

Skill-Building Tip Sheet #SB2



Screening for depressive symptoms and other emotions

Sometimes carrying out a skill is very stressful for caregivers. For example, caregivers might feel emotional about how to deal with the survivor's behaviors. Some caregivers might feel emotional about trying to help the survivor in the bathroom. There are other specific skills that might cause negative emotions for the caregiver. Negative caregiver emotions need to be dealt with before caregivers can learn how to improve their skills.

What skill are you having trouble with? **CNCC Item #**

What emotions do you have about this skill?

Emotions I am having about this skill...	Ratings for each emotion: Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Strong
Emotion #1 is...	Rating for #1 =
Emotion #2 is...	Rating for #2 =
Emotion #3 is...	Rating for #3 =

Depression is very common in family caregivers of stroke survivors.

Do you feel that you might be depressed? If so, let's screen for depressive symptoms that you may be having.



Circle the number (0, 1, 2, or 3) for how often you have had each of the 9 depressive symptoms below.

PHQ-9: Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u>, how often have <u>you</u> been bothered by any of the following problems?	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite – being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way	0	1	2	3

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Add up the numbers you circled above for a total score. **Total Score:** ____
Look at the chart below to see your level of depressive symptoms.

My level of depressive symptoms is: _____

Total PHQ-9 Score	Level of depressive symptoms
Total score 0 – 4	Minimal
Total score 5 - 9	Mild
Total score 10 - 14	Moderate
Total score 15 – 19	Moderately severe
Total score 20 - 27	Severe



You should call your doctor or a health professional if ...

- Your Total Score for depressive symptoms is 10 or above
- Your level of depressive symptoms is:
 - Moderate
 - Moderately Severe
 - Severe
- You have had thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way
- You have any questions about how to manage **any** of your emotions

Do not be afraid to seek professional help from your doctor or others involved in your care. Negative thoughts and emotions can be very difficult to control on your own. **Medications and psychological counseling are often prescribed, and they are often very effective.** It is far better to seek treatment than to allow the downward spiral of depression interfere with providing care. **Talking with another caregiver or someone who has “been there, done that” can also help.** Others sometimes do not understand what it is really like to be a caregiver.

Place an X beside all of those below who you think you can seek help from.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ 911 if an Emergency | ☐ Crises/Suicide line 1-800-273-8255 |
| ☐ Stroke survivor's doctor | ☐ https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org |
| ☐ Caregiver's doctor | ☐ ASA Warmline 1-888-4-STROKE |
| ☐ Psychiatrist | ☐ Mental health clinic |
| ☐ Neurologist | ☐ Local hospital |
| ☐ Neuropsychologist | ☐ Support group |
| ☐ Psychologist | ☐ Other stroke survivors |
| ☐ Counselor | ☐ Other caregivers |
| ☐ Priest or Pastor | ☐ Family and Friends |
| ☐ Nurse | ☐ Other _____ |

Write the telephone numbers for each of the above that you put an X by.

More places I can seek professional help

Let's try some more strategies to help you manage these emotions before we move on to help you with the skill.

1. **Ventilation.** When you are having negative emotions about doing a skill, it is important to talk about your feelings with someone else. Who can you talk to about how you are feeling about a skill?
Caregivers may need a third party to “blow off steam.” This should never be done in the presence of the stroke survivor.



Put an X beside any who apply below. Write their names and phone numbers below too.

Person you can talk to about your feelings about this skill:	Name	Phone Number
☐ The TASK III study nurse		
☐ The stroke survivor		
☐ A trusted family member		
☐ A trusted friend		
☐ Another caregiver		
☐ A doctor		
☐ A psychologist		
☐ A nurse		
☐ A physical, occupational, or speech therapist		
☐ A social worker		
☐ Other _____		
☐ Other _____		
☐ Other _____		

Finding someone who is a good listener is helpful. Sometimes just talking about your feelings can help you gain understanding and make you feel better.

You might think about writing in a journal. This is a way of talking to yourself about how you are feeling. You may want to keep your journal private.

When you talk with others, describe the skill, then say how it makes you feel. For example...

"I am having trouble with _____. This really makes me feel _____." Or.....

"I feel _____ when I try to (insert skill) _____."

Try to separate your emotions from the skill when you talk with others. This will help you describe the trouble you are having with the skill. It will also help you define your emotions and to seek support from others.

Write what you would say to someone else about how you are feeling about this skill:

2. Positive self-talk. Positive self-talk is very important in getting a handle on your emotions about a skill. What are you telling yourself about this skill? Are you being too hard on yourself? Are you putting yourself down? Thinking positive is important while learning new skills. Here are some examples of positive self-talk.

- "I can look at what I have done and continue to improve."
- "I'm being too hard on myself. I am just learning."
- "I can handle this if I take one day at a time."
- "On the positive side..."
- "At least I am able to..."
- "I am really doing a good job overall."

What can you tell yourself about this skill that is positive?

3. Dealing with your thoughts and emotions.

Thoughts are not the same as emotions. Thoughts are what we tell ourselves. What are you telling yourself about this skill? There are ways to think more positively.

In this TASK III Resource Guide is a workbook called, ***“Stress Management Workbook for Caregivers and Survivors.”*** (See ***Skill-Building Tip Sheet SB6***). (Look for the ***SB6 tab***). This workbook has many strategies in it that can help you deal with negative emotions that you have about a skill. Work through this workbook with this skill as your problem.

The workbook can help you to identify negative thoughts and change them to more realistic, positive thoughts. Positive thoughts lead to more positive emotions.

Also, take a look at Tip Sheet #27 *“Dealing with my Own Emotions While Providing Care.”* This tip sheet can:

- Help you identify the emotions you are having about this skill.
- Help you determine your level of depression.
- Give you some suggestions on how to think more positive or how you can seek treatment.

Don’t be afraid to call a doctor or another health professional to help you deal with the emotions you are having. Medications and psychological counseling often are very effective. Negative thoughts and emotions are difficult to control on your own.

This Tip Sheet has given you some ideas on how to improve your emotions for a specific caregiving skill.

- Ventilation
- Positive Self-Talk
- Dealing with your thoughts and emotions
 - See the workbook, “Stress Management Workbook for Caregivers and Survivors” under Skill-Building Tip Sheet #SB6.
 - See Tip Sheet #27, “Dealing with my Own Emotions while Providing Care.”
 - Don’t be afraid to call your doctor or another health professional for help.

Positive thoughts and emotions will help you learn how to do a skill better.

What was the caregiving skill you are having trouble with?
 What are your emotions about this skill now?

CNCC Item # _____

Emotions I am having about this skill...	Ratings for each emotion (1 – 10):	My new ratings for these emotions (1 – 10):
Emotion #1 is...	Rating for #1 =	Revised rating for #1 =
Emotion #2 is...	Rating for #2 =	Revised rating for #2 =
Emotion #3 is...	Rating for #3 =	Revised rating for #3 =

Rate your emotions about this skill again. Have your emotions improved?

- If so, let's look at information about your skill and how to improve. Turn to the Tip Sheet that matches the skill you need to improve. Look in the Table of Contents for this notebook and turn to the tip sheet. **The CNCC Item # matches the numbered tabs for the tip sheet that addresses your skill.**
- If not, let's spend some more time working on your thoughts and emotions. Look through **SB6 Stress Management Workbook (Look for the SB6 tab).**