

Practical Strategies for Managing Anxiety & Frustration after Stroke:

Resources for Persons with Stroke and their Caregivers

The resources listed below provide information and strategies that can help with managing anxiety & frustration after stroke.

The first resource is the video [Practical Strategies for Managing Anxiety & Frustration after Stroke](#) (see below). Once you have watched this video, more information on this topic can be found by clicking on the links below. To access the links, click the underlined titles.

Video

- [Practical Strategies for Managing Anxiety and Frustration after Stroke](#)

Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation Canadian Partnership for Stroke Recovery

Supporting Resources

General Information

- [YourStrokeJourney: A Guide for People Living with Stroke](#)

This booklet provides information on stroke and its effects. It features tips and strategies to address challenges related to managing anxiety and frustration. Available to download or in hardcopy format.

Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

- [Depression](#)

This webpage provides stories of those who experience depression, signs of depression and where to get more support.

Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

January 2021

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- [Coping with Stress](#)

A document that includes information on stress and how to cope with it.

Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

- [Anxiety Canada](#)

This webpage promotes awareness of anxiety and offers resources and strategies to take active steps to take charge of your anxiety.

Source: Anxiety Canada

- [Your Life Counts](#)

This webpage offers a listing of mental health resources available in English and French

Source: Your Life Counts International

One to One Professional Counselling

- [BounceBack™ Program](#)

A free skill-building program designed from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to help adults and youth (15 years and over) manage symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association

Peer Support

- [Stroke Peer Support](#)

This webpage offers links to peer support groups.

Source: After Stroke, March of Dimes Canada

Mobile Apps

- [Mental Health App Library](#)

A list of apps for sleep, anxiety, depression, and relaxation.

Source: Scarborough Health Network

- Search the mobile app store on your smart phone or tablet to find free and available apps to help manage and reduce your stress and anxiety. Suggested search terms – stress, antistress, mindfulness, meditation.

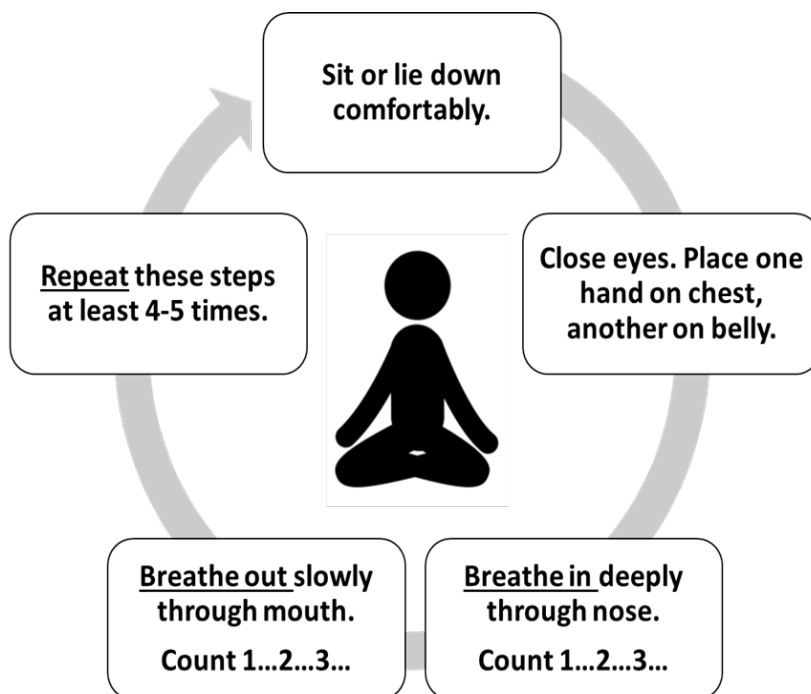
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Audio and Video Links

- The following is a list of audio tracks to help with mindfulness and relaxation.
 - [Calm breathing audio](#)
 - [Breathing bubble](#)
 - [Deep Breathing](#)
 - [Progressive muscle relaxation](#)

Deep Breathing



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Sensory Grounding

1. Sit comfortably in a quiet space.
2. Take several deep breaths.
3. Notice, say, or think of:



5 - things you **see**



4 - things you **hear**



3 - things you can **touch**



2 - things you **smell**



1 - thing you **taste**

Modify this exercise:

- For aphasia/word finding challenges: Visualize items in your mind instead of saying them. Look at them in the room.
- For vision challenges: Skip this step, **or** focus on what is directly in your field of view, **or** imagine objects in the room.
- For hearing challenges: Skip this step, **or** notice objects in the room that you know make a sound.
- For sensory tactile challenges/numbness: Skip this step, **or** use the unaffected side of your body to touch objects.
- For problems with taste/smell: Skip this step, **or** sip a cool glass of water/hot tea, and notice the temperature and feel.
- Skip any step that causes pain, discomfort, or frustration.

Quick Muscle Tense and Release

1. Sit comfortably in a quiet space
2. Take several deep breaths
3. Tense (squeeze) and release (let go) different muscle groups.
 - a. Notice what relaxed feels like.
4. As you relax, say or think “relax,” “calm,” or “safe.”
5. How to tense four muscle groups:
 - **Face** – wrinkle your forehead
 - **Shoulders** – shrug shoulders to your ears
 - **Hands & arms** – clench fists and lift arms
 - **Legs & feet** – lift feet and point toes to ceiling

Modify this exercise:

- If you have pain, numbness, or difficulty moving one or more of your limbs, try the exercise using only the unaffected side.
- If tensing causes pain or discomfort, simply bring your awareness to each muscle group, notice what you feel, and imagine that muscle relaxing and a sense of calm in your body.
- Skip any step that causes pain, discomfort, or frustration and ask a medical professional how to modify safely.

Caregiver Resources

- [Taking Care of Yourself](#)

This webpage for caregivers provides tips on how to care for yourself and provides links to self-care videos.

Source: The Ontario Caregiver Organization

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- [Stroke4Carers](#)

This e-learning website is designed for caregivers but can be helpful to persons living with stroke. Topics include psychological issues.

Source: Stroke4Carers, National Health Service-Scotland

Local Resources

Search www.thehealthline.ca or **Call 211** to find local programs and services to address stress. Suggested search terms- Stroke peer support, Counselling, Stress, Mood, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction.

NOTES:

Acknowledgement

This information was compiled by the Ontario Regional Stroke Networks' Community and Long-Term Care Group. It is based on the Stroke Self-Management Video Series Worksheet: Practical Strategies for Managing Anxiety & Frustration, which was developed by the Calgary Stroke Program's Early Supported Discharge Program/Alberta Health Services, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, and Heart and Stroke Foundation Canadian Partnership for Stroke Recovery. Modifications have been made with permission.

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