

# Caring for a relative with a stroke

'Carers play a vital but often underappreciated role and it can be very demanding, especially if you suddenly find yourself in the role. It may mean you have to be emotionally and physically strong when you feel least able.' **Stroke Association**

A carer has to try to learn quickly how to support someone with a stroke. There is often a need to change lifestyle and activities. It is no wonder that this can produce stress and conflict, and families struggle to manage. Unfortunately there is no manual to tell you how to do it! It can be difficult for spouses, partners and children to get used to the changes.



Stroke can affect the whole family and other relationships;

- There is often more stress, worry, and new issues to manage
- Sometimes people behave differently after stroke and at times it may feel that their loved one is not the same person they knew before
- There may be changes in physical and emotional relationships
- Changes in abilities can mean a change in roles, responsibilities and burden sharing
- There may be changes to the home set up, and finances

Often Carers feel that they have to put their own needs to one side. Sometimes people don't like to even call themselves carers.

As a Carer it may help to;

- Establish a routine in your week and your day where possible
- Try to keep your mind in the present moment and take things one day at a time
- Ask for information and help when you need it
- **Accept** help when you need it and when it is offered
- Take a little time out to do your own thing, whether this is having a coffee with a friend, going for a walk or doing some gardening or a yoga class

To be able to care for someone, a carer needs to look after themselves as well!

**Morris, R et al 2017**

### **What you can do;**

- Talk to your Community Stroke Nurse, or Community Stroke Team, and they may be able to advise and sign post
- Register as a carer with your GP Surgery. Talk to your GP for more psychological support or counselling
- Talk to your employer if your situation is difficult. You may be able to have more flexible hours or time off
- Ask about a Carers Assessment. The assessment will look at how caring affects all aspects of your life. It is the opportunity to discuss with the local council what support or services you need. Your local Council, Northamptonshire Carers, Carers UK, and Carers Trust, can do your assessment. Be honest about how things are
- Consider joining a local Stroke group. Both you and your loved one can meet people going through similar things to you, share experiences, and gain valuable emotional support
- Read a copy of 'Stroke: A carers guide'. Obtainable from The Stroke Association, or ask your Community Stroke Team to get you a copy.
- Call The Stroke Association helpline. There is a family and carers support service. You can talk to someone who understands and find out what support is available near you

- Contact Northamptonshire Carers, for practical and emotional support
- Contact Different Strokes for peer support for younger families and people affected by stroke. Call the advice line on 0345 130 7172, or the Administration line on 01908 317618
- Consider some Respite care. This could be with family or friends or a care agency or local council. There is a directory which is available by calling Northamptonshire County Council on 0300 126 1000 then option 2, and asking for the Northamptonshire Care Service Directory which is a comprehensive guide to choosing and paying for care.
- Contact Age UK. (over 55's), for Carers support groups, Respite centres, sitting service, and arranging practical assistance around the home. Call the advice line on 0800 0556 1126, or Age UK Northamptonshire on 01604 611200
- Call Carers Direct on 0300 123 1053 or [www.nhs.uk/Carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/Carersdirect). For help managing your life, assessments, benefits, combining work or education with caring, individual budgets, or, time off
- The local Department of Work and Pensions can give advice on benefit entitlement. For Daventry, Northampton, Rushden, Corby and Kettering call 0800 169 0190. For Wellingborough call 0800 169 0310. The local Community Law office can help with filling out forms. For Northampton, Daventry, Corby and Kettering call 01604 621038. Rushden call 01933 313020. Wellingborough call 01933 278248
- For transport difficulties;
  - Wellingborough area-The Wellibus, on 01933 223636. Daventry Area-Community Transport DACT, on 01327 701665. Northampton- For non-emergency patient transport to medical appointments TASL, 0808 164 4617, or, the Northampton Volunteer Car Scheme, on 01604 628234. Rushden- SERVE, on 01933 315555. Kettering -Shire Community Services, on 01933 272735. Corby- Corby VCS car pool, on 01536 269482.

## Useful contacts:

Northamptonshire County Council; [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Daventry District Council; [www.daventrydc.gov.uk](http://www.daventrydc.gov.uk)

The Collaborative Care Team; 01604 635279

The Disability Resource Centre; Free service to help and empower disabled people, carers and families; 0300 3030203

Age UK for support if you care for a person with Dementia; 0800 6781174

Disability advice and Benefit support; 01582 470980

The centre for independent living; 01604 588501. Information and advice on disability and welfare for families

Emergency Carers Services Northamptonshire (Crossroads Care East Midlands) [www.emcrossroads.co.uk](http://www.emcrossroads.co.uk) or call 07810 104125 or 07789 111318 including a sitting and Befriending service. British Red Cross befriending service on 0345 0547171.

Northamptonshire Carers support line; 01933 677837 (including health and fitness for carers) or 01933 677907 for carers assessment

Alzheimer's Society; 01832 736670. Carers in Northamptonshire 01832 736676

Relate Northamptonshire giving relationship counselling; 01604 634400

Changing Minds (IAPT), for support with psychological and emotional issues. Self-referral 0300 9991616

MIND provide emotional support; Corby 01536 267280, Kettering 01536 523216, Daventry 01327 897416, Northampton 01604 634310, Wellingborough 01933 223591, Rushden 01933 312800. [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

The Stroke Association helpline; 0303 3033100 [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)

Carers UK, advice, support and information; 0207 3784999 [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Carers Trust East Midlands; 01455 560046 [hello@carerstrustem.org](mailto:hello@carerstrustem.org)