

# NORTH SHORE STROKE RECOVERY CENTRE

OCTOBER 2022



## Vision

A Community without barriers for Survivors of Stroke.

## Mission

To maximize the quality of life for people impacted by stroke through accessible programming, peer support, healthcare partnerships, and community partnerships.

## NEW FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM MONDAY: AUGUST 8 - DECEMBER 12, 2022



Each Monday, from 10 am-12 pm, at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, North Vancouver, we will offer a Caregiver Support Group Meeting, and Art therapy & Yoga therapy. This new program is especially for Family Caregiver's, significant others, friends of NSSRC Survivors of Stroke.

In 2022, as the Executive Director of the North Shore Stroke Recovery Centre, I have had many meaningful experiences and conversations with NSSRC Survivors of Stroke members, Family Caregivers, friends, and significant others.

A special welcome to the many new NSSRC members who have joined. Fall 2022 Penelope Bacsfalvi, SLP resumed Speech Language services, with Yasmine Bia, Speech Assistant. Kathryn Seely, Program Coordinator, dedicated Music, Art, Yoga, and Exercise specialists continue their important work.

The New Family Caregiver Support Program successfully launched on Monday, August 8, 2022 until December 12, 2022.

By utilizing firsthand knowledge of Family Caregivers, with my SFU master degree in Gerontology, and Family Caregiver of British Columbia certification, this

program supports Family Caregivers of our Survivors of Stroke members.

Here are wonderful quotes from participating Family Caregivers:

*It's a joint effort. Together we're strong! Marsha C.*

*As a caregiver of a survivor of stroke, significant mental stress wears me down. The sessions allow for sharing and learning. The yoga and art time allow my mind to completely calm down. I want to thank the NSSRC for these in-person sessions. Norm J.*



Written with gratitude on unceded traditional territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

# Art Therapy | FOR NSSRC MEMBERS & FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Article by Kali Anna Dukowski

Art therapy combines the creative process and psychotherapy, facilitating self-exploration and understanding. The process of engaging in art materials awakens the senses to present moment perceiving. Beyond that, the art itself can be enjoyable when self-consciousness and self-judgement abates.

There are three principles of positive psychology that can come into play:

- Pleasure and Gratification
- Embodiment of Strengths and Virtues
- Meaning and Purpose

Awakening the senses through colour, shape, line and image can provide pleasure and gratification.

When engaging in art, or any other activity, one can enter a state of flow, or as artists often call it, being in the zone.

Meanings and purpose can arise from perceiving what is made.

**“I make art to show my soul I am listening.”**

*(Source unknown)*



Figure 2 is an image of a place that the artist can bring to mind when feeling anxious or overwhelmed. Although it could have been a totally imagined place, this image is a place from memory where all was calm and peaceful. Besides the visual, the memory contains all the senses, how it felt emotionally.

Figure 2

All that can sound pretty abstract. To get a better idea of what can happen in an actual group, here are some examples from the Family Caregiver Program and Survivors of Stroke NSSRC members in the last few weeks.



Figure 1. This image was an exercise done with members in the Family Caregiver Program session. Three people had a “colour conversation”, meaning that without words or any preplanning each person had a silent conversation with each other making marks on a page which came together on the same paper. The result formed a collective meaning.

Figure 1



Figure 3 began as a prompt in the Stroke Survivors group, to draw seven lines and seven circles in any combination as a way to get started. The group member that made this image found delight in connecting to a part of herself that loves colour and the playful aspect is evident.

Figure 3

# Exercise Therapy | BENEFITS OF EXERCISE FOR SURVIVORS OF STROKE

Article by Susan Freeborn

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Exercise implemented immediately following a stroke as well as long term will help the participant regain and maintain strength in their bodies, increasing blood flow to extremities and repairing atrophied muscle tissue.

Chair class exercises are beneficial for regaining confidence in an individual's functionality and activities, such as getting in and out of the car, up and down hills or stairs, going through a crosswalk, etc., maintaining independence in some cases or perhaps regaining independence in others.

In some cases, survivors of stroke can relearn how to do safe 'sit to stand' moves and employ weight shift techniques to regain their walking and turning abilities and fall prevention.

By implementing repetitive movements to uplifting music, survivors of stroke can enjoy the challenge of a variety of oppositional moves and a fun patterning in effectual and creative ways to improve activities of daily living, while laughing and enjoying a social atmosphere with new and old acquaintances.

Muscle memory is a formula of procedural memory that involves consolidating a specific motor task into memory through repetition, which has been used synonymously with motor learning.

When a movement is repeated over time the brain creates a long-term muscle memory for that task, eventually allowing it to be performed with little or no conscious effort. The brain needs 17 repetitions to learn something. The brain's neural networks form, store, and re-form information into long-term memory that can be recalled like files on a computer.

Myoplasticity is the ability of a muscle to change and adapt. Recruitment and load refer to the exercises you do. A muscle must be activated in order to adapt. That's why a body in motion responds.

It takes two to three weeks, and up to a month, for a muscle memory to start with application of muscle memory in your routine workout.

It usually takes six months or more to develop a new skill. Patience and persistence are necessary to develop good habits in exercise for survivors of stroke. Muscle memory is your body's ability to regain previously gained muscle. Studies show that muscle memory may last up to 15 years, or possibly forever. Very impressive.

There are so many benefits of exercising for stroke survivors. This just names a few. More include increased postural alignment, improved vocalization, increased energy, well being, improved sleep, and so much more.



# Yoga Therapy

Article by Angie Howden Duke

In the West we often think of Yoga as the Physical (asana) practice, however Yoga is so much more than this. We may look at Yoga through a relational lens, including the relationship between a person who has had a stroke and their care giver. In this relationship there is an exchange of our own energy and if that is depleted it's difficult to give to others. Yoga invites us to become the witness to our life, noticing when our energy is depleted and then taking the time to replenish. Replenishing is different for everyone; it requires us to listen to the guidance and wisdom of our inner voice with kindness.

Ahimsa, meaning non-harming, is the first guideline in the 8-fold path of yoga philosophy inviting us to be kind to ourselves; this includes protecting our own energy. Non-harming is often thought as physical harm, however being hurried, afraid, powerless, or out of balance and speaking unkind

words to ourselves are ways of doing harm. Ahimsa, invites us to practice balancing our energy, self-love and compassion for ourselves and others. Participating in the NSSRC program stroke survivors can replenish and receive what they need, the care givers can receive what they need from The Care Givers program which then invites the partnership between two human beings in a relationship giving and receiving with more energy and Ahimsa. Take the time to replenish; body, mind and soul.



## Our Supporters

Our programs and services for individuals impacted by stroke would not be possible without the contributions of our community supporters.



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## North Shore Stroke Recovery Centre

Phone: **778-340-5803** • Website: **www.nssrc.org**

**Executive Director:** LaDonna Miller • **Co-ordinators:** Yasmine Bia, Kathryn Seely  
**Speech Language Pathologists:** Penelope Bacsfalvi • **SLP Assistant:** Yasmine Bia

### Days of Operation August 2022:

**Monday:** 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 1110 Gladwin Drive, North Vancouver: Family Caregiver Support Program.

**Monday:** 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.- St. Stephen's Church, 885 22nd Street, West Vancouver: Survivors of Stroke members.

**Tuesday-Thursday:** North Shore Neighbourhood House, 225 East 2nd Street, North Vancouver. 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Wednesday:** North Shore Neighbourhood House, 113 East 3rd Street, North Vancouver. 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

*Articles in this October 2022, are the opinions of their writers*