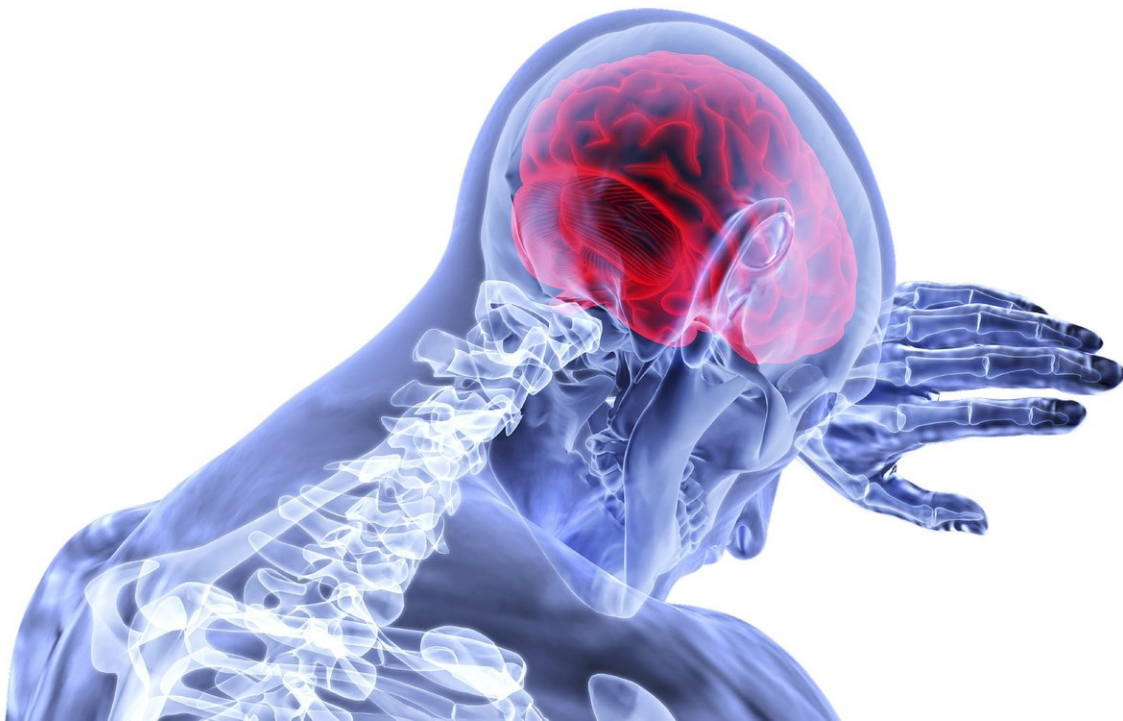


Study identifies 'triggers' that shape stroke survivors' emotional adaptability

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Participation in an online community can help stroke survivors move forward and adapt to their new circumstances, research led by a Queen Mary lecturer suggests.

More than 100,000 people in the U.K. experience a stroke every year

and there are 1.2 million stroke survivors across the country.

A paper published in Neuropsychological Rehabilitation concludes that survivors' route to making the adjustments required following a stroke is not a smooth path which develops as time passes. Instead, the study team suggests, [emotional adjustment](#) is shaped by positive and negative "trigger events."

Dr. Anna De Simoni, a GP and clinical lecturer in primary care research at Queen Mary's Institute of Population Health Sciences, led the study. The team studied the journey of emotional adjustment of 69 stroke survivors through their conversation in an online community of 2,348 stroke survivors.

Social support vital for positive trajectory

She said: "We were surprised to learn that emotional adjustment is very much linked to 'trigger events,' rather than time dependent. Social support is a fundamental trigger to help survivors in their emotional adjustment. Participating in an established and trusted online stroke community can in itself be a positive trigger for adjustment. It helped people move along a positive trajectory and moved some from a negative trajectory to a positive one that leads to emotional acceptance of [stroke](#) and its results."

Dr. De Simoni continued: "We need to improve awareness and knowledge about emotional adjustment triggers and their impact. This would help families, carers and healthcare professionals supporting [stroke survivors](#) moving towards or alongside the positive trajectory. Awareness could also help [healthcare professionals](#), families and carers prevent negative triggers affecting survivors. This work has certainly changed my own practice as a GP."

More information: F. E. Smith et al. Emotional adjustment post-stroke: A qualitative study of an online stroke community, *Neuropsychological Rehabilitation* (2019). [DOI: 10.1080/09602011.2019.1702561](https://doi.org/10.1080/09602011.2019.1702561)

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