



Starting a Stroke Support Group

A simple guide for survivors, caregivers, volunteers, and community partners

The most important thing to know

A support group does not have to be perfect. Start small, listen to the people who come, and adjust as you learn what your community needs.

Start here: 5 simple steps

1

Find a few people to help

You do not need a large committee. Start with a small group of people who care about stroke support.

- Include a survivor or caregiver when possible.
- Invite a health-care or community professional if helpful.

2

Decide who the group is for

Be clear about who you want to welcome and what kind of support you hope to provide.

- Survivors, caregivers, family members - or a mix.
- Keep the purpose simple and easy to explain.

3

Pick a place and time

Choose a comfortable place that is easy to get to, then choose a regular day and time.

- Check parking, entrances, restrooms, and room setup.
- A virtual or hybrid option can help people who cannot travel.

4

Tell people about it

Share the meeting anywhere stroke survivors and caregivers may already be connected.

- Hospitals, rehab programs, clinics, senior centers, libraries, churches, community groups, and social media.
- Ask referral partners to keep your flyer handy.



5

Hold the first meeting

Keep the first meeting relaxed. Welcome people, explain the purpose, and ask what they would like from the group.

- You do not need a guest speaker for the first meeting.
- Always end by sharing the next meeting date.

Updated by the Nebraska Stroke Association. Adapted from the original “Developing a Support Group” guide by Marcia Matthies.

Before your first meeting

Use this as your quick planning checklist. You can build on it over time.

Who will help?	Choose a main contact and at least one backup person.
Who is invited?	Decide whether the group is for survivors, caregivers, family members, or everyone affected by stroke.
Where will you meet?	Choose a comfortable, accessible location. A circle or relaxed seating arrangement usually feels more welcoming than rows of chairs.
When will you meet?	Pick a consistent day and time. Before changing it, ask members whether time, transportation, or location is the real barrier.
How will people hear about it?	Create a simple flyer with the group name, who can attend, date, time, location, contact information, and whether registration is needed.
What will the group feel like?	Agree on a few basics: respect privacy, listen without judgment, give everyone a chance to participate, and do not give personal medical advice.

A simple first-meeting plan

TIME	WHAT TO DO
10 min	Welcome people and allow time to settle in.
10 min	Introduce the group and explain why it was started.
25 min	Let people talk, connect, and share what they need from the group.
10 min	Ask for ideas for future topics, speakers, or activities.



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Simple steps. Local connection. Ongoing support.

5 min

Share the next meeting date and how to stay connected.

You do not have to do everything yourself.

Ask members to help with greeting, reminders, refreshments, speakers, or outreach. Sharing the work helps the group last.

Keeping the group going

1

Ask what people need

At each meeting, ask members what would be helpful next. Their ideas can guide future topics, speakers, and activities.

2

Keep the group welcoming

People may communicate, move, hear, see, or process information differently after stroke. Be patient, reduce distractions, and give people time to participate.

3

Build a speaker list

Over time, invite people who can offer useful information - survivors, caregivers, therapists, nurses, physicians, social workers, researchers, and community resource experts.

4

Check in after each meeting

Ask: What worked? What should we change? What do we want to do next time? Small adjustments are normal.

5

Share leadership

Train other people to help lead. The group is stronger when it does not depend on one person.



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Quick checklist

- ☐ A main contact and backup person are identified
- ☐ The location and meeting time are set
- ☐ A simple flyer or announcement is ready
- ☐ The first meeting plan is ready
- ☐ NSA has the group's current information
- ☐ The group purpose is clear
- ☐ Accessibility has been considered
- ☐ Referral partners know about the group
- ☐ The next meeting date is decided

Let the Nebraska Stroke Association help

Send us your group name, city, meeting schedule, contact person, and virtual meeting information. We can help connect Nebraskans with support groups and statewide resources.

NEBRASKA STROKE ASSOCIATION

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Every stroke journey deserves hope, support, and connection. No one should face it alone.

This guide is for community support planning and does not replace medical, mental-health, legal, or emergency guidance.