



STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# Snippets December 2014



## Facebook and Twitter

SRABC is now on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/StrokeRecoveryBC>

and Twitter at:

<https://twitter.com/StrokeRecovBC>

- **Snippets** is published on the 10th day of each month by Stroke Recovery Association of BC
- **Snippets** contains SRABC news and information and stroke recovery resources for stroke survivors and caregivers
- **Snippets** is for our Branch Coordinators to assist them in their work with people whose lives have been affected by stroke

- **Snippets** can also be useful for people recovering from a stroke, their caregivers, their friends, family and supporters
- We welcome your comments and feedback about **Snippets**
- If you know anyone who will find **Snippets** useful please forward it to them or ask them to add their name to our mailing list by sending an email to [office@strokerecoverybc.ca](mailto:office@strokerecoverybc.ca)
- All past issues of Snippets are available on the SRABC website at: <http://strokerecoverybc.ca/snippets/>

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## 7 Steps to Stroke Recovery Video Goes Viral

Our 7 Steps to Stroke Recovery video, which was posted on YouTube 5 months ago, reached 12,684 views today. While that may be small in comparison to the latest dreadful 'wardrobe malfunction' or 'funny things my cat does' viral videos, it is an impressive number for a targeted health-related production. It demonstrates that this is an effective way for us to get helpful information about stroke recovery into the right hands. I encourage you all to continue to help spread the word on-line and by using the DVD. You can see the video here <https://www.youtube.com/user/office814> and order copies of the DVD from [office@strokerecoverybc.ca](mailto:office@strokerecoverybc.ca)



Healthier Branscombe- Physiotherapist

## Branch Update - News from SRABC's Branches

- **Burnaby North Branch**

**Memory and Stroke** - We did an education session today on memory and stroke today (e.g., Memory tips and techniques, exercise boosting memory, foods that may help to boost memory, and discussion of other factors that affect memory such as depression, stress, anxiety and mindfulness techniques shown to lower stress and so on) and used info and research from various resources and it went well. The sources for the information came from reputable sites and studies. It was conducted in an informal setting using a verbal and blackboard presentation. We did a quiz format afterwards and asked members what they remembered (another good way to help with retention of new info). I have created a document outlining the session content.

***If anyone wants a copy to use with their group please contact Ruby or email***

***[execdir@strokerecoverybc.ca](mailto:execdir@strokerecoverybc.ca)***

***Ruby Gill, Branch Coordinator***

- **Delta Branch**

Duncan Holmes from our Delta Branch wrote in the November Snippets to let us know about their recent Gym Fitness Fund Raiser put on by fitness instructors, volunteers and stroke survivors which raised over \$2,000. Dawn Sillett Branch Coordinator sent us the photo below which shows the gym crew accepting the cheque from Terry Day at the New Day Gym.



Delta Branch Gym Group

- **Templeton Branch**

The new Branch Coordinator at the Templeton Branch is John Talos. John is a Registered Care Aide with extensive experience caring for older adults with dementia. He has worked for a number of health care agencies including Bayshore Home Health and St. James' Community Services Society and comes with excellent references. John has volunteered at Templeton for the last 10 months and has built a good relationship with the people there. Please join me in welcoming John to the SRABC team.

- **Oceanside Branch**

### **Awards Ceremony**

We had a successful Phyllis Delaney Life After Stroke Awards Ceremony for Battista Rizzuto, Outstanding Achievement Award winner, with a few other activities, (parade, picnic, fishing, etc) at the end.

We held a lovely pot luck lunch with Battista's family and close friends in attendance. The Mayor of Parksville, Chris Burger presented the award and Jessica Skelton from the Parksville/Qualicum News was on hand to record the occasion for the newspaper. A huge celebration cake was served after lunch.

We had arranged the ceremony for November 20 as that was a time when Suzanne and Battista Rizzuto's son, Jason, would be able to attend. He travelled from Calgary to attend the event. Battista's brother and closest friends also attended as well as members of Oceanside Branch SRABC. It was a moving, emotional occasion as attendees heard the details of Battista's recovery journey and his courage in meeting life's challenges. The event was also captured on video by Mary Jane Turner.

I think it was a very good idea to ask the branches to do their own ceremony this year. It turned out well.

1. There was more opportunity to share the celebration with family and friends.
2. There was less stress on the award winners as they did not have to travel.
3. It saves funds at head office during this period of reduced funding.

Our branch held its exec meeting today and wanted me to pass on their feelings in this matter. Everyone enjoyed the party and celebration. We did it as a potluck. They think that all future winners should be celebrated in their own branches as everyone got to participate and it created much joy.

There's a great write up on Battista Rizzuto here:

<http://www.pqbnews.com/news/284083961.html>

### **Esthetics Program**

Oceanside Stroke Recovery joined forces with Vancouver Island University Esthetics program in November. Ten of our members enjoyed a manicure while the VIU students practised their skills on clients with mobility issues. There was lots of laughter and everyone enjoyed their treatment. In return for the spa services, Mary Jane Turner provided a 25 minute presentation "Living with Stroke" to the students. This provided an

opportunity for the students to ask questions before they met with their clients.

*Kathleen Falvai, Coordinator, Oceanside Branch*



Battista Rizzuto with Parksville's Mayor Chris Burger



Battista and Suzanne Rizzuto with their son Jason



Esthetics program treatment

## **Dave Baker Canadian Hobo's Lullaby**

Here's a message from David Baker - songwriter and Maple Ridge Stroke Recovery member who we have featured in previous editions of Snippets.

"I have some terrific good news to share with you - go to YouTube and search for "Dave Baker Canadian Hobo's Lullaby". I recorded the song in 1998. What I did was take an old American folk song "Hobo's Lullaby" by Goebel Reeves (it was made famous by Woody Guthrie) and add some lyrics to "Canadianize" it. The song has been recorded by the Kingston Trio, Joan Baez, and Arlo Guthrie. The video is great. Have a look!"

You can find this marvelous video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muUrJDeFa4o>

It's a great song Dave and it still sounds great today!



David Baker receiving his 2013 Phyllis Delaney Life after Stroke Award from Casey Crawford and Jack Corstanje

## **AGM Refreshments Thank You**

A quick thank you to quick thinking Deb Chow for arranging pizza and coffee for people who attended the SRABC AGM on Saturday October 25 at the Creekside Community Centre.

We paid \$5 and Deb's favourite "baby" BLAST (Building Life After Stroke Together) Easter camp at Squamish – made a bit of a profit. We were all winners!

Thank you Deb!

*Margaret Hansen, Coordinator, Coquitlam Branch*

## Art Therapy - Coordinator Education Session

The Branch Coordinators' Education Session was held before the SRABC AGM on Saturday October 25th 2014. The topic was Art Therapy and included:

- Overview of Art Therapy with stroke survivors
- Samples of stroke survivors' artwork
- Hands-on session

The presenter was Alannah MacPhail, professional Art Therapist, B.A. (Psych); B. Ed.; DVATI

Alannah currently runs art therapy classes at the North Shore Stroke Recovery Centre in North Vancouver.

“Art therapy is a form of expressive therapy that provides the client with an opportunity to explore personal problems and potentials, resolve conflicts, and facilitate self-awareness and understanding through a variety of artistic activities. As an art therapist my role is to engage the client in a healing process by fostering and encouraging creative expression. This work is founded on a therapeutic relationship of acceptance, support and trust.”

<http://arthatmatters.ca/>

The Session Coordinator was Peggy Kane, Shaughnessy Branch Coordinator - thank you Peggy!

Alannah sent us this note after the session:

*Sending you some photos of Saturday's workshop. We had 14 participants and the feedback was very positive. A number of the Coordinators asked for my business card and indicated an interest in a follow up with their Branches. Many thanks for the opportunity. I thoroughly enjoyed myself!!*

You can email Alannah at [Alannah@arthatmatters.ca](mailto:Alannah@arthatmatters.ca)



SRABC Branch Coordinators



## Casey Crawford Elected

The City of Vancouver held its municipal election on November 19, 2014. Casey Crawford, our former Board Chair and President, was elected to the position of Park Commissioner with 49,020 votes which represented 33.85% of total votes cast. Congratulations to Casey from all at SRABC.



*Casey Crawford*

## Research News



DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE  
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

Julie Wei, a Senior Manager at BC Emergency and Health Service and a SRABC Board and Professional Advisory Committee member, sent us this update:

This is something quite new and exciting. University of Toronto researchers and scientists have developed a drug that will keep the stroke brain "breathing". This is a clinical trial to test the effectiveness of the drug. There's more detail in the following link:

<http://www.emergencymedicine.utoronto.ca/research/ptmr/CS/Frontier.htm>

I would like to mention that BC is participating in this multi-centre trial so it'd be a good news piece to share with our SRABC members.

## Small Fee for Participation in Research

Do you use a mobility scooter?



At the GF Strong Research Centre, Dr. Ben Mortenson and his research team are conducting a study on the reliability of several new measures and tools related to scooter use. This study involves answering questions about your scooter use and daily life as well as completing a scooter mobility test. The information gathered from this study will be used to determine whether a larger scooter training intervention

(You must be over 19 years of age and have owned your scooter for at least 3 months. You must also have the ability to read, write and speak in English.)

The study requires two visits and a small fee will provided for each visit. The study can be done at the GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre OR Blusson Spinal Cord Centre. If you are interested in this study please contact Mary-Ellen Johnson at [maryellen.johnson@ubc.ca](mailto:maryellen.johnson@ubc.ca) or call 604-714-4108

Each visit will range in time from 2-2.5 hours, and participants will receive a \$25 stipend per visit.

## Stroke Support Group Guide



Here is a link for how to start a successful stroke support group for anyone else interested in starting one. The guidelines are quite in-depth, and not everything needs to be used, but it is a useful tool for Branch Coordinators and has lots of usable ideas in it.

You can find the guide here:

[http://www.strokeassociation.org/idc/groups/stroke-public/@wcm/@hcm/@sta/documents/downloadable/ucm\\_309688.pdf](http://www.strokeassociation.org/idc/groups/stroke-public/@wcm/@hcm/@sta/documents/downloadable/ucm_309688.pdf)

*Ruby Gill, Branch Coordinator, Burnaby North Branch*

## Post-Stroke Guide for Caregivers



Surviving a stroke can be a harrowing experience. Even once the danger has passed, survivors need to be prepared to face new challenges in their daily routine. Professional or family caregiving can help stroke survivors retain independence and function, but caregivers need to be informed on how best to aid seniors after a stroke.

### - Coping with changes

The Cleveland Clinic warned that changes in mood and behavior can be common after a stroke. This may be especially difficult for family caregivers to adjust to, as they have more of a history with their loved one than a professional caregiver would. However, the mood changes that come after a stroke can present challenges to professionals as well. Stroke survivors may be relearning common tasks, which can lead to stress and anxiety. This pressure could manifest as anger or depression, according to the source. Caregivers of all kinds should be prepared to offer emotional support as well as taking care of medical issues.

### - Learn the ropes

Caregivers should get as much information as they can about strokes from the health care providers on the case, according to the American Stroke Association. The lasting effects of a stroke may vary based on its severity and where in the brain it occurred, so getting this information is essential. It's also integral to find out what led to the stroke to know how to avoid one in the future, if possible. High blood pressure and smoking are common risk factors, so care should be taken to reduce these and other potentially dangerous conditions and behaviors. However, caregivers should also ask specifically what could be

done to prevent another stroke. Other risk factors may be present that didn't cause the first stroke but may lead to another.

- Regaining control

Recovery is about more than preventing another stroke, though. With rehabilitation, many people can regain some of the function that they lost because of a stroke. Survivors may use physical therapy, meal planning, support groups, psychological counseling and many other treatments to help them achieve the highest quality of life possible. Caregivers can serve as the bridge between a stroke survivor and any of these services, contacting providers, setting up appointments and making sure that their loved one or client can make it to appointments and stick with the regimen they need.

- Day to Day

Navigating the road to recovery also means re-establishing a daily routine and making sure that no mundane concerns impede rehabilitation. Canada's Heart and Stroke Foundation provided a guide to these processes and many other aspects of post-stroke care. Especially in the early stages, stroke survivors can have mobility limitations, making tasks such as dressing, bathing and eating difficult. Caregivers should be prepared to offer help wherever it's needed, as many requirements may not be easy to predict. Loss of feeling or function can make it more likely that seniors will need help cleaning themselves and maintaining hygiene. Caregivers can assist by checking the feet and skin for abnormalities such as redness, sores, swelling or bruising. They can also help in the bath, as some parts of the body can be difficult to reach unassisted after a stroke.

- Stress Relief

It's also important for caregivers to take care of themselves, as the stress of caregiving could otherwise lead to fatigue and mental distress. The Cleveland Clinic recommended finding caregiver support groups to get a sense of community and possibly learn from people who are in similar situations. Beyond that, caregivers must make time to care for themselves, as a lack of nutrition, sleep or exercise could not only harm them, but it may lead them to provide less effective care.

By Julia Little on November 11, 2014

<http://www.sunriseseniorliving.com/blog/november-2014/poststroke-guide-for-caregivers.aspx>

[http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/LifeAfterStroke/ForFamilyCaregivers/National-Family-Caregivers-Month\\_UCM\\_466774\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/LifeAfterStroke/ForFamilyCaregivers/National-Family-Caregivers-Month_UCM_466774_SubHomePage.jsp)

## Merry or Melancholy? Why Facial Expressions Can Be Misinterpreted After a Stroke



Discover what causes some stroke survivors to have trouble understanding or expressing emotions through facial expressions and discover ideas on how to make communication easier.

<http://www.strokesmart.org/new?id=276>

## How to Get Up From a Fall

**Stroke**Smart

Falling after a stroke is common and can be unnerving.

<http://www.strokesmart.org/new?id=275>

## Talk the Talk: 5 Things You Need to Know when Speaking with a Person with Aphasia



Imagine that you can construct fluent sentences in your mind, but only utter “Not good” when asked a question.

Or you remember every moment of your wedding day 48 years ago, but when asked the date, you have to write the numbers 2 and 7, point to them, and say, “This one . . . December.”

Or you recall many treasured stories about each of your grandchildren, but when you look at a photo of all five smiling back at you, you struggle to say their names.

This is reality for stroke survivor Jennifer Swaren, and for many other people living with aphasia.

Read the whole article here:

<http://tactustherapy.com/5-ways-to-help-someone-with-aphasia/>

## Talk Around It Speech and Language Therapy Apps



Talk Around It helps people with word finding difficulties to practice Naming Techniques and improve Word Retrieval. Developed by Speech and Language Therapists, Talk Around It uses evidence-based techniques to treat conditions such as aphasia, anomia, stroke, dementia, alzheimer’s and autism. It now includes over 100 high quality pictures with support for high-density Retina displays, over 900 Cues, Testing and Progress Reports to document patients’ progress.

For more information please visit [www.neurohero.com](http://www.neurohero.com)

To watch the video go here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYD0dmyGK5c>

## **Aphasia Resources from the UK**



**Rebuilding Communication**

- **Picturing Aphasia**

This simple illustrated booklet is useful for explaining what a stroke is and how it causes Aphasia. Suitable for people with Aphasia and carers.

- **Lost for Words**

An introductory booklet that explains what Aphasia is, what causes it, what you can do to help, the role of the Speech and Language Therapist and the aims and services of Speakability.

- **Rebuilding Communication**

This 16-page booklet introduces the main strategies for rebuilding communication with people with language disorders. Suitable for carers and staff working with people with communication problems.

Workbook for Carers Contributors include:

J. Marshall PhD MRCSLT, Eva Carlson PhD MRSLT and Diana Moir MSc Reg MRCSLT

This 32 page, book supplements the advice of a speech therapist. It aims to help caregivers to understand Aphasia and offers ideas and tips for providing support.

There are more here: <http://www.speakability.org.uk/Aphasia+Information>

## **Info for People with Aphasia**

**Free brochures regarding speech and language, info for people with aphasia e.g. basic communication boards, etc.**

<http://ow.ly/DSkkm>

## Understanding Aphasia Videos

Aphasia affects millions of people worldwide. Watch and share the videos on our YouTube page to help spread the word. We would love to hear your comments on our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/understandingaphasia>

The YouTube page is here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/understandingaphasia>

## “We Connect Now” Website for College Students with Disabilities

We Connect Now is dedicated to uniting people interested in rights and issues affecting people with disabilities, with particular emphasis on college students and access to higher education and employment issues.

One of the goals of this site is to help college students with disabilities to succeed in their studies by getting the information and support they need, both through resources, [links](#), [blogs](#) latest [news](#), studying existing [laws and regulation](#) and through personal contacts. Through this website people can also share and read other people's [stories](#) as a source of support and comfort.

Go here to view the website: <http://weconnectnow.wordpress.com/>

## 2 Questions to Transform Conflict into Empowerment



“Living with integrity means: Not settling for less than what you know you deserve in your relationships. Asking for what you want and need from others. Speaking your truth, even though it might create conflict or tension. Behaving in ways that are in harmony with your personal values. Making choices based on what you believe, and not what others believe.”

~ Barbara De Angelis

In any relationship system (romance, family, friends, teams, communities), it is inevitable



that buttons are pushed, and conflicts arise. Perhaps we are triggered by how someone speaks to us, or we withhold from sharing our feelings and ideas due to fear of rejection. Relationship systems are bound to make us feel unsettled. But that is exactly their purpose. They serve to rattle the unconscious so that we make conscious those parts of ourselves held in the shadows; so that we become more aware of old wounds and limiting beliefs that keep us living reactively in victim mode, and disconnected from our power. There are two questions that serve to move us from reactivity and victim consciousness to personal responsibility and empowerment.

1. What is my role in the situation?

The moment we ask ourselves this question, we are willing to take 50% responsibility for the conflict. Instead of blaming, gossiping or complaining, we take time to examine how we have contributed to the situation.

