



Workplace Toolkit

Group Discussion Prompt Sheet

This prompt sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with the video aids and fact sheets in the kit. It contains a set of questions and possible answers to assist with further discussion. Discussion should not be restricted to the information included within the prompt sheet and if you run out of time, don't worry, just quickly review the key message about stroke and learn the F.A.S.T. acronym.

Setting the scene

Anyone can have a stroke. Although strokes often happen to older people, a quarter of all strokes in New Zealand occur in people still in the workforce or younger – even children and babies have strokes.

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain stops, and the brain cells in the affected area begin to die. There are two main types of strokes: ischaemic and haemorrhagic.

An ischaemic stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks or narrows an artery leading to the brain. A haemorrhagic stroke is caused by bleeding in the brain from a burst artery. Strokes occur suddenly and the word stroke comes from the idea of receiving a “strike” or “blow”, as that is how quickly this devastating condition appears.

There are approximately 9,500 strokes experienced in New Zealand every year. Stroke is New Zealand's second single biggest killer and the leading cause of serious adult disability. Strokes are always a medical emergency, and the symptoms might show on the face, arm or in speech, but it is the brain that is being damaged.

It is vital to recognise when someone is having a stroke and to get help as soon as possible, because the sooner medical treatment begins, the more likely any damage to the brain can be reduced, and a better outcome achieved. The quicker a clot can be dissolved or removed, the less damage is done, and the better the chance of a strong recovery.

How can you tell if someone is having a stroke?

By learning the F.A.S.T. check. If you recognise the symptoms of stroke, you could save a life!

- FACE** Is their face drooping on one side? Can they smile?
- ARM** Is one arm weak? Can they raise both arms?
- SPEECH** Is their speech jumbled or slurred? Can they speak at all?
- TAKE ACTION** Call 111 immediately.

Other signs of stroke may include:

- Weakness or numbness or paralysis of the face, arm, or leg on either or both sides of the body.
- Dizziness, loss of balance or an unexplained fall.
- Loss of vision, sudden blurring, or decreased vision in one or both eyes.
- Headache, usually severe and abrupt onset, or unexplained change in the pattern of headaches.
- Difficulty swallowing

It's important to remember that F.A.S.T. covers 80% of the main symptoms of stroke and a person may only suffer from one or a combination of these symptoms. NOT ALL.

Possible Q&A's

Question 1: What are the three main signs of stroke?

Answers: Face drooping, arm weakness and speech difficulties.

Question 2: Do you need to observe all three signs before you Take Action?

Answer: No. As the brain controls the whole body the symptoms may vary subject to what part of the brain has been affected when the stroke occurs. At any of the above signs of stroke, please call 111 immediately.

Question 3: What should you do if you think someone is having a stroke?

Answer: Take Action – Call 111 immediately

Question 4: How many people do you think experience a stroke in New Zealand each year?

Answer: Approximately 9,500 strokes are experienced in New Zealand every year. That averages one every 55 minutes.

Question 5: Does stroke only affect old people?

Answer: Strokes can affect people at any age. 25–30% of strokes are experienced by people under the age of 65 years. In fact, nearly 60% of strokes in Māori and Pacific Peoples occur between the ages of 15 and 65.

Question 6: Can I reduce the risk of a stroke?

Answer: Yes, by regular blood pressure checks, living a healthy lifestyle and learning about stroke symptoms so that you can get help fast. Over 75% of strokes can be avoided by making lifestyle changes.

Question 7: What does F.A.S.T. stand for?

Answer: Face, Arm, Speech, Take Action.

Question 8: Why is Taking Action quickly so important?

Answer: Time = Brain. 1.9 million brain neurons are lost every minute that a stroke victim does not receive medical attention. The quicker medical treatment is started, the better chance of recovery.

Question 9: Is a stroke always a medical emergency?

Answer: Yes, stroke is always a medical emergency, just like a heart attack.

Question 10: Could you help save someone's life by knowing what to do if they are having a stroke?

Answer: Yes, by Taking Action and calling 111 immediately, your prompt action could save a life, as well as improve their chance of recovery.