

# After Stroke Peer Support Toolkit



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



**INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT**

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

### Acknowledgements

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### Disclaimer

This toolkit is not designed to offer medical or health advice. This information is for reference and educational purposes only. The people and groups that developed, contributed to, funded, or were otherwise involved in the toolkit's creation are not responsible or liable for any damages, loss, or injuries that arise from or are related to the use of information in this toolkit. While reasonable efforts were made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information within the toolkit, we make no warranties, expressed or implied, regarding errors or omissions.

### Conflict of Interest Declaration

The contributing members have no conflict of interest to declare.

## Project Team

**Gayatri Aravind**, Program Lead, Innovations in Peer Support, March of Dimes Canada. Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Physical Therapy, University of Toronto

**Christina Sperling**, Director, Community Programs and After Stroke, March of Dimes Canada

**Michelle Nelson**, Principal Investigator, Science of Care Institute, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, Sinai Health. Associate Professor (status), Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, Division of Clinical Public Health (cross-appointment), Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

## Codesign Group

**Christy Nich**, Member with lived experience

**John McGowan**, Member with lived experience

**Margaret Hansen**, Member, Codesign group

**Paul Roberts**, Member, Codesign group

**Robert Mahony**, Member, Codesign group

**Susan Robertson**, Member, Codesign group

**Tim McCleary**, Member, Codesign group

**Amanda Nash**, Project Lead, Lived Experience Engagement Support, Heart & Stroke

**Sarah Munce**, *Scientist*, KITE-Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, University Health Network. Assistant Professor (status only), Dept. of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Rehabilitation Science Institute

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## Contact

Gayatri Aravind, B.P.Th., Ph.D.  
Program Lead, Innovations in Peer Support  
March of Dimes Canada  
202-885 Don Mills Road, Toronto, ON,  
M3C 1V9

[garavind@marchofdimes.ca](mailto:garavind@marchofdimes.ca)

[www.marchofdimes.ca](http://www.marchofdimes.ca)

[www.afterstroke.ca](http://www.afterstroke.ca)

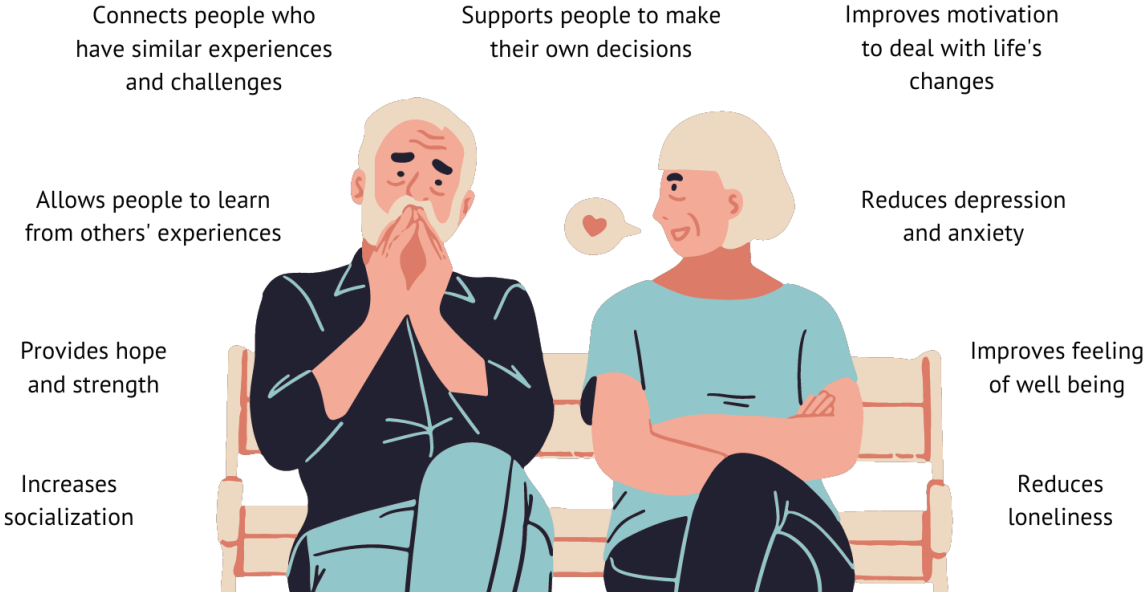
# Introduction to Peer Support


## What is Peer Support?

Peers are people who have similar identities, experiences, or interest. For people living with the impact of stroke, other stroke survivors, or caregivers can be peers. In a peer support group, people who have had similar experiences in life (e.g., had a stroke) meet to provide hope, and support to each other. Since they know what it is like to have a stroke, peers can understand the fears and needs of others living with the impacts of a stroke and share useful support.

