

COMMUNICATION GUIDE FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Two patient-directed resources which can be used to support these discussions are [Your Stroke Journey](#) and the [Patient Journey Map](#). See column titled PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE.

FREQUENLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE FOR PATIENTS/CAREGIVERS	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
Why am I being moved to rehabilitation so quickly?	Moving to a unit or hospital that provides specialized rehabilitation as soon as you are medically ready after your stroke will help you to achieve the best possible recovery. In a rehabilitation hospital or unit, you will be receiving care from a team of rehabilitation professionals who are stroke recovery experts. These experts will help you to gain as much independence as possible. They will work with you to help recover and improve your ability to move or walk, use your arms, think, and/or speak.	Your Stroke Journey Pages 25-30	All patients with stroke should receive rehabilitation therapy as early as possible once they are medically stable and able to participate in active rehabilitation. ¹	Acute care stroke team. Any team member discussing transition to rehab.	For patients families anxious re transfer from KHSC to PCH or BrGH to PSFDH. May adapt last statement to reflect the patient’s most important goals that have been identified for rehab.
Why do I have to go to another unit?	Rehabilitation units provide specialized care to support the best recovery after a stroke. They have staff, equipment and facilities dedicated to this part of your recovery that are not available in acute care.	Your Stroke Journey Pages 25-30	All people who require inpatient rehabilitation following stroke should be treated on a specialized stroke rehabilitation unit. ²	Acute care stroke team	For patients transitioning from one facility to another (KHSC to PCH or BrGH to PSFDH)

¹ Robert Teasell (First Author), Nancy M Salbach (Co-First Author) et al. Rehabilitation and Recovery Following Stroke. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations, 2019; Ottawa, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 3 i

² Robert Teasell (First Author), Nancy M Salbach (Co-First Author) et al. Rehabilitation and Recovery Following Stroke. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations, 2019; Ottawa, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 2.1 i

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
Why do I have so many people coming into my home?	<p>An interprofessional team approach will help you to achieve the best recovery. Interprofessional means that the team is made up of different health care providers who can best meet your needs. This may include occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, social workers, nurses and personal support workers. Each provider has expertise in a specific area of stroke care and they work as a team to support your recovery.</p> <p><i>Note: Can include reason for each provider (e.g. the Speech Language Pathologist will help you with your communication needs and the Physiotherapist will help with your mobility).</i></p>	Your Stroke Journey Pages 25-30	Outpatient and/or in-home rehabilitation services should include the same elements as coordinated inpatient rehabilitation services. ³	HCC Coordinators In-Home rehab providers	Usually within first weeks after discharge home when patient and family are feeling particularly overwhelmed with this transition.
Why do I have to have so much therapy right away?	<p>Research tells us that patients who receive early and intense therapy achieve the best recovery. It is the best time to help your brain re-learn how to do things. It can be very tiring but it does result in the best outcomes.</p>	Your Stroke Journey Pages 25-30	(Rehab) services should ideally begin within 48 hours of discharge from an acute hospital or within 72 hours of discharge from inpatient rehabilitation. ⁴	HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers	Usually within first weeks after discharge home when patient and family are feeling particularly overwhelmed with this transition.

³ Robert Teasell (First Author), Nancy M Salbach (Co-First Author) et al. Rehabilitation and Recovery Following Stroke. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations, 2019; Ottawa, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 4.1 iv

⁴ Robert Teasell (First Author), Nancy M Salbach (Co-First Author) et al. Rehabilitation and Recovery Following Stroke. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations, 2019; Ottawa, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation 4.1 iia

