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published in <https://www.heartofstroke.com/all-applications>

Country: **Canada**

Titel of the project: **Getting on with Life After Stroke**

Project details

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Networks Activity Centre

Award amount: €100,000

The program will prepare stroke survivors to successfully integrate into their communities. They will learn to find solutions that enable them to engage in meaningful activity despite disability. This program will increase stroke survivors' capacity to: advocate for prevention, explain how causes of stroke, like atrial fibrillation, can be treated.

Initially, we will use this funding to do a media blitz about AF stroke prevention and community stroke services. In 2003, a Canadian Stroke Network expert panel identified that there was a significant need for effective and sustainable programs targeting the life-long needs of community dwelling individuals with stroke. The Networks Activity Centre has participated as the community partner in the Getting On with the Rest of Your Life after Stroke research project. It is an integrated program of exercise, leisure training, learning, and social activities. Although the study is not complete, preliminary evaluation shows 90% of participants made clinically meaningful gains. Over half increased their community activities, and a third improved their gait speed and reported improved quality of life. The true benefits of the programs may have been masked by the choice of outcome measures. Alan, a mild stroke survivor, says that before the program, "There were so many days that had gone by where I grieved for the man that I once was and longed for my own life. This just led to a life of despair of thinking of what my life would have been like had I not had the stroke. After years of ruminating over my former life – today I understand that I can Get On with the Rest of My Life after Stroke. It opened up opened many new opportunities, new directions, and a new life." The objective of this funding is to continue to offer the Getting On Program in Edmonton and further develop stroke survivors skills to advocate for stroke prevention and awareness of stroke survivors support needs. This funding will: 1) develop Getting on program graduates skills to speak in public about stroke prevention and need for ongoing support; 2) continue to offer the Getting On program to new stroke survivors; 3) advocate for systemic funding for effective community integration programs in Alberta. Research indicates that the program cannot be run by volunteers. A program facilitator, assistant, and therapists are required. The program facilitator needs to be a professional either in leisure, occupational, physical, or exercise therapy with additional facilitator skills training. The staff will run the Getting On program for new stroke survivors 2 x a week for 3 hours/session. They will facilitate a continuing weekly 3 hour session for Getting On program graduates and other interested survivors to develop life skills, prevention and advocacy programs. Stroke survivors will be trained to speak about atrial fibrillation and risk of stroke. The facilitators will seek opportunities for participants to speak to community groups (Lions, Rotary) and with health professionals at community presentations. Intended impact: Awareness of stroke from atrial fibrillation will increase. Edmonton and Alberta will be more aware of stroke risks and the support needs of stroke survivors. Stroke survivors will become positive role models for others dealing with stroke disability. Volunteering and advocacy will provide stroke survivors with a new "occupation" that will increase self esteem and decrease depression and isolation.

Audience

Type

- AF Patients
- Healthcare professionals
- Carers of AF Patients
- General public
- publicity about the funding will target: Media
- policymakers
- people who don't know they have AF

Location

Canada, North America