



**STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

RECOVERING FROM A STROKE

**AN INTRODUCTION FOR STROKE
SURVIVORS, FAMILIES,
& CAREGIVERS**

In Affiliation With



STROKERECOVERYBC.CA

Stroke Recovery Association of BC

The Stroke Recovery Association of BC (SRABC) is a non-profit organization. We have been offering information and programs since 1979 for stroke survivors after they leave hospital. We are committed to assisting stroke survivors and their caregivers throughout the province to improve their overall quality of life. Our vision is that every stroke survivor in BC moves through recovery with hope and support to lead a full and rewarding life.

To learn more please visit srabc.ca

Our Message

There is Life After Stroke

After more than 35 years of helping stroke survivors and their caregivers in BC we have learned some vital lessons that we want to share with you:

Never give up hope and never stop trying. We have seen with our own eyes that being determined to get better makes a big difference. You may never fully recover but you can keep on improving.

There is life after stroke. Many stroke survivors go on to have successful and enjoyable lives. They learn to make the most of the abilities they have.

Support is very important. Family and friends play a huge role. The support of other stroke survivors and their understanding and encouragement really helps. Caregivers also need support.

You need to set goals. As long as you achieve some of them you are moving in the right direction. If you fail then break your goals down into smaller steps.

Never give up hope and never stop trying. We can't say that often enough.

We hope you find the information in this booklet useful. If you have further questions after reading, please contact us:

STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION OF BC

T. 604.688.3603

TF. 1.888.313.3377

E. office@strokerecoverybc.ca

W. srabc.ca

 [@StrokeRecovBC](https://twitter.com/StrokeRecovBC)

f [StrokeRecoveryBC](https://www.facebook.com/StrokeRecoveryBC)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----------------|
| RECOVERING FROM A STROKE | 2 |
| WHAT IS A STROKE | 2 |
| THE HUMAN BRAIN | 2 |
| UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN | 3 |
| PREVENTING ANOTHER STROKE | 4 |
| EFFECTS OF A STROKE | 6 |
| HOW TO JOIN A STROKE RECOVERY BRANCH | 6 |
| OTHER INFORMATION & RESOURCES | 7 – 8 |
| VISIT OUR WEBSITE | 8 |
| SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS | 8 |
| PRINTED RESOURCES | 8 |
| HOW TO DONATE | 9 |
| FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | 10 |
| STROKE RECOVERY BRANCHES | 11 – 12 |

RECOVERING FROM A STROKE

How well you recover from a stroke depends upon many factors, including how much and which parts of your brain were damaged, and your health before the stroke. Doctors can provide surgery, medication and other treatment. The work you do with your stroke rehabilitation team in the hospital, rehabilitation centre and in the community is very important to your recovery.

WE CAN HELP

Here are a few useful guidelines to help you get the most out of your rehabilitation:

- » **Rest:** Tiredness and fatigue are common after a stroke.
- » **Simplify:** Keep activities and information as simple as possible.
- » **Repetition:** Learning after stroke requires repetition of information and practice of skills.
- » **Structure:** A daily and weekly structure and routine are helpful.
- » **Consistency:** Do things the same way each time.
- » **Learn to Compensate:** You have to adapt and change from past ways of doing things. For example use a day-timer or calendar to help you to remember things.

7 STEPS TO STROKE RECOVERY

Step 1 | Exercise and Mobility

Walk, bike, garden – even dust. Physical activity can trigger changes in the brain that make up for lost function. Be consistent too so that it turns into a habit. It's best to do an activity once a day for a short period than a long block of activity once a week.

Step 2 | Communication and Language

Write down key words, draw pictures, point and make faces to communicate. Don't rush or pretend to understand either. Be patient with yourself. It'll get better.

Step 3 | Social Interaction

Enjoy family, friends and favourite activities, take up new interests and reclaim your social life! Connecting with people and passions provides a sense of purpose and self-worth.

Step 4 | Thinking, Memory and Perception

If you have trouble thinking, understanding and remembering then stick to a routine and keep activities simple. Also take notes and use a calendar to jog your memory. Little tactics like these can help you cope, as well as improve.

Step 5 | Support

A stroke can cause anxiety, hesitation, even mood changes. So get help from family and friends. Ask for what you need. Share your frustrations. Don't shut people out. You can also attend stroke support groups and recovery programs. Other survivors can relate to what you're going through. They can provide practical help, validation and hope.

Step 6 | Healthy Lifestyle

Improve your chances of recovery with healthy habits. Lose weight, cut down on cholesterol, quit smoking and reduce your alcohol intake. Limit your caffeine intake too. Little changes go a long way toward recovery.

Step 7 | Navigating the System

Get to know key organizations and resources. Check out facilities and programs that can help as you evolve. Learn how to use public transportation. Adjust your home. The more you do to make your life easier, the more energy you'll have to work on areas that train the brain.

WHAT IS A STROKE?

A stroke is a brain injury caused by:

- » Blood flow to the brain being blocked
- » A blood vessel bursting in the brain

When blood stops getting to your brain, the brain cells don't get the oxygen they need. Bleeding in the brain also damages brain cells.

Blockages and bleeding cause brain cells to stop working properly or to die.

THE HUMAN BRAIN

The brain is the most complicated organ in your body. It is a network of special cells that are constantly sending signals and messages from one part to another. It controls everything you do. It is responsible for your movements and helps you to walk and to keep your balance. It makes sure that you know where you are going, and that you don't get lost. It controls memory and awareness. It helps you to recognize and remember things, like who the members of your family are. It controls your senses, so you can hear and understand what others are saying to you. It helps you to see what is around you and to understand what you see. It controls your personality and how you behave. All of your thoughts, feelings and emotions come from your brain. It helps you to make decisions. It governs communication including your speech, reading and writing. It even controls life support

systems, like breathing and eating.

Your brain is divided into two halves called the right and left hemispheres and four different areas called lobes. Each of these parts is in charge of a different aspect of your functioning. It all depends on:

1. The part of your brain that is damaged
2. How serious the damage is

UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN

It helps to understand how the brain works if you think of it as the workforce of a company. The company runs at peak efficiency when all the parts are working.

Vice Presidents

Up at the front of the company (frontal and temporal lobes) there are several vice presidents. They make the plans for the company; they decide who's going to do what, and when. As things get underway, they get feedback or information as to how well it is going and they judge it - "that looks good or not so good"; and they make further decisions - "change that, keep this"; and show appreciation or annoyance. So, up at the front you have planning, organization, decision making, judgment and appreciation.

Managers

In the middle (parietal lobes) are the managers and each of the managers runs their own department. On the left side of the brain is a speech department (which moves the tongue, lips and throat muscles); a language department (finds the words you want, know what the words mean) and a motor department (moves the right arm and right leg). On the right side is another motor department (moves the left arm and left leg); and a spatial reasoning department - (allows you to find your way around a building, know where you are when driving a car, right down to the basics such as getting your arm through a sleeve). Also over there is a music department and a few incidentals. In a very simplified view, the right side is the picture side and the left side is the talking side.

The managers know what the plan is from the vice presidents, and they make sure it gets carried out. In order to do this, they communicate frequently with one another and with the vice presidents, sending messages back and forth.

