

FAQ FOR STROKE SURVIVORS

By Kate Scrivener - Stroke Physiotherapist

How to navigate the NDIS?

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary supports for people aged 65 years and younger, who have a permanent disability that affects their daily life. To determine if you are eligible for the NDIS complete the check at www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis/am-i-eligible. To access the NDIS you need to contact them on 1800 800 110, you then need provide evidence of your eligibility (a form called an Access Request that is completed by you and can be assisted by a health care professional).

Ways to increase funding NDIS?

If you find it difficult talking to the NDIS directly or expressing your wants and needs, get support in this process. There are a number of people who can help you with this including:

Your NDIS Local Area Coordinator to find your local contact you can use the following website www.ndis.gov.au/contact/locations

Your healthcare team the health professionals involved in your care should draft a report each year before your funding review. This report should clearly outline your current abilities as well as your needs and wishes for the following year.

What to look for in a physio?

To find the right Physio consider the following factors:

Are they a Neurological Physiotherapist?

A Neurological Physiotherapist specializes in working with people after stroke and with other neurological disorders. They will understand how to assess and treat someone with neurological problems. A Neurological Physiotherapist will generally work with a specialized clinic or hospital, it would be unusual to find one in your local physiotherapy clinic.

Do they have experience working with people after stroke?

An experienced therapist should understand stroke-related problems, demonstrate advanced decision making and understand the evidence about which treatments can best drive your recovery.



Do you have a good relationship with them? You should work well together as a team! They should ask you about your goals and aspirations and clearly communicate with you throughout the therapy about how you are progressing. There should be a process of shared decision making in which you are involved in driving your own recovery.

If you're not sure if your current physiotherapist is right for you, I recommend trying someone new! The NDIS is designed to give you the choice and control to find the person who is right to work with you.

What are basic exercises to do?

Exercise after stroke should focus on 3 broad areas; strength, skill and fitness. Strength exercises involve making muscles that are weaker after stroke stronger, skill exercises focus on performing everyday tasks such as walking better and fitness exercises make sure you are fit enough to tackle your day. I have developed an exercise program for people after stroke that is guided by videos. You can find the program at www.mq.edu.au/about/about-the-university/faculties-and-departments/faculty-of-medicine-and-health-sciences/departments-and-centres/departments-of-health-professions/our-research/task-program

What are 'normal' feelings post stroke?

Experiencing a stroke is a major life event and often comes very unexpectedly. It is normal to feel sad and experience feeling of grief after your stroke. For some people feeling of grief and loss start straight away, for others the momentum of rehabilitation seems to delay these feelings and they present later often after discharge home. Either way, please let the health professionals working with you know that you are feeling this way. They can help you in many ways including counselling, medication and even exercise!

Should I set goals?

Setting goals, or clearly thinking about what it is you would like to achieve can be really important in motivation and giving your rehabilitation program direction. You can set goals and try and achieve new things at any time post stroke. If you are not sure about what your goal should be or how to put your aspirations into works, talk to your Physiotherapist. They should assist in writing the goals and following them up over time.

What about feelings of fatigue, tingles and cognitive issues?

There are many wide and varied symptoms reported after stroke. These commonly include things like feeling fatigued and experiencing pain or pins and needled in an affected limb. I recommend that you discuss these symptoms with your Physiotherapist. Physiotherapy can assist with all of these symptoms and help you improve and manage them in the future.