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
Will I continue to recover?	<p>Each person is different and each stroke is different so everyone recovers differently. When reviewing the rehabilitative process, it is important to recognize that the stroke recovery journey is unique for every individual. It has been well established that rehabilitation should be started as early as possible, following a stroke. This can be viewed as a jump start initiative. For many patients, following this jump start initiative, there will be further gains of various degrees noted over the next several months or years. These gains usually occur at a much slower pace. It is also important to note that ongoing maintenance of previous gains is also critical and requires a maintenance program which is usually a combination of community and self-directed programs.</p>	Your Stroke Journey Pages 25-30		HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers	May be used throughout the recovery journey.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
<p>What does a social worker do?</p>	<p>A social worker provides support to patients and their families on their journey of recovery in whatever way they want and however they need help. They assist in a variety of areas, including counselling, discharge planning, crisis management, housing, access to services, referrals to the community, legal matters, addictions, career counselling and advocacy.</p> <p>Whether you have just one visit and get information on what to watch for with space to ask questions or if you need ongoing support with coping and/or system navigation, the social worker would be honored to be with you on your recovery journey.</p>	<p>Your Stroke Journey Page 20 Pages 60-63 Pages 72-76 Pages 96-98 Pages 102-106</p>	<p>People with stroke, their families and caregivers, should be screened for their level of coping, risk for depression, and other physical and psychological issues.⁵</p> <p>Consider assessment of the following issues as they relate to a family member’s or caregiver’s ability to care for the person with stroke: ...Resource issues such as financial situation, housing, transportation, insurance, healthcare benefits, medication cost coverage; Support from other family members, relatives and social networks...⁶</p>	<p>HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.</p>	<p>May be used throughout the recovery journey. It is recommended that a referral to social work be offered at different point in the recovery journey. The patient/family response to/ interest in a SW referral may vary over time.</p>

⁵ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation.. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 1.1 i

⁶ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation.. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 1.1 ii

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
How can a social worker help in my recovery?	The social worker can provide support with unpacking how you have been impacted by your stroke and can provide knowledge about what can be common after stroke. The social worker can also support you and your loved one(s) as you navigate the health care system. They can help inform and guide you towards a safe and appropriate discharge. They can work with you and your family to create a plan that supports your return to the community. They can help you adjust to your new normal, provide counselling for coping if you are feeling sad, depressed, confused, anxious, angry or scared and can connect you to services in the community.	Your Stroke Journey Page 20 Pages 60-63 Pages 72-76 Pages 96-98 Pages 102-106	People with stroke, their families and caregivers, should be screened for their level of coping, risk for depression, and other physical and psychological issues. ⁷ Consider assessment of the following issues as they relate to a family member's or caregiver's ability to care for the person with stroke: ...Resource issues such as financial situation, housing, transportation, insurance, healthcare benefits, medication cost coverage; Support from other family members, relatives and social networks... ⁸	HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.	May be used throughout the recovery journey. It is recommended that a referral to social work be offered at different point in the recovery journey. The patient/family response to a SW referral may vary over time.

⁷ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation.. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 1.1 i

⁸ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 1.1 ii

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
<p>Why am I ending sessions with my community rehab team?</p>	<p>Research tells us that once discharged home, patients should receive more intensive rehab for up to 12 weeks for the best recovery. How often and how long you receive rehab in the community depends on your individual situation. You may not need therapy for a full 12 weeks or you may continue to receive therapy after 12 weeks. Therapy may be provided in your home or in an outpatient setting. Once therapy has been completed, you can continue your recovery with activities and exercises you can do more independently. Your therapist will help you learn these activities before you are discharged and may also connect you with a community exercise program.</p>	<p>Your Stroke Journey Page 30</p>	<p>Patients should receive 2 -3 visits/week of OT, PT and SLP for 8 to 12 weeks⁹.</p>	<p>HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers</p>	<p>Prior to discharge from the Community Stroke Rehab Program or OP.</p>

⁹ Health Quality Ontario; Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Quality-Based procedures: Clinical handbook for Stroke (Acute and Postacute). Toronto: Health Quality Ontario; 2015 February. 9.5, 9.6, 9.7

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
<p>Are there other rehabilitation options available after this 12-week community rehab program I am currently receiving? If so, what are they?</p>	<p>Yes, in some cases you may access continued therapy such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy and social work through Home & Community Care. If you do not qualify for additional services through Home and Community Care, you can also access private therapy services however there will be a cost. You may want to check with your insurance provider about your coverage. You can find a listing of therapy providers in your area through the Healthline at www.thehealthline.ca When accessing private therapy services, be sure to ask for therapists who have stroke expertise.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>At any point in their recovery, people with stroke who have experienced a change in functional status and who would benefit from additional rehabilitation services should be offered a further period of outpatient rehabilitation if they meet the requirements¹⁰</p>	<p>HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers</p>	<p>Prior to discharge from the Community Stroke Rehab Program or OP.</p>
<p>How can I ensure that my current exercise program is continuing to meet my needs? For example, you notice an improvement or decline in your abilities.</p>	<p>Later in the stroke recovery journey, patients may need a re-evaluation or 'tune up' from a physiotherapist. Your family doctor or nurse practitioner can refer you to the best setting for your specific needs. This may be an outpatient setting or in your own home. You can also self-refer to Home & Community Care for this physiotherapy service.</p>				

¹⁰Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation 4.1 v

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
<p>Can I return again to rehabilitation services in the future? If so, how?</p>	<p>You may be eligible again in the future to resume therapy services through Home & Community Care or outpatient services if your needs change. For instance, you may experience an increase or a decrease in function. You can call Home & Community Care at 310-2222 or your local outpatient department. Perth Smiths Falls District Hospital (613- 267-1500, Ext. 2127) and Quinte Healthcare (Belleville) (613-969-7400) have outpatient rehab. Providence Care Hospital – Physiotherapy (613-544-4900 Ext. 53231). If you do not qualify for these services, you can also access private therapy services however there will be a cost. You may want to check with your insurance provider about your coverage. You can find a listing of therapy providers in your area through the Healthline at www.thehealthline.ca When accessing private therapy services, be sure to ask for therapists who have stroke expertise.</p>	<p>Your Stroke Journey Page 28</p>	<p>At any point in their recovery, people with stroke who have experienced a change in functional status and who would benefit from additional rehabilitation services should be offered a further period of outpatient rehabilitation if they meet the requirements¹¹</p>	<p>HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers</p>	<p>Prior to discharge from the Community Stroke Rehab Program or OP.</p>

¹¹ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation 4.1 v

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
How can joining a community exercise group help in my recovery?	Continuing to stay active helps to ensure that you maintain the gains you made with rehab and can help to prevent a second stroke. Your physiotherapist can help you select an exercise program that would be right for you. Your physiotherapist can also help you fill out application forms. Your physiotherapist may also accompany you to your first exercise class or connect with the class instructor (with your permission) to make sure your needs will be safely met.	Your Stroke Journey Page 39 Pages 92-94	People with stroke should be encouraged to participate in evidence-based community exercise programs as appropriate. ¹²	HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers	Prior to discharge from the Community Stroke Rehab Program and at any time throughout the stroke recovery. Note that a PT visit can be used to accompany the patient to their initial class session. Note that information on available stroke-specific exercise programs can be found on the stroke network website https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports
Is there a cost to participate in an exercise program?	There is no cost to participate in the stroke-specific exercise programs in the southeast. Programs that are not stroke-specific (such as <i>Revved Up</i> in Kingston) may require a fee. Check with your physiotherapist to make sure that these programs would be suitable for you. If a program is not available in your area, your physiotherapist can provide you with information on virtual exercise programs and can help you with a home exercise program.	N/A	N/A	HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers	Prior to discharge from the Community Stroke Rehab Program and at any time throughout the stroke recovery. Note that information on available stroke-specific exercise programs can be found on the stroke network website https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports

¹² Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke Foundation. 4.2 iii

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
Is there an exercise program close to me?	Your physiotherapist or other healthcare provider can help you find a program near you that would meet your needs. If a program is not available in your area, your physiotherapist or other healthcare provider can provide you with information on virtual exercise programs and can help you with a home exercise program.	N/A	N/A	HCC Coordinators In-home rehab providers OP rehab providers	Prior to discharge from the Community Stroke Rehab Program and at any time throughout the stroke recovery. Note that information on available stroke-specific exercise programs can be found on the stroke network website https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports
What are the benefits of joining a support group?	Participating in a group will provide you with the opportunity to meet others who are also living with the effects of a stroke. You can learn about stroke recovery, share tips on how to adjust to daily life tasks and routines, make social connections, understand and share personal experiences and learn about community resources. Each group is led by an experienced professional who can help you connect with supports and services.	Your Stroke Journey Pages 60-63	People with stroke, their families and caregivers should be provided with information about peer support groups in their community where available, descriptions of the services and benefits they offer, and be encouraged to consider participation. ¹³	HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.	At any time prior to discharge and throughout recovery. You can find a listing of support groups in the southeast on the stroke network website under Community Supports https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports Note that your patient may have access to an inpatient peer visiting program. Check with your team leader

¹³ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke. 1.2 iii

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
What support groups are available?	Supports groups are available across the southeast including Kingston, Napanee, Trenton, Sydenham, Belleville, Picton, Brockville and Perth. Support groups may include groups that are specific to stroke survivors, younger stroke survivors, caregivers, adults with aphasia and others. Groups may be provided virtually or in person. Support groups continue to expand so check the Community Supports page of the Stroke Network website at https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports and call the number for your local support group on the flyer to get connected.	Your Stroke Journey Pages 60-63	People with stroke, their families and caregivers should be provided with information about peer support groups in their community where available, descriptions of the services and benefits they offer, and be encouraged to consider participation. ¹⁴	HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.	At any time prior to discharge and throughout recovery. You can find a listing of support groups in the southeast on the stroke network website under Community Supports https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports Note that your patient may have access to an inpatient peer visiting program. Check with your team leader
Are support groups just for stroke survivors or can my family also attend?	Yes, family members, friends and other significant others are welcome to attend. In some areas, separate caregiver groups are offered. To find out the groups that are offered in your area, check on the Community Supports page of the Stroke Network website at https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports and call the number for your local support group on the flyer to get connected.	See above	See above	HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.	At any time prior to discharge and throughout recovery. You can find a listing of support groups in the southeast on the stroke network website under Community Supports https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports Note that your patient may have access to an inpatient peer visiting program. Check with your team leader

¹⁴ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke. 1.2 iii

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
<p>How do I connect with a support group close to me?</p>	<p>To find out the groups that are offered in your area, check the Community Supports page of the Stroke Network website at https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports and call the number for your local support group on the flyer to get connected. Once you have expressed an interest in joining a support group, the group leader will be in touch to share more information about the group.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.</p>	<p>At any time prior to discharge and throughout recovery. You can find a listing of support groups in the southeast on the stroke network website under Community Supports https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports Note that your patient may have access to an inpatient peer visiting program. Check with your team leader.</p>
<p>Is there a cost to attend?</p>	<p>No, all groups are free and, if you need assistance with transportation or respite, the group leader will be able to provide you with that information.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.</p>	<p>At any time prior to discharge and throughout recovery. You can find a listing of support groups in the southeast on the stroke network website under Community Supports https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports Note that your patient may have access to an inpatient peer visiting program. Check with your team leader.</p>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION	RESPONSE	PATIENT/FAMILY REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER REFERENCE	HEALTHCARE PROVIDER USER	WHEN TO USE
Are there any groups that can help me with my aphasia/communication?	Yes, there are different groups and services that can help you if you are experiencing aphasia including Aphasia Supportive Conversation Groups that are led by a Speech-Language Pathologist. These are free services and you can find out what is available in your area by checking the Community Supports page on the Stroke Network website at https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports and call the local number for the aphasia services in your area.				
Who do I contact if I have questions about other community resources?	If you are in hospital or are receiving in-home services, you can speak to anyone on your care team. If you are in the community, you can call Home & Community Care at 310-2222, check out the www.thehealthline.ca or the Community Supports page of the Stroke Network website at https://www.strokenetworkseo.ca/community-supports . If you are attending a stroke support group, you can ask the group leader.	Your Stroke Journey Pages 26-28	People with stroke, their families, and caregivers should be provided with information, education, training, support and access to services throughout transitions to the community to optimize the return to life roles, activities and social participation. ¹⁵	HCC Coordinators Acute, rehab and in-home providers.	At any time prior to discharge and throughout recovery. Listings of community resources can be found on the Healthline at www.thehealthline.ca or the Community Supports page of the Stroke Network website at www.strokenetworkseo.ca or by calling 211. Home & Community Care would also be able to provide information on available community resources.

¹⁵ Anita Mountain (First Author) et al, Transitions and Community Participation. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations Sixth Edition, 2019; Toronto, Ontario Canada: Heart and Stroke. 4.0