Activity Gives Meaning to Life

Did You Know?

- Physical and cognitive (thinking) impairments caused by a stroke can make it challenging to have a satisfying and balanced lifestyle.
- Without meaningful activities, hobbies and pastimes, days can feel long and empty resulting in social isolation and depression.

“I used to be an outgoing person. After my stroke I withdrew and didn’t go out or talk to people as much.”

Why participating in activities can be challenging after a stroke:

- Physical weakness
- Lack of confidence
- Depression and or anxiety
- Aphasia (difficulty communicating)
- Decreased mobility
- Difficulty initiating activities
- Difficulty thinking and understanding (cognition)
- Difficulty understanding the environment (perception)
- Memory problems
- Activities not adapted
- Changed living situation
- Feeling worthless or helpless
- Unaware of community resources
- Unsure of leisure interests
- Limited finances
- Lack of transportation
Engaging in meaningful leisure activities after stroke is essential for mental, physical, and emotional recovery. Meaningful activities provide enjoyment and a sense of purpose.

Did You Know That Taking Part In Leisure Activities:

- Creates opportunities for meeting new people
- Improves self-confidence
- Aids in adjustment to a disability
- Reduces depression and improves mood
- Supports connections to the community
- Enhances quality of life

"After rehab I was not done, I was just beginning my life again”

The “Meaning” in Meaningful Activities
Leisure activities help to structure the day in a productive and therapeutic way. Participation helps to maximize and maintain function at home and in the community.

Meaningful activities meet the individual’s need for:

- Social contact, conversation and companionship
- Physical fitness
- A sense of control
- A feeling of accomplishment and mastery
- Creative expression
- Stress relief, relaxation, and….FUN!!!
What You Can Do To Help

Ask the following questions....

- What do you like to do...what makes you smile?
- Where do you like to do your favorite activities?
- Do you prefer daytime or nighttime activities?
- Who do you enjoy doing things with?
- What makes it hard to do your favorite activities now?
- How can I help you to prepare for and participate in activities?
- Last week you participated in ______(e.g. card games). Did you enjoy yourself?

Talk with the individual, family and other caregivers to find out more about the individual’s interests

What you can do to help ....

- Assist with choosing meaningful activities
- Encourage a return to activities previously enjoyed
- Ensure the individual is prepared to participate in the activity (e.g., hearing aids, glasses, mobility devices, etc.)
- Have necessary assistive devices ready (e.g., card holder)
- Find others with similar interests
- Support activity initiation. Remember that initiation for a stroke survivor can be difficult.

Get to know the person, their abilities and interests. This is key to developing a successful relationship. You can make the difference.


STROKE NETWORK of Southeastern Ontario

“Going to activities helps me to talk more and participate. It opens the world up”