

INTRODUCTION

A caregiver's role may start immediately post-stroke or may have evolved over time as it becomes clear that a stroke survivor can no longer manage all his/her daily needs. No matter when or how your role as a caregiver begins, it can be challenging, and you may have questions and concerns. National Stroke Association is committed to assisting caregivers during their journey alongside stroke survivors.

Recognize that caring for your loved one IS caregiving.

Many of you will be directed to this guide when your loved one has just survived a stroke or you may find this guide days, weeks, months or even years into your caregiving journey. This guide is designed to walk you through the caregiving process.

The guide will help you:

- **Prioritize tasks and develop a plan** for the stroke survivor's care.
- Access resources, tools, templates and suggestions to **keep you organized**.
- **Adapt to changing roles** and relationships post-stroke.
- **Prevent recurrent stroke**.

Strokes can be sudden and complex.

Caregivers' roles are multifaceted and unique to each person. There are many things for a caregiver to think about when determining their stroke survivor's care. Just as no two stroke survivors have the same experience, there is no standard way to care for a stroke survivor. Because this guide includes worst-case scenario information and advice, not all sections may apply to your situation. Read the sections that apply to you and modify them as you see fit.

Caregivers may need to assist their stroke survivor with a wide variety of tasks and activities. Caregivers often:

- Plan out the stroke survivor's care, including setting routines and managing the care team.
- Observe the stroke survivor's medical needs, communicate with healthcare professionals and advocate (medically) for the stroke survivor.
- Provide the stroke survivor with physical, mental and emotional support.
- Assist the stroke survivor with daily activities such as personal care and hygiene.
- Manage financial matters and transportation.

**Keep in mind—you don't have to do it alone.
If someone offers to help, let them!**

It's important to take care of yourself too!

Join National Stroke Association's new online social network, **Careliving Community**, to connect with other caregivers about self-care and share successes and challenges. **Join today at www.stroke.org/careliving.**

The screenshot shows the Careliving Community website. At the top left is the National Stroke Association logo. To its right is the 'careliving' logo in a dark grey box, followed by the tagline 'Caring for YOURSELF and a Stroke Survivor'. Below the logo is a navigation menu with 'Main', 'Discussion Forum', 'Events', and 'Live Chat'. The main content area is divided into several sections: a 'Welcome to Careliving Community' section with 'Sign Up or Sign In' buttons and social media icons; an 'About Careliving' section describing the community as a social network for caregivers; a 'Blog Posts' section featuring a post titled 'Screaming for help with my "Inside voice"' by Lori Ramos Cavallo, dated January 25, 2012, with 3 comments and 6 likes. The post text begins with 'During the eight years I was a caregiver to my mother I wondered why I was left to struggle with her care all alone. Day after day, month after month, year after year I wondered what in the world was wrong with my family and friends. Couldn't they see that I was struggling taking care of Mom? Didn't they hear my cries, heck'.

If you are unfamiliar with stroke signs and symptoms, stroke risk management or conditions post-stroke, refer to fact sheets that provide information on issues that may affect your caregiving. Visit www.stroke.org/factsheets.