It may not be easy to be clear on what our role is because so much of what we attract in our lives is done so unconsciously. In the same way an abused child grows up attracting abusive relationships, we all unwittingly enter our own familiar patterns of relationship as dictated by our history and social conditioning. The shadows of our past shroud our perception of reality, and keep us from realizing the true underpinnings of any situation, including our role in it. The the darker the shadow, the stronger the reactivity and victim consciousness.

Victims will see their counterparts in conflict as adversaries who must be blamed, changed or avoided altogether. They will project their unresolved past onto the situation or other person, and allow it to veil the truth and keep them entrenched in their victim role. Those who take personal responsibility, however, will see these people as teachers who mirror back their internal state of consciousness; teachers disguised as bully bosses, aloof friends, messy spouses, and arrogant co-workers; teachers who unwittingly offer an opportunity to reveal old wounds and limiting beliefs, and the patterns or roles we take on. Examples of roles include being a chronic pleaser, enabler, challenger, controller and saviour. These roles will continue to play out in our lives so long as they are left in the shadow. They will continue to lead us into relationships systems that both feed the role and offer opportunity for transformation.

It is vital to understand that these old roles have served a very important purpose in our lives. They have kept us safe and secure for a very long time. At an early age, keeping our mouth shut, avoiding feeling vulnerable, and dumbing down our greatness may have been an act of self-preservation – a choice that enabled us to cope or survive. But now, many

years later, we are still governed by the same survival strategy even though the situation is long gone, and at the cost of our authentic Self and empowerment.

## 2. What is my learning?

Once we know what our role is in a conflict, we are ready to learn. Learning is the growth and empowerment gained when we make new choices that serve ourselves and the relationship system. It is the opportunity that the conflict affords us.

Learning can come about on many different levels. For instance, if we are holding back from saying how we feel, then our learning comes from speaking our truth, claiming our worth, and feeling the feelings that comes with this. If we are aware that we are bullying others, then our learning comes from grieving our old pain, apologizing to others, and offering kindness. In both situations, we gain new insights about ourselves, relationships and life as a whole. We birth a new level compassion, and an ability to better serve others who are in similar situations,.

A particular avenue of learning that we all will need to travel down is the understanding of where our judgment originates from, and the reintegration of our shadow. If you judge someone for being a “wimp”, for example, you do so because it represents a part of yourself you have come to judge. Perhaps as a child you needed to be strong; it was not safe to be weak or vulnerable. You therefore made the choice that it was bad to be weak, and you made a judgment about this part of yourself - “wimp”. By doing so, you disowned weakness and it became hidden in the shadows of your consciousness.

But what you resist within, you project outwardly. What you disown, you project onto others through judgment.

Learning happens when we reintegrate these shadow parts of ourselves, and stop projecting them onto others through judgment. Instead of pointing the finger at others, we point it at ourselves. We use those people we are judging simply as a mirror for our own self-judgment. This is personal responsibility and ownership.

When we understand that each part of our self has a gift to offer, reintegration is easier. A bit of weakness or wimpiness may in fact be good for us. It may support us to act with greater discretion. It may allow us to be less hard on ourselves and others. And we might just be less averse to feeling our own vulnerability, and welcoming in the vulnerability of others.

More than anything, by reintegrating the energy of weakness or wimpiness, we learn to love that part of ourselves again. That is what all learning is about ultimately. We reclaim our power through self-love. We love ourselves enough to speak our truth. We love

ourselves enough to say No. We love ourselves enough to be kind to others and ourselves. We love ourselves enough to be vulnerable, and to feel the full spectrum of feelings we felt when we were children.

Conflict is simply the vehicle for empowerment. It is the fire that illuminates, boils and burns away impediments to love; the fire we must all walk through over and over again if we are to fulfill the deeper purpose of relationships and live to our fullest potential.

\* \* \*

Afterthought: 5 Principles to Remember

Asking these two questions will be easier if we remember the following five principles:

Relationship systems thrive to the degree that each person commits to ongoing self-care and inner work.

Our outer world is but a reflection of our inner world.

We cannot change others. The change must happen from within.

Relationship systems serve a greater purpose – to heal, empower, and move us closer to love.

We can only love others to the degree that we love our Self.

***Vince Gowmon is the founder of Remembering to Play Events. He leads keynotes and playshops for organizations, conferences and communities on topics such as Leadership, Communication, Creativity, Community Engagement and Play. His events are fun and interactive, leaving people inspired and with practical tools for work and life.***

<http://www.vincegowmon.com/>

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We send out the snippets newsletter to all of our Coordinators to keep everyone connected.

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