

1 The Stroke Care Team

There are many considerations that are crucial to promoting safety and optimizing recovery when working with people who have had a stroke. The TACLS Quick Reference Guides were developed from the TACLS resource and can be used as quick reference to *help support healthcare providers* and informal caregivers who may not typically work with and care for people who have had a stroke.

We recommend reviewing the full **TACLS resource** for more complete information:
strokebestpractices.ca/resources/professional-resources/tacsls

Quick reference guide highlights

- **Always follow the current care plan** for the person you are working with.
- **Caregiver** can refer to a spouse, child, sibling, other relative, close friend or neighbour involved with the care of the person who has had a stroke. In this document, it excludes paid healthcare providers.
- **Note:** When working with the person's caregivers, ensure privacy and confidentiality is respected and followed. If unsure, check with the care team.
- People who have had a stroke can experience a wide range of challenges. Each member of the stroke care team contributes to a person's care and recovery journey.

Roles and responsibilities of the stroke care team

- **Communication** with the person who has had a stroke and their caregivers, as well as with the stroke care team.
- **Educate** the person and their caregivers about stroke, its effects and recovery.
- **Help** the person and their caregivers learn strategies to cope and adjust.
- **Develop** and update care plans.
- **Help** the person achieve the best possible outcomes.
- **Work to prevent or reduce** complications.
- **Be responsive** to changing needs, abilities, and goals of the person and their caregivers.

Providing person-centred care

- Follow the principles of **person-centred care**, meaning the healthcare provider puts the person at the centre of everything that is done. Remember in person-centred care there should be "nothing about me without me".*
 - Include the person in decision-making to the extent that they wish to be involved.

- Respect each person as an individual, taking the time to get to know and understand them. Ask the person about their goals, preferences and values, and work as a team to incorporate these elements into the care plan.
- Support their dignity and encourage independence without pushing the person beyond their limit or holding them back.
- The stroke care team works together so that people who have had a stroke can recover and heal in a safe and supportive environment and receive care that includes stroke and rehabilitative expertise to address their physical, social, cognitive and emotional needs.
- The **person who has had a stroke is the focus of the team's efforts and is a member of the team.** As much as possible, the person and their caregivers should have input into decisions about the care plan, goals, and the care that is provided.
- The stroke care team varies depending on factors such as stroke severity, needs of the person, stage of recovery, and location where the care is being provided. In addition to the person and their caregivers, team members can include: physicians, case managers, dietitians, healthcare support workers, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists/ neuropsychologists, recreational therapists, rehabilitation assistants, social workers and speech-language pathologists.

Learn more about the stroke care team and their roles in **TACLS – The Stroke Care Team.**

The team approach

- **Assessment:** your observations and insights about the person with stroke can contribute to the team assessment. Be sure to report what you see.
- **Diagnosis:** based on the assessment, the physician will make a diagnosis to then minimize risk of complications and determine required treatment approaches and interventions.
- **Care Planning:** the team develops a care plan based on the assessment, diagnosis and goals of the person.
- **Implementation:** your input and communication can help determine the best way to carry out the plan.
- **Evaluation:** your observations and monitoring can help determine how well the plan is working and whether change or reassessment is needed.
- **All team members must work within their scope of practice.**

Your role as a part of the stroke care team

- Get to know each person as an individual. This makes it easier for you to adapt your care and approach to suit their needs and preferences.
- Empathize with the person's challenges and celebrate their successes.
- You may be the first to notice changes. Communicating your observations to the stroke care team can help the person experience the best possible care and recovery.

- Know the care plan and follow it. Always be familiar with each person's individualized care plan and know what your responsibility is. Make sure you know who your direct contact on the team is and always consult with your team if you are unclear about anything in the care plan, have questions, or are concerned about the person you're caring for.
- Follow your workplace guidelines for communicating with the team. Do not delay if a situation requires immediate attention – contact the appropriate team member as quickly as you can.

Note: There may be times when the information in these TACLS resources differ from the instructions or care plan that have been developed by the organization you work for or by the stroke team. **Always follow the direction from your employer, your team, and the care plan.**

References:

1. Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations: www.strokebestpractices.ca, **Rehabilitation and Recovery Following Stroke**, 6th Edition, Section 1
2. Taking Action for Optimal Community and Long-Term Stroke Care (TACLS), – **The Stroke Care Team**
3. *Excerpt from Valerie Billingham, from a session at the Salzburg Global Seminar, (session 356) in 1998, "Through the Patient's Eyes."

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