



STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

COMMUNITY STROKE RECOVERY EDUCATION DAYS PROJECT 2013 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main question facing stroke survivors and caregivers after discharge from hospital is— “now what?” Not knowing where to go for help in the community, not knowing what is available and not knowing how to access programs is tremendously confusing and frustrating. Stroke survivors and family caregivers need relevant education and practical guidance on living life after stroke - from how to get through life one-handed and how to help a family member who can no longer speak to how to get the most from appointments with family doctors and specialists.

The Community Stroke Recovery Education Days project reached over 150 individuals affected by stroke, including stroke survivors, family caregivers and health care professionals. The Stroke Recovery Association of BC (SRABC) held four educational events in four different communities. Additionally, SRABC piloted the use of two webinars for stroke survivors and family caregivers in the Northern region of BC.

One of the most important sources of knowledge about how to cope with life after stroke is from stroke survivors themselves. Each education event began with an inspiring and moving personal story by a community member living with stroke. These speakers talked candidly about how a stroke turned their lives upside down; physically, emotionally and mentally, and yet each story conveyed a message of hope, strength and optimism; inspiring others to continue moving forward in their own recovery.

A group of highly skilled professionals including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, kinesiologist, recreation therapists, a gerontologist and speech language pathologist gave engaging and practical presentations on living life after stroke. Appendix A provides a list of presentations given in each community.

“Never Give Up” is something we heard over and over again from stroke survivors attending SRABC’s Community Stroke Recovery Education Days.

[Click here](#) to watch a powerful and inspirational promotional video on “Community Stroke Recovery Education Days”



“Just because I have a disability doesn’t mean my life is over. My life is still worth living”

~ Mr. B, White Rock, BC

This powerful message resonated with media and the publicity of Community Stroke Recovery Education Days exceeded our expectations. [Click here](#) to read the stories covered in the media.



“Recovery never ends and these [education events] give me and others hope”

~ Mr. S, Vancouver, BC

Attendance

- 2/3 of stroke survivors attending the events had their stroke within the last two years.
- The range in age of participants was as young as 20 all the way to 92 years old. The average age was 67 years old.
- Caregivers attending the events were more likely to be women
- Events held in larger cities had a higher attendance than in the smaller communities.

Key Findings

- Stories of stroke recovery are a powerful message as evidenced by 22 awareness raising media hits, which provided coverage of the events.
- 75% of all participants described the education events as uplifting with organized and knowledgeable presenters.
- Over half of participants felt an increased awareness on stroke recovery.
- Over 30% of participants listed SRABC as one of the most important resources in their long term recovery.

Recommendations

- SRABC needs to find ways of continuing and building upon the ground-breaking work of this pilot project by seeking funds to deliver further educational services including:
 - Discussion and analysis with key stakeholders, including the SRABC Professional Advisory Committee, in order to create a strategic plan for continuing to deliver this educational service throughout BC.
 - Research and identification of foundations, provincial and federal government departments, individuals and agencies that can be approached with proposals for continuation of this community health promotion and educational initiative.
 - Development of proposals to secure ongoing support and funding.
- Continue to explore a variety of mediums to delivery education including community events, videos and the use of web-based platforms.
- Develop and deliver additional “Guides to Recovering from a Stroke” based on participant feedback.
- Continue to provide “Guides to Recovering from a Stroke” in languages other than English and to look for further opportunities to have key information translated.
- Conduct an analysis of education needs and learning styles of younger stroke survivors and offer targeted educational activities.
- Continue to promote the key messages of stroke recovery:
 - There is life after stroke and for most, there is the opportunity for continued recovery
 - Stroke survivors and caregivers need tools, information, knowledge and practical ideas which promote stroke recovery for all phases of community reintegration
 - Stroke survivors who have recovered are vital role models for fellow survivors

“The only way to get what you need is to ask for it”.

Participants walked away armed with new information and tools to live the best possible life after stroke.

[Click here](#) to see the 4 “Guides to Recovering from a Stroke” developed and produced in English, Punjabi, Hindi and Chinese.



“Our communities have many resources for stroke survivors and families”.

~ Mrs. W, Kelowna, BC

The Community Stroke Recovery Education Days are a seminal event, which will pave the way for SRABC to help stroke survivors and caregivers to get the right information at the right time.



“I am not alone; there are many stroke survivors out there”

~ Mrs. M, Nanaimo, BC