



Opportunities and experience of psychological rehabilitation after a stroke

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Society of psychological support for people who have had a stroke and their relatives

"Vigor"

Riga, Latvia

www.vigor.lv

Introduction

On the basis of Vigor (from Latin - life force, life energy), the Latvian society for stroke survivors and their relatives, which has been working for 17 years in Latvia, the programme of psychological rehabilitation for stroke survivors has been developed and is being successfully implemented. The programme works on a volunteer basis and brings together almost 60 people. The team of volunteers consists of about 30 people, the main part of them are psychologists and psychotherapists.

Psychological changes after a stroke and personal life crisis

Stroke strikes not only the physical health of a person, it often resets his life:

- a fundamental change in social identity in the family;
- the social significance of the individual is falling - professional, intimate-personal, etc.;
- the ability to communicate is often lost as a familiar instrument of interaction, etc.;
- the habitual circle of communication is lost;
- the time perspective disappears - there is a feeling that everything is in the past;
- a loss of self-esteem and decrease in self-esteem.

It is necessary to reassess:

- values of life;
- the discovery of new personal meanings;
- building a new way of life and Self image.

Methodology

Components of effective stroke rehabilitation: medical, social and psychological rehabilitation.

Recovery is possible if:

- care for the body, soul and lifestyle are combined;
- a person acts step by step and does it systematically;
- mastering new abilities to replace the lost ones.

Psychological rehabilitation is restoration of **psychological health**.

Characteristics of a psychologically healthy person



The principles of psychological rehabilitation of the "Vigor" programme

1. The principle of humanism is a belief in a person's capabilities, his own active, creative nature.
2. The principle of realism is taking into account real capabilities of a person who has suffered a stroke, at the moment,
3. The principle of consistency is understanding of a person as an integral system and reliance on his compensatory skills.
4. The principle of mutual assistance and mutual support
5. The principle of variability is creative, flexible work, using a variety of forms and methods, taking into account the real needs of the programme participants.

Results

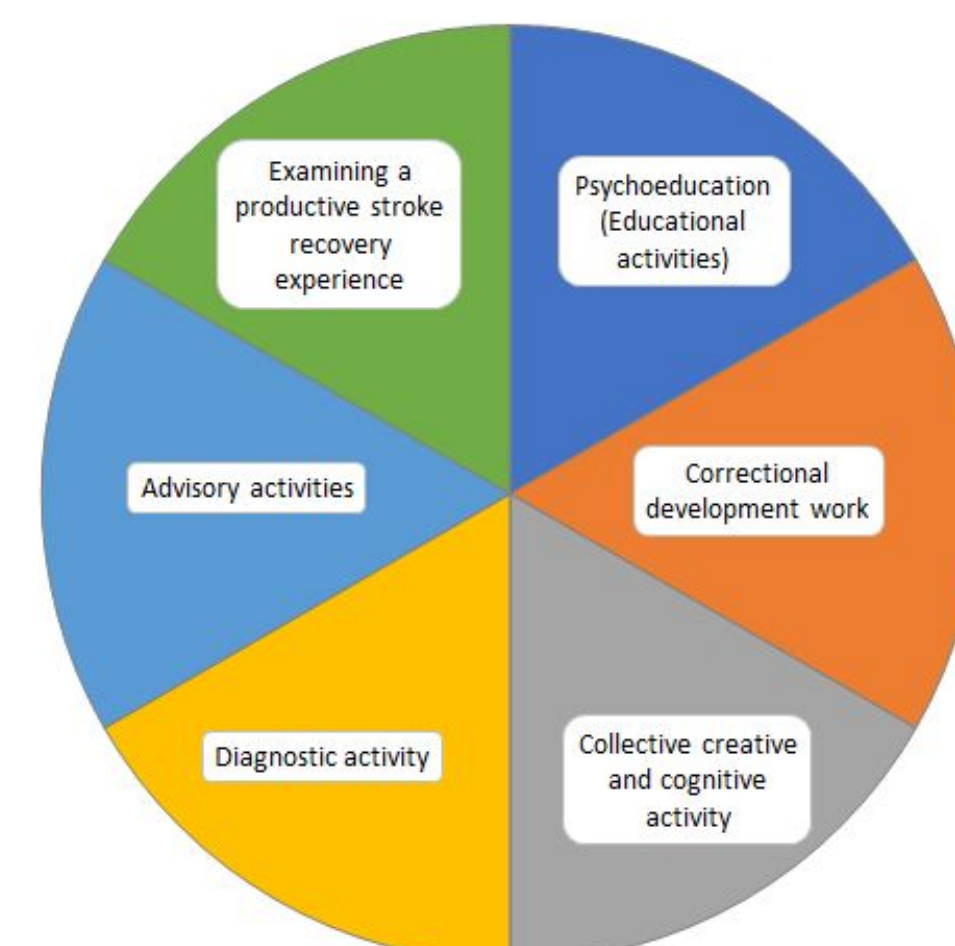
The implemented programme of psychological rehabilitation after a stroke by a team of volunteers based on the society "Vigor" **helps its participants:**

- to find new meaning in life,
- to discover their own resources,
- to build a new way of life and the Self image,
- to create an optimistic attitude toward the future,
- to integrate into society.

