (Private or public)
  - Public transportation

- Work/School

- Readiness to return to work or school can be influenced by changes in cognition/thinking, communication, behavior and emotion, and physical ability.
- Individuals often find adjustment is easier if they initially return to work/school part-time.
- Tips:
  - Therapy can simulate work/school and provide an opportunity to practice strategies that will aid in successful return to work/school.
  - Meet with a vocational counselor to develop a plan.
  - Advocate for yourself. Know your legal rights to various accommodations.
  - Prepare your employer/teacher. Discuss potential accommodations and adaptations early to ease the transition.

REMEMBER: All is not lost! Many of these skills can be improved with therapy and over time.

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