## What is the Value of Peer Support After a Stroke?

Peer support can be valuable tool to manage life after a stroke. For a person living with stroke or its impact (e.g., caregivers), peer support can help your emotional, physical, and mental health. The image below highlights some key benefits peer support can offer people impacted by a stroke.



 **Tip:** Peer support is just one part of your care. It is not a replacement for professional emotional or psychological care.

# Introduction to This Toolkit

## Who Can Use this Toolkit?

Anyone interested in starting a peer support group can use this toolkit. You do not need any previous experience designing peer support groups.

The toolkit was designed for people affected by a stroke. However, most of the information can be used by other groups as well.

## How Do I Use this Toolkit?

You can use this toolkit as a step-by-step guide to help you build your peer support group. You can also use it as a toolbox where you pick and choose the information and tools that you need for your group.



**Tip:** The steps described below are to guide you. What steps you follow will depend on your abilities and available resources. You can make changes to suit your group's needs.

# Where To Start?

The toolkit is divided into sections based on where you are in your journey of building a peer support group. Use the questions below to help you find the right section to start with.

## **Are you thinking of starting a peer support group?**

Go to → **Section 1 - Before starting a peer support group.**

It discusses things to do before you start a peer support group. This includes checking the need for a new group and finding the right partners.

## **Are you ready to start a peer support group?**

Go to → **Section 2: Build your peer support group.**

It has information about designing your peer support group, finding group members, and the resources you need to run the group.

## **Wondering what to do in peer support meetings?**

Go to → **Section 3: Run your peer support meetings.**

It talks about what to do in peer support group meetings, and how to prepare to run the meetings.

## **Do you have a peer support group and are thinking of ways to improve and grow?**

Go to → **Section 4: Evaluate and grow your group.**

It talks about how to make sure your group is running well and what you can do to grow your group.

## **Looking for suggestions on how to manage peer support group discussions?**

Go to → **Section 5: Facilitator's guide.**

It provides information that may be valuable to people who manage the peer support group discussions (guiding discussions, solving arguments, improving engagement, etc.).

# Quick Overview

This roadmap describes the various steps along the journey of setting up a peer support group. Your group’s journey may look a little different based on its needs and resources.

## Peer Support Group Design & Implementation Roadmap



**Legend**

- Before Starting A Peer Support Group ■
- Build Your Peer Support Group ■
- Run Peer Support Group Meetings ■
- Evaluate and Grow Your Group ■

## How Did We Build this Toolkit?

We built this toolkit using a codesign process, which means that a group of people with different backgrounds, skills, and life experiences shared ideas and made decisions about what this toolkit should include. Our codesign group included people who have experienced the impact of stroke and the benefits of peer support, have been involved in the delivery of peer support or are researchers in the areas of stroke recovery and community programming.

By using a codesign approach we hope that the toolkit reflects the needs and capabilities of people living with the effects of stroke and scientific evidence in the field of after stroke peer support and program implementation.

## Can March of Dimes Canada Help Me Build a Peer Support Group?

We at March of Dimes Canada (MODC), welcome the opportunity to help you build your peer support group.

March of Dimes Canada is a Canadian charity that supports people living with disabilities have a rich life. Through its After Stroke Program, MODC offers support to people living with stroke, at every stage of recovery and life after stroke.

Peer support programs that are affiliated with March of Dimes Canada are part of a Canada-wide peer support network and have access to:

- Support with designing, running, and growing their peer support group.
- MODC templates and forms.
- Support with fundraising and managing finances.
- Liability insurance coverage.
- Assistance with identification of resources and partners.
- Learning and development opportunities for facilitators and volunteers.
- Opportunities to connect and collaborate with other peer support groups.

For more information, contact MODC's National Manager, Peer Support Network ([kabbott@marchofdimes.ca](mailto:kabbott@marchofdimes.ca))