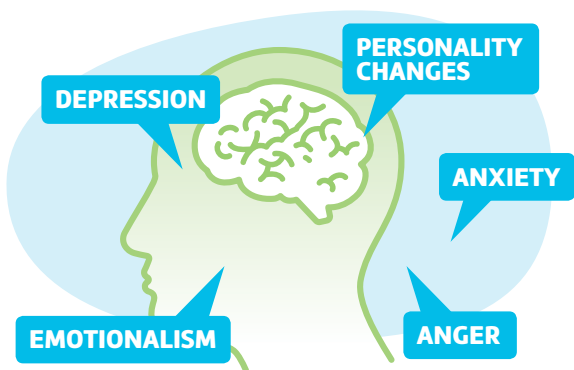


Emotional Changes after a Stroke

How does stroke cause emotional changes?

Emotions may be hard to control, especially right after a stroke. Some changes are a result of the actual injury and chemical changes to the brain caused by the stroke. Others are a normal reaction to the challenges, fears and frustrations that one may feel trying to deal with the effects of the stroke.

Often, talking about the effects of the stroke and acknowledging these feelings helps stroke survivors deal with these emotions.



Common emotional changes after stroke

Pseudobulbar Affect, also called “emotional lability,” “reflex crying” or “labile mood,” can cause:

- ✓ Rapid mood changes — a person may “spill over into tears” for no obvious reason and then quickly stop crying or start laughing.
- ✓ Crying or laughing that doesn’t match a person’s mood.
- ✓ Crying or laughing at unusual times or that lasts longer than seems appropriate.

Post-stroke depression is characterized by:

- ✓ Feelings of sadness
- ✓ Hopelessness or helplessness
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Changes in eating, sleeping and thinking

Other common emotional reactions:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Frustration | Apathy/not caring what happens |
| Lack of motivation | Anxiety |
| Anger | Depression or sadness |

How can I cope with my changing emotions?

- ✓ Tell yourself that your feelings aren't "good" or "bad." Let yourself cope without feeling guilty about your emotions.
- ✓ Find people who understand what you're feeling. Ask about a support group.
- ✓ Get enough exercise and do enjoyable activities.
- ✓ Give yourself credit for the progress you've made. Celebrate the large and small gains.
- ✓ Learn to "talk" to yourself in a positive way. Allow yourself to make mistakes.
- ✓ Ask your doctor for help. Ask for a referral to a mental health specialist for psychological counseling and/or medication if needed.
- ✓ Stroke may cause you to tire more easily. Rest when you feel fatigued.
- ✓ Make sure you get enough sleep. Sometimes lack of sleep can cause emotional changes and cause you not to cope as well.

TREATMENT FOR POST-STROKE DEPRESSION



If not treated, depression can be an obstacle to a survivor's recovery. Don't hesitate to take antidepressant medications prescribed by your doctor.



For more Stroke and General Health Information please scan the QR codes

