

After Stroke Peer Support Toolkit



A Guide to Develop, Deliver and
Maintain Group-based Peer Support



SECTION **1**

Before Starting A Peer Support Group

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Disclaimer

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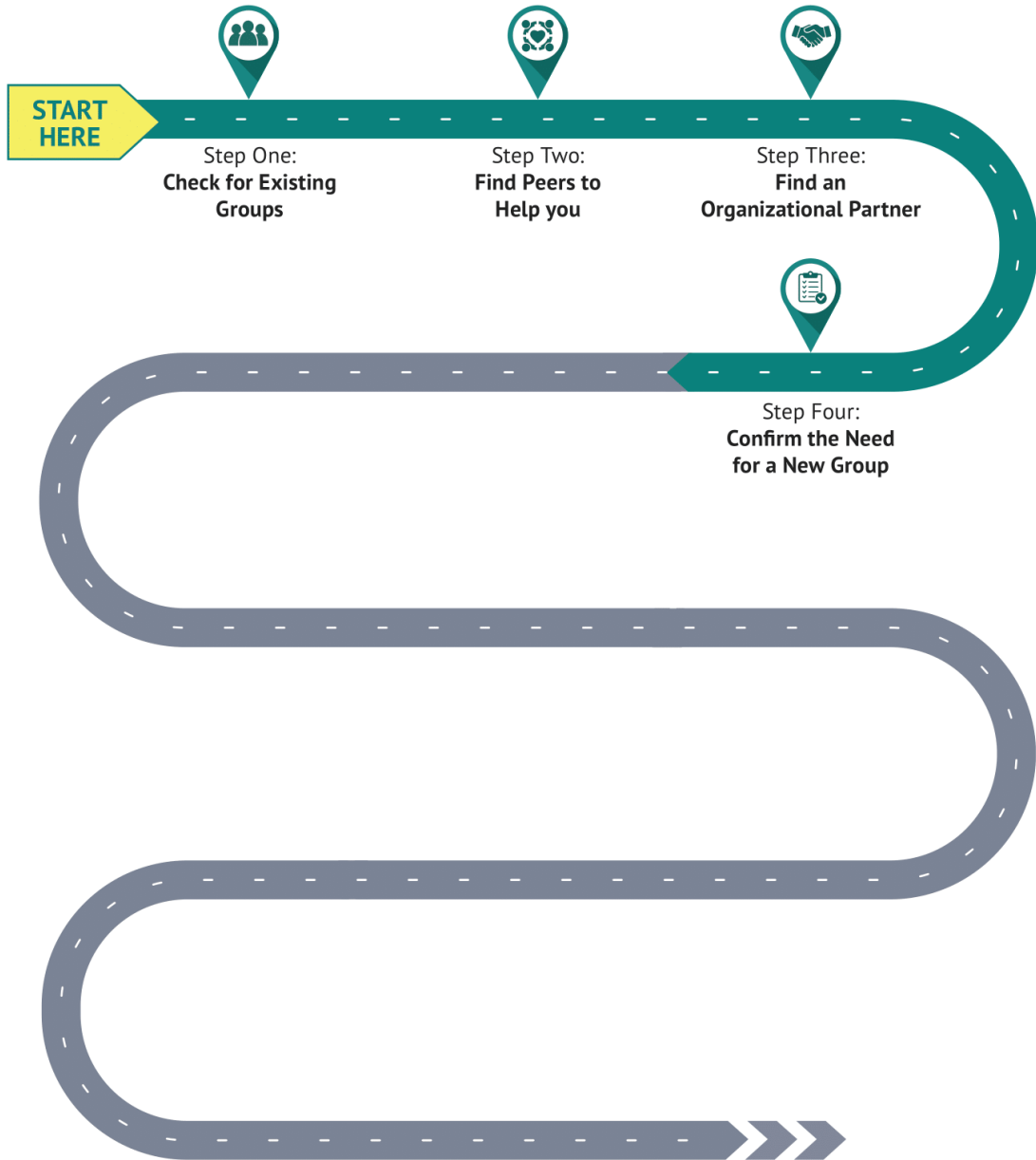
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Quick Overview

Before we can set up a peer support group, we need make sure that the community needs a group. We also need to find people who can help us.

SECTION 1 Before Starting A Peer Support Group



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Step One | Check For Existing Groups

How To Search For Existing Groups

It is possible that there is already a peer support group in your community that you could be a part of. Do a quick check in your community before you begin to set up a new group. You might find something local or a virtual group you can attend from any place.

You can try to:

- Talk to your healthcare or social service team.
- Check for information in local program guides.
- Ask your doctor, stroke team, stroke navigator, or social worker.
- Connect with local stroke prevention/recovery groups. This could include March of Dimes Canada, Heart & Stroke, etc.
- Search the internet for 'peer support stroke group' and your 'city/town/province'.

If you find a group that suits your needs, reach out and ask about becoming a member. **If no group suits your needs, go to the next step.**



Step Two | Learn About The Community

How To Find Peers In Your Community

Try to find peers (other people living with stroke) to join you in starting a peer support group. Setting up a new group may be difficult for one person to do by themselves. Having a team may make the work more manageable and fun!

You can try to:

- Connect with your local healthcare team.
 - Ask your social worker or healthcare team (family physician, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, hospital stroke team) to connect you with other people who have had a stroke.
- Connect with stroke networks and groups.
 - Regional stroke networks or local organizations that work with stroke populations (e.g., March of Dimes Canada, Heart & Stroke) may be able to help you connect with peers in your area.
- Use social media.
 - Connect with people on social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.).
- Post flyers.
 - You can post flyers in the local library, doctors' office, grocery store, community centre, or a religious/spiritual centre.

Template | Flyer

On the next page, we have provided a flyer you can write on and share. You can use this template as is, or as inspiration to create your own.



Tip: If you are sharing an email address, you might want to make one just for this work, so strangers don't have your personal information.

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH STROKE



We would like to start a peer support group so people living from stroke can meet and talk to each other.

If you or someone you know would like to join us, please contact:

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Step Three | Find An Organizational Partner

This is an important step for people who have no previous experience in starting or running a peer support group. An organizational partner can help support you through all the steps involved in setting up a new group.

Who Would Make A Good Partner?

A good organizational partner is one that:

- Is interested in improving community health.
- Works to support people living with disabilities.
- Works in stroke prevention or recovery (e.g., March of Dimes Canada).
- Has started community groups in the past.

How Can An Organizational Partner Help?

Depending on the type of organization, partners can:

- Help you complete the steps listed in this toolkit.
- Help you find new group members and other resources you need to manage your group and conduct the peer support meetings.
- Develop and conduct community surveys.
- Spread the word about your group in the community.
- Provide consultation and/or support with group management and administration (training, use of templates and forms, taxes, financial statements, liability insurance, charitable status, fundraising, networking, and partnership development, etc.).



Tip: March of Dimes Canada can support you in starting your peer support group. For more information, please contact us at peersupport@marchofdimes.ca.

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Step Four | Confirm The Need For A New Group

Setting up a new peer support group will take time and effort. You may want to make sure that this is something that people in your community need. The best way to get this information is by asking people living with stroke.

Your organizational partner can help you build and conduct the survey.



Tip: It's OK, if you are unable to conduct a community survey at the start! If you already have a few members, then you know that this group is needed. However, you should consider a survey when planning how to grow the group.

Distributing Your Survey

Your survey can be printed and shared, completed over the phone, or posted online. Try to get as many people to answer your survey as possible.

You can connect with places frequently visited by people living with stroke to hand out surveys (hospital stroke units, outpatient stroke rehabilitation clinics, stroke recovery/prevention organizations, and doctors' offices).

If you use online survey options (Google Forms, Survey Monkey, etc.) you can share the link to the survey in stroke groups via social media.

Template | Survey

On the next page, we have provided an example of a survey. You can use this template as is, or as inspiration to create your own.

Understanding The Need For Peer Support For People Living With Stroke

Have you experienced a stroke? If yes, please consider filling out this survey. We want to understand if people living with stroke feel the need for a peer support group in this community.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your abilities. If you don't want to answer a question, leave it blank.

As someone who has experienced a stroke, would you like to meet and talk to other people who have had a stroke?

- Yes, it would be extremely useful.
- Yes, it would be somewhat useful.
- It would not be especially useful.
- It would not be useful at all.
- Do not know.

A peer support group allows people with similar experiences (such as stroke) to learn from each other, support each other, and feel a part of a community.

Do you think such a group is needed in _____?

- Yes, it is urgently needed.
- Yes, it is needed but is not urgent.
- No, it is not needed at all.
- Do not know.

What kind of support would you like to receive from a peer support group?

- Information on managing health, living life with stroke, local resources.
- Emotional support, talking to someone who understands.
- Social support, friendships, doing things together.
- Motivation and hope.
- Other _____



If a peer support group was started in _____, would you attend?

- Yes, I would attend.
- I may attend.
- No, I do not think I will attend the sessions.
- Do not know/do not wish to answer.

What type of peer support would you prefer to attend?

- A group that meets in-person.
- A group that meets virtually (phone, web conference, etc.).
- Do not know/wish to answer.

What resources would help you better attend meetings?

- Eldercare
- Childcare
- Respite
- Travel funds
- Virtual support
- Other _____

Is there anything else you want to share? _____

Thank you for filling out this survey.

If you need any information or have questions, please contact:

