

Identity Theft: Rediscovering Ourselves After Stroke

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Chapter 1: A Slow Fall Off a Cliff

1. Debra describes how after her stroke, “Without much information, my family had to figure out how to react.” (p. 13). As carepartners, there is a lot of information processing, risk assessment, and decision making that typically must happen very quickly.
 - a. What was this experience like for you during the acute post stroke recovery phase?
 - i. Did you take control of the situation? Feel helpless? Both?
 - ii. Did you feel equipped to make the best decisions for your survivor and yourself as carepartner?
 - b. Did you have friends/family to serve as sounding board(s), accessible medical professionals, or did you feel alone?
 - c. How supported did you feel throughout the decision process?
 - d. Did you comfort others or were you comforted?
 - e. Did your communication style with your survivor change before and after their stroke, especially when discussing the stroke and other serious matters?
 - i. If so, how?
 - ii. What level of medical/recovery detail did you initially discuss with your survivor?
 - iii. What level of medical/recovery detail do you discuss with your survivor now?
 - iv. Would you do or communicate anything differently knowing what you know today?
 - f. As recovery progressed, how did the support you initially experienced change over time?
2. Debra and her husband describe the night of her stroke as, “a slow-

motion fall off a cliff.” (p. 16)

- a. Would you describe your survivor’s stroke experience in the same way?
 - i. Why or why not?
 - ii. Are there different analogies or images you’ve used? (Share a picture if you like.)
- b. Would you describe your own experience as a carepartner in the same way?
 - i. Why or why not?
 - ii. Are there different analogies or images you’ve used? (Share a picture if you like.)
- c. Has the suddenness of stroke and the uncertainty surrounding recovery added to the emotionally difficult nature of dealing with the stroke for you and others in your support network?
 - i. Why or why not?

3. While Debra is in the ICU during her first two months of recovery, she writes “I found myself grasping for connections to the outside world.” (p. 22)

- a. Were you surprised Debra wanted to hear about the outside world while in the hospital?
 - i. Why or why not?
 - ii. Was this also true for your survivor?
- b. What feelings surfaced when you and your survivor would discuss updates about the outside world?
- c. Some have shared that the ICU experience makes the outside world “shrink as it is difficult to focus on anything beyond immediate needs.” Was this your experience?