Workshops 1a:
Mental health, anxiety and depression
Kate Charles and Susan Fitton
Aims of the workshop

• To explain what is known about the effects of stroke on mental health

• To explore the relationship between these hidden effects of stroke

• Charlotte Covey: My Story

• To examine ways that individuals can support themselves and access services to manage and improve mental wellbeing after stroke

• Future learning

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[UK Stroke Assembly]
What emotions or feelings might we experience following a stroke?

- **Grief**
  - E.g. “I’ll never be the same again”

- **Low mood**
  - E.g. “How will I cope”

- **Contemplation**
  - E.g. “Why me?”

- **Anger**
  - E.g. “This isn’t fair”

- **Anxiety**
  - E.g. “what will happen to me”

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After a **stroke**, people often experience **emotional** and behavioural changes. This is because **stroke affects** the brain, and our brain controls our behaviour and **emotions**.

- **Depression**: It is normal for stroke survivors to experience depression some time after a stroke.
- **Anger**: Stroke survivors may become angry when realizing their independence has suffered from the stroke.
- **Anxiety**: It is also normal for a stroke survivor to feel extreme anxiety after a stroke. Will life return to normal? How long will it take to recover?
Post Stroke Depression (PSD)

• Depression is the most common psychological change after stroke
• Affects 1 in 3 up to 10 years after stroke
• About **40%** of those with PSD will develop symptoms **within 3 months**
• **30%** of non depressed stroke survivors become depressed upon discharge from the hospital
Symptoms of Post Stroke Depression

• Feeling sad or down in the dumps
• Losing interest in everyday activities
• Finding it difficult to concentrate or make decisions
• Changes in your sleep pattern
  - being unable to sleep or sleeping too much
• Changes in your appetite
  - eating too much or too little
• Loss of self esteem or self-confidence
Different Types of Crying

- Emotionalism
- Catastrophic Reaction
- Pathological Crying

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Post Stroke Anxiety

67% of stroke survivors who took part in the feeling overwhelmed survey reported experiencing anxiety.
What can cause Post Stroke Anxiety?

After a stroke you might experience fears or worries connected to your health or other aspects of your life.

- Having another stroke or TIA
- Being unable to communicate in an emergency, for example, to call an ambulance
- Being unable to drive or return to work
- Taking medication – worrying about any side effects and whether it is helping
- Falling
- Feeling embarrassed in social situations
- Never feeling any better
Explaining Anxiety

• Anxiety is both a physical and psychological response to a frightening situation.

• Anxiety increases the blood flow to the heart and muscles, preparing us for action.

• Anxiety can very suddenly arise, or may develop slowly over a long period of time.

• Some level of anxiety is normal but if it persists, you need help
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palpitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trembling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot flushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortness of breath</td>
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<tr>
<td>A choking sensation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chest pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nausea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dizziness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling faint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numbness or pins and needles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A need to go to the toilet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ringing in your ears</td>
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<tr>
<td>A feeling of dread or a fear of dying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A churning stomach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tingling sensation in your fingers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shivering</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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![Sponsor Logos]
Difficulties of Diagnosis

Other people
- Health/care staff not recognising symptoms
- Family compensating/being afraid to speak up

General factors
- Cognitive factors
- Fatigue
- Communication difficulties
- Pain
- Boredom
- Dementia

Emotional/behaviour changes
- Emotionalism
- Anxiety
- Not wanting to make a fuss!
What Can help?

- Psychological therapy
- Counselling
- Relaxation
- Mindfulness
- Peer support
- Medication

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How Can I Help Myself?

Look at your routine and add in pleasurable activities. Thinking creatively and adjusting your expectations of yourself can be helpful in identifying new ways to do things.

Problem solving and goal setting. Set yourself achievable goals regarding what you want to get out of life, what you want to achieve, and based on what you want your life to look like in 12 months’ time.

Be kind to yourself. Things have changed for you. Give yourself more time to do things, and don’t be hard on yourself when things don’t go to plan (we know this is easier said than done!)

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Know your limits: lots of people try to get back to doing all of the things they did before their stroke in the way they used to do them.

It is important to remember that you, your brain, and your body have been through a challenging, distressing and tiring event. It will take you time to recover; adaptation is needed to help you best get on.

Having a better understanding of the changes that can happen due to a stroke, can be the first step in moving forwards with your life.
Stroke Recovery Service

Emotional Support

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The Emotional Support Service is delivered by coordinators who are trained counselling professionals with specialist stroke knowledge. They are responsible for delivering the counselling sessions as well as supervising a team of volunteer peer support workers.

The key elements of the Emotional Support Service are:

1. In-depth assessment of psychological support need
2. Counselling
3. Review
4. Peer support
Service Elements

• Talk about thoughts and feelings
• Understand their problems better
• Deal with any issues that are preventing the stroke survivor from meeting their goals
• Develop a better understanding of other people’s point of view
• Address relationship problems
• Develop coping skills, increasing their sense of control over their life
• Feel more confident and positive
Charlotte’s Story
Ongoing Learning

There is still a lot to learn about the brain and the effects of stroke on mental health

• Research
• Providing the right support
• Information and resources
• Self help: Hints and tips
• Peer support

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Current Research Funded by the Stroke Association

• Dr Niall Broomfield for the TEARS study – Testing for Emotionalism After Recent Stroke.
• Professor Hugh Markus for the Apathy after SVD study, through a priority programme award.
• Dr Terry Quinn for research into the emotional, thinking and memory problems after stroke through his lectureship position, and a priority programme award.
Mindful!

Breathe.
Thanks for Listening

Any Questions or Comments to share

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