

## **Network for Spousal Caregivers of Stroke Survivors NY Finger Lakes Region**

Are you a spousal caregiver (some prefer the term care-partner) for a stroke survivor in the Rochester, Syracuse, Finger Lakes area, and environs, interested in connecting with other spousal caregivers? We invite you to join our Network for Spousal Caregivers of Stroke Survivors, NY Finger Lakes Region.

This support network is a peer founded and organized group of spousal caregivers looking for support from and striving to create a sense of community with others navigating similar situations. As spousal caregivers, we have had our relationships, family circumstances, and day-to-day lives completely upended, as the result of our spouse/life partner suffering and surviving a life-altering stroke (or similar medical event).

Currently the network hosts a monthly meeting group (referred to as the Stroke Spousal Caregiver Support Group, Finger Lakes Region, NY) on the 2nd Thursday of the month, 7:30-9:00pm ET on Zoom. The support group has as a core purpose providing caregivers with a safe, confidential environment to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of providing care for a spouse/life partner who survived a stroke. Participants are encouraged to offer ideas about topics and issues for discussion, and we openly consider ways to share information and provide support to each other as needed. We also share information about other support groups and resources.

Knowing that stroke survivors, and their spouses as well, contend with a variety of challenges depending on the area in the brain affected by stroke, we welcome spousal caregivers of survivors of any type of stroke. Specific examples include spouses of individuals with damage to the right side of the brain, resulting in loss of function or weakness on the left side of the body and a suite of cognitive, communicative, and neurological challenges referred to as Right Hemispheric Brain Damage aka "RHD" (see the [righthemisphere.org](http://righthemisphere.org) website); or conversely with damage to the left side of the brain, resulting in loss of function or weakness on the right side of the body, often accompanied by aphasia (an acquired language disorder).

Abby & Don, co-founders of this network, came to know one another through participating in various stroke support groups we attended together with our spouses. Both co-founders have spouses suffering with a range of RHD symptoms as result of stroke. Both tried out various caregiver support groups, but felt that existing ones were not tailored specifically enough to the set of circumstances we found ourselves navigating. We therefore decided to start a network designed to be more meaningful and helpful to us, and toward needs of others in similar situations. One important dimension of our group is to be "RHD informed", something we haven't found in other groups. Our group meetings are professionally facilitated by Occupational Therapist, [Michele Bennett](#).

We invite caregivers in similar situations to join us! Please contact us at [StrokeSpousalCarepartnersNYFL@gmail.com](mailto:StrokeSpousalCarepartnersNYFL@gmail.com) if you'd like to learn more about the network and might be interested in joining our meetings. We also invite you to check out the network's website [StrokeCaregiverSupport.org](http://StrokeCaregiverSupport.org) with resources for caregivers.

Don, Rochester, NY & Abby, Ithaca NY

Co-founders, Network for Spousal Caregivers of Stroke Survivors, NY Finger Lakes Region

October 2024