

# Meaningful Activity After Stroke

**Meaningful activities can provide enjoyment, a sense of purpose and define who a person is.** These activities may include engagement in leisure, social, cultural and/or spiritual activities. After a stroke, impairments can make it challenging for a person to engage in meaningful activities. Supporting persons with stroke to participate can help with their recovery and build a sense of belonging.

## What you should know

- An individual is more likely to participate in an activity if it is meaningful/interesting to them
- Without meaningful experiences, days can feel long and empty, which can lead to social isolation, loneliness and depression
- Meaningful activities can contribute to improved recovery, including physical fitness, mood and overall well-being

#### Engaging in meaningful experiences can provide opportunities for:

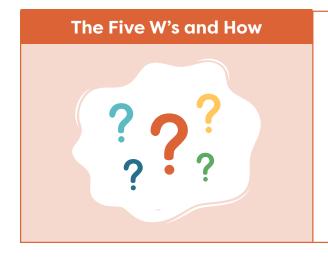
- socializing and meeting new people, leading to friendship and feeling they belong
- physical activity
- a sense of control over one's life
- a creative outlet
- stress relief

- a sense of accomplishment
- cultural experience
- improved self-confidence
- adjustment to a disability
- structuring a person's day
- enhanced quality of life



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### Smart Tips - Always follow the care plan!



#### Ask questions to determine meaningful activities:

- 1. Who do you like to do activities with?
- 2. What do you like to do?
- 3. Where do you like to do these activities?
- 4. When do you like to do these activities?
- 5. Why do you like to do these activities?
- 6. How do you do these activities?

#### How you can help



- Choose activities that are meaningful, enjoyable and important to the person; encourage participation
- Support the person with stroke to prepare for their activity - get any assistive devices ready (e.g. hearing aids, glasses, mobility device)
- Think of ways to modify the activity for successful participation (e.g. use card holders, encourage seated exercise, use large print bingo cards/playing cards)
- Find other individuals who have similar interests
- Use strategies to accommodate different levels of ability in communication, cognition, perception, vision, etc.
- Talk to family members, caregivers or friends about the person's interests
- Encourage family members, caregivers or friends to bring in some favourite items (e.g. music, books, games, word searches)
- Adjust food activities if the person with stroke has swallowing difficulties (i.e. dysphagia) to promote inclusion. Talk to a Registered Dietitian and/or Speech Language Pathologist if you have questions. (See Smart Tips for Stroke Care – Eating and Swallowing After Stroke)

## Seek extra support

 Occupational Therapists and Recreation Therapists are experts in supporting persons with stroke to engage in meaningful activities. It may be helpful to involve them in the person's care - especially if you notice the person is not participating or is becoming isolated