Workers

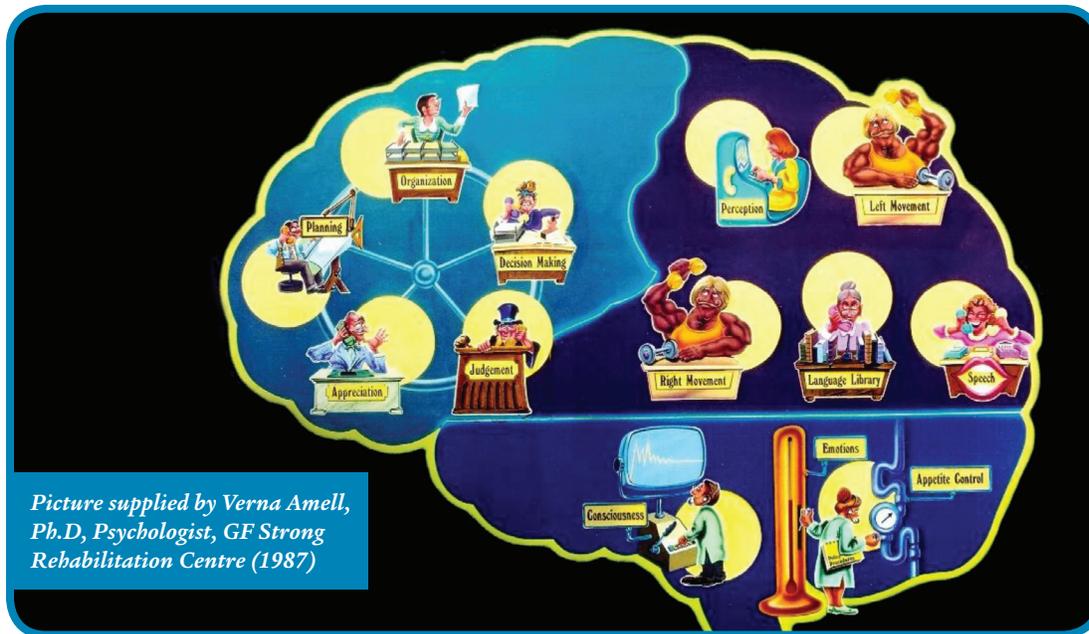
At the bottom, (limbic region, amygdala, basal ganglia) are the workers. They don't know what the plan is from the vice presidents, but they know their job and they do the same job day in and day out - things like appetite control, need for water, staying alert and awake or going to sleep, and basic emotions (turn on the tears, make the face red, increase the pulse rate).

Getting Fired

In a brain injury, someone 'gets fired'. It can be a vice president, a manager or a worker, depending on the injury. You can also have someone go on a leave of absence. That occurs when there is a temporary swelling or loss of blood supply, that recovers in a short time. The result of the injury is to reduce the efficiency of the company. Messages get sent but aren't picked up. The vice presidents

get annoyed; the managers get fatigued; and the emotional workers get overwrought. Confusion reigns. A primary purpose of rehabilitation is to find out who got fired and who is still on the job, so messages can be re-routed and the company can become more and more efficient again.

-Verna Amell, Ph.D, Psychologist, GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre (1987)



PREVENTING ANOTHER STROKE

People who have had a stroke have a greater chance of having another one, especially during the first year following the first stroke.

There are several things you have some control over that can help you avoid another stroke, including:

- » Reducing cholesterol
- » Losing weight
- » Getting regular exercise that increases your breathing and your heartbeat
- » Limiting your intake of caffeine, animal fats, sugars, and processed foods
- » Eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and high-fibre foods
- » Quitting the use of tobacco products
- » Limiting your alcohol consumption
- » Reducing your stress level
- » Avoiding use of certain illegal drugs, such as cocaine

EFFECTS OF A STROKE

Effects of a stroke can include the following. Remember that every stroke and every person is different.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS

- » Part or all of one side of the body is paralyzed
- » Loss of feeling or numbness in part or all of one side of the body
- » Loss of awareness of part or all of one side of the body
- » Problems with movement, which can affect walking, sitting, bathing, using the toilet, dressing etc.
- » Pain
- » Fatigue
- » Loss of vision

COGNITIVE EFFECTS

These effects involve things like thinking, understanding and learning:

- » Loss of ability to recognize familiar objects or understand their use
- » Difficulty judging distances, shapes and directions
- » Difficulty remembering things
- » Difficulty learning new information
- » Slow, cautious behavior
- » Problems planning, organizing and starting tasks
- » Problems recognizing current abilities and limitations
- » Problems with body image

