

# CHANGES TO EMOTIONS AND MOOD

**DEPRESSION IS A COMMON FACTOR AFTER STROKE.**  
IT CAN AFFECT YOUR FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, AND BEHAVIOURS.



Approximately 1/3 to 2/3 of stroke survivors will experience depression.



Depression can occur weeks, months, or years after stroke. It can impact your recovery and quality of life, and is also a risk factor for future stroke.

UNDERSTAND THAT **RECOVERY TAKES TIME**, AND THAT FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION ARE A NATURAL PART OF THE GRIEVING PROCESS. **BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF.**

Stroke recovery can be a highly emotional and stressful time for both survivors and care supporters. There can be a range of changes to emotions and mood post-stroke.

## PHYSICAL SIGNS:



Changes in sleep; sleeping more or less



Changes in appetite; weight gain or loss



Low energy, feeling extremely tired



Feeling restless, or irritable



Chronic pain, headaches, or stomach problems



Withdrawing from others

## EMOTIONAL SIGNS:



Feelings of grief, sadness, anger, hopelessness or worthlessness



Difficulty coping or controlling your emotions



Feeling anxious or easily overwhelmed



Problems with remembering and/or making decisions



Significant loss of interest in activities once enjoyed



Emotional lability: an expression of strong emotion that happens often and is unexpected or uncontrollable (i.e. laughing or crying)

## WHAT YOU CAN DO



Try to **engage in exercise** and activities that you enjoy.



**Eat well,** limit alcohol.



Find a positive social and/or **peer support network.**



**Discuss changes to your emotions and mood** with your health care providers.



Maintain open and honest communication with your loved ones; **talk about your feelings and express your emotions.**



**Learn relaxation skills;** practice deep breathing, mindfulness, meditation, visualization.



Remember, depression is a medical illness that is **TREATABLE.**



Treatment can include connecting with a mental health professional, and/or taking medication.

**For more information, talk to your health care providers.**

**THOUGHTS OF DEATH OR SUICIDE:  
CALL 911 (or a mental health helpline) immediately.**