The model of psychological rehabilitation after a stroke has been developed.

The subject of the research is **psychological health**.

The directions of psychological rehabilitation after a stroke in the programme of "Vigor"



1. Psychoeducation is informing and explaining the nature of stroke, its consequences, stages of recovery, prevention, opportunities for adaptation in life etc.

The series of **thematic booklets** have been developed in two languages. There is also a constantly updated **website** in three languages, which provides information about psychological rehabilitation to stroke survivors and their relatives.



2. Correctional development work is activity connected with the restoration of specific physical and mental functions (speech, motor, cognitive ones etc.), lost as a result of the disease. Recovery is provided thanks to the compensation mechanism, when parts of the brain take over the functions of the lost ones. This is possible in the situation of timely (after a stroke), phased and diverse correctional and developmental work.

Our forms of activities:

- Club for people who had a stroke
- Kaleidoscope meetings "My interests' world"
- Intensive body practice of mental capacity development – sensomotor correction
- "Understanding through the movement" Workshop
- Movement and dance workshop "Joy of movement"
- Speech workshop "We restore the speech together"
- Art Workshop "Art of life"
- Cognitive workshop "Resource"
- Workshop "Gifts of every day"
- "Alphabet of Health" Workshop
- "Fairy Tale Therapy of Health" Workshop
- Photo workshop "How beautiful this world is"
- Vocal workshop "BEL CANTO"
- Workshop "Literary Salon"
- Individual programme "Communication with a horse"



3. Collective creative and cognitive activity

This direction is presented by:

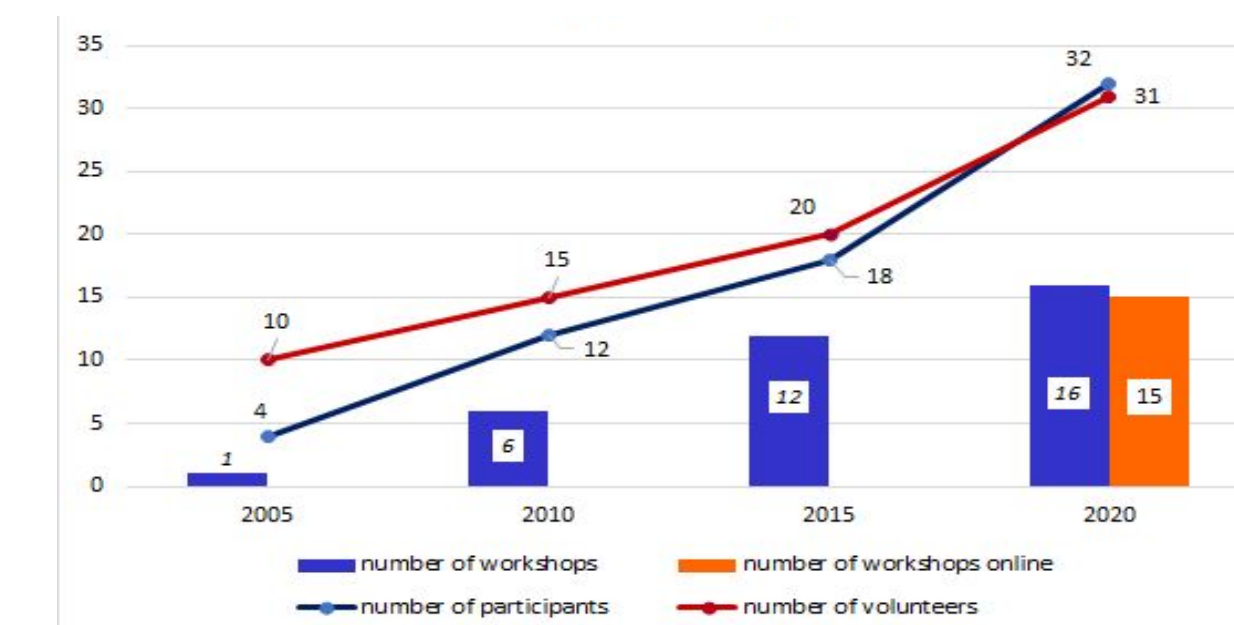
- the traditional Vigoriada Spartakiad;
- parties with loved ones (New Year's eve parties, Vigor's birthday parties, etc);
- excursions in Latvia, visiting museums, etc.



4. