

Living with a stroke By Cherie Madden

What sorts of things or strategies helped you keep going and keep motivated?

- I exercise at the gym and connect with friends and family as well as focus on my son's wellbeing. Volunteering within and outside my community really helps me to keep my mind and soul positive and focused. I also love gardening and I find that it helps me with my depression. At the same time it's really important to take your medication as prescribed.
- Don't beat yourself up if you can't get out of that funk (cloud of unhappiness) in spite of all that you have tried... that's what anti-depressants are for. If you need it, use it, it doesn't make you a drug abuser it just takes the edge off the despair and gives you the energy to get going again.
- Hang out with positive people. People who can cheer you up instead of you trying to cheer them up as this only drains your energy.
- Share your story when appropriate
- Remember to honour your body, rest when you need to. Ration your energy - focus on doing one or 2 things per day only e.g. if you do laundry today, don't plan to clean the house the same day. (I learned this the hard way)
- Choose to wallow in happiness by celebrating small accomplishments.
 - E.g. making my bed, putting on a sani-pad (sticky part out), finally figuring how to put your bra back on, holding and using my utensils appropriately. Learning to snap my fingers again. Mastering the art of typing with one finger.
- Sing. If you can't sing, hum. If you can't hum, blink. If you can't walk, rock. You are here when many of us could not be so honour them by choosing to live and strive. This is my primary motivation.