COMMUNICATION EFFECTS

- » Inability to use or understand words (aphasia)
- » Loss of writing abilities
- » Slurred speech
- » Difficulty in absorbing information

EMOTIONAL EFFECTS

- » Loss of emotional control (e.g. crying easily – sometimes for no apparent reason)
- » Depression
- » Anxiety
- » Anger
- » Frustration
- » Loss of self esteem

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS

- » Awkwardness
- » Inappropriate behavior
- » Isolation
- » Family breakdowns
- » Loss of privacy
- » Change in roles
- » Challenges with relationships
- » Work and career issues
- » Financial concerns

STROKE RECOVERY PROGRAMS

HOW TO JOIN A STROKE RECOVERY PROGRAM

We offer a range of programs designed to support stroke survivors in the community after they leave hospital.

STROKE RECOVERY BRANCHES

SRABC has around 30 local Stroke Recovery Branches across the province. There is a list of our Branches on pages 12-13 of this booklet. Branches provide a friendly place where stroke survivors, families, friends, and caregivers can get encouragement, help, and support. Branches range in size from approximately 10 to 65 members. The programs on offer vary depending on the resources available. Most include:

1. Physical exercises
2. Communication and memory exercises
3. Social interaction and recreation
4. Support from fellow stroke survivors
5. Caregiver support
6. Stroke recovery education
7. Help finding other health and community resources

OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

We also offer other programs and services such as walking programs, education sessions and resources in Chinese, Hindi and Punjabi.

To get the latest information about what we do and how we can help you please contact the Provincial Office:

T. 604.688.3603 **TF.** 1.888.313.3377
F. 604.688.3660 **E.** office@strokerecoverybc.ca

srabc.ca

OTHER INFORMATION & RESOURCES

GF STRONG REHABILITATION CENTRE

Offers regular community education sessions throughout BC called Understanding Stroke and Building Community Connections. If you can't attend one they can send you the information by email, fax or through the mail.

T. 604-737-6269

RESOURCES FROM HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION

Heart and Stroke Foundation is developing programming that will enhance support to survivors and family members/care partners. Initiatives include:

1.800.473.4636 Information Line

Trained volunteers are available on weekdays to answer your questions about heart disease and stroke, recovery, community resources and your ability to reduce the risk of a second event through increasing physical exercise, eat a balanced diet, don't smoke, lower alcohol intake and reduce stress.

Living with Stroke Program

This 6-8 week program will be provided by trained volunteer facilitators in your community. The program will help survivors and family members cope with the changes as a result of stroke and problem solve to meet their own individual needs. It will provide a social and supportive program to empower and allow for learning from and with others in stroke recovery.

To find a program near you and register call 1.800 Information Line

T. **613-562-5800 EXT. 8593** | E. INFO@CANADIANSTROKENETWORK.CA

FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT LINE

T. **1-877-520-3267** | E. CAREGIVERSUPPORT@FCNS.CA

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Learn how to recover from stroke and take back your life. Find expert advice, guides, videos, community group programs designed for stroke survivor in BC, and best of all – hope. SRABC's website is at www.srabca.ca

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

We post useful information on stroke recovery here. Please take a look at the links, 'like' us, 'follow' us and let us know your ideas.

Facebook: facebook.com/StrokeRecoveryBC

Twitter: @StrokeRecovBC

PRINTED RESOURCES

SRABC GUIDES TO RECOVERING FROM A STROKE:

Most titles are available in English, Chinese, Punjabi and Hindi. It is noted when they are not. Please email office@strokerecoverybc.ca or visit our website for copies. The titles are:

Daily Living

This guide will help to answer questions about how to successfully return home and resume daily living after stroke.

Adjusting the Home after Stroke

This guide will help to answer two questions:
What can be done to make the home safe?
How can the home be set up to help recovery?

Self-Advocacy

This guide will help to answer questions about how to get what you need after a stroke, whether you are a caregiver or a stroke survivor.

Getting Back into the Community

This guide will help to answer questions about how to get back into the community after a stroke.

Understanding Aphasia

This guide will help to answer questions about speech and language problems after a stroke. (English and Chinese Only)

7 Steps to Stroke Recovery

This guide describes the brain's ability to adapt to your new needs (neuroplasticity). The guide follows up with steps to meet your goals. Each step includes options to suit your stage of recovery. (English Only)

Exercise & Mobility

Can you exercise after a stroke? Yes! This guide helps you get started with exercise and improve your mobility after a stroke. It covers goal setting, injury prevention and making choices that are right for you.

TAKE CARE: A HANDBOOK FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

This handbook talks about the problems and rewards that come from caring for an adult with a chronic illness or disability. The aim is to give caregivers information and ideas about how to cope. It is available in English and Traditional and Simplified Chinese. There are copies on the SRABC website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/px8gvrd>

HOW TO DONATE

Having a stroke is devastating. One minute you are a fully functioning person, the next, you can't think, can't speak, can't feel and can hardly move. There are 6,500 strokes in BC every year.

Hospitals do a great job of saving people who survive a stroke but sooner or later those survivors go back home. What then?

When you decide to donate to Stroke Recovery Association of BC, you help build a world where every stroke survivor has respect, inclusion, and support in their home community. Please help to bring stroke survivors in BC back to life by making a donation today.

There are 2 ways to DONATE

1. By Cheque: Cheques payable to Stroke Recovery Association of BC can be mailed to us at: 301-1212 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V6H 3V1
2. Online via PayPal at strokerecoverybc.ca If you have any questions about donating to SRABC, please contact us.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ARE STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION OF BC AND THE HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION THE SAME THING?

NO, we work together but are two different organizations. We do different things.

The Stroke Recovery Association of BC works with stroke survivors and their families and caregivers in local communities to improve the survivors' overall quality of life as they recover from a stroke.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO JOIN STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION OF BC?

If you want to be a voting member of the Association the annual fee is \$20.00. Contact us for more information. You do not need to join SRABC to attend one of our Branches, programs or events.

WHAT IF THERE IS NO STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION BRANCH IN MY COMMUNITY?

There may still be programs and services available. Talk to your doctor, rehabilitation therapist or social worker for information, or contact us.

STROKE RECOVERY BRANCHES

Please see our website for the most up to date list of Branches and contact information

» srabc.ca/programs-locations/all-branches/

» Contact the Provincial Office at 604-688-3603 or by Email at office@strokerecoverybc.ca

VANCOUVER COASTAL REGION

COLLINGWOOD (CHINESE LANGUAGE)

Strive Centre

#100 - 5055 Joyce Street, Vancouver

Mon. 10:00am - 1:00pm

SECHLT/SUNSHINE COAST

Sunshine Coast Lions Club Hall

Greenecourt Hall - 5810 Medusa Street, Sechelt

Fri. 9:30am - 12:00pm

RICHMOND (CHINESE LANGUAGE)

Thompson Community Centre *

5151 Granville Ave, Richmond

Wed. 10:00am - 1:00pm

RICHMOND STROKE RECOVERY CENTRE

South Arm Community Centre*

8880 Williams Rd\Garden City

Fri. 11:00am - 1:00pm

VANCOUVER DOUGLAS PARK

Douglas Park Community Centre

801 W. 22nd Avenue, Vancouver

Fri. 11:00pm - 2:30pm

VANCOUVER SHAUGHNESSY

Shaughnessy Heights United Church

1550 W. 33rd Avenue, Vancouver

Tue. 10:30am - 2:00pm

VANCOUVER STRATHCONA

Strathcona Community Centre

601 Keefer Street, Vancouver

Thu. 10:00am - 1:00pm

VANCOUVER TEMPLETON

Templeton Pool Activity Room

700 Templeton Drive, Vancouver

Tue. 10:00am - 1:30pm

POWELL RIVER

Lower Legion Hall

6811 Alexander Street, Powell River

Tuesdays: 9:00am - 1:00pm

FRASER REGION

ABBOTSFORD

Abbotsford Recreation Center

2499 McMillian Road, Abbotsford

Thu. 12:30pm - 3:30pm

BURNABY NORTH

Confederation House

4585 Albert Street, Burnaby

Wed. 10:00am - 1:00pm

BURNABY SOUTH

Edmonds Community Centre

7433 Edmonds Street, Burnaby

Fri. 10:00am - 1:00pm

CHILIWACK PROGRAM

Slesse Room, Evergreen Hall

9291 Corbould Street

Wed. 9:30am - 12:30pm

COQUITLAM

Dogwood Pavilion

1655 Winslow Avenue, Coquitlam

Fri. 10:30am - 2:00pm

MAPLE RIDGE/PITT MEADOW

Ridge Meadows Seniors Activity Centre

12150 224th Street, Maple Ridge

Fri. 10:15am - 1:15pm

PORT COQUITLAM

Wilson Centre

2150 Wilson Avenue, Port Coquitlam

Mon. 11:00am - 2:00pm

SURREY

St. Luke's Auditorium

10167 148th Street, Surrey

Thu. 10:00am - 12:30pm

DELTA

Tsawwassen United Church

693 53rd Street, Delta

Tue. 10:00am - 2:00pm

WHITE ROCK/SOUTH SURREY

Centre for Active Living

1475 Anderson Street, White Rock

Tue. 9:30am - 12:30pm

Thu. 9:30am - 12:30pm

INTERIOR REGION

KAMLOOPS

Elks Lodge

#102 1121 - 12 Street, Kamloops

Thu. (2nd - 4th) 10:00am - 1:00pm

KELOWNA

St. Aidan's Anglican Church

380 Leahhead Road, Kelowna

Thu. 11:00am - 2:00pm

SALMON ARM

St. Joseph's Church

90 1st Street S.E., Salmon Arm

Fri. (2nd - 4th) 10:30am - 1:30pm

TRAIL

Warfield Community Hall, Shutek Drive

1139 Pine Avenue, Trail

Thu. 10:00am - 1:00pm

VERNON

Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall

5101 25th Avenue, Vernon

Thu. 9:30am - 12:30pm

VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION

COMOX VALLEY

Comox Valley Head Injury Society

#102 - 254 Simms Street, Courtenay

Mon. (2nd & 4th) 10:00am - 12:00pm

COWICHAN VALLEY

Vancouver Island Regional Library

Multi-Purpose Room 2687 James Street, Duncan

Fri. 1:00pm - 3:00pm

NANAIMO

Bowen Park Complex

500 Bowen Road, Nanaimo

Fri. 10:45am - 2:00pm

NORTHERN REGION

PRINCE GEORGE

Elder Citizens' Recreation Association

1692 10th Avenue, Prince George

Wed. 9:00am - 11:30pm

VANDERHOOF

Stuart Nechako Manor

3297 Hospital Road, Vanderhoof

Mon. 9:30am - 12:00pm

NEXT STEPS MALL WALKING PROGRAMS

Next Steps is a fun, friendly walking group for stroke survivors throughout British Columbia that helps you set goals and stay motivated during recovery.

CAPILANO MALL

935 Marine Dr., North Vancouver

Fri 9:15am - 11:30 am

OAKRIDGE CENTRE

650 W 41st Ave, Vancouver

Thu 8:00 am - 9:30 am

KINGSGATE MALL

370 Broadway E, Vancouver

Mon 9:00 am - 10:30 am

TSAWWASSEN MILLS

5000 Canoe Pass Way, Delta

Wed 9:30 am - 11:00 am



STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

In Affiliation With



The Stroke Recovery Association of BC gratefully acknowledges the support of our partners:

**Province of British Columbia
Provincial Health Services Authority**



*We acknowledge the financial support
of the Province of British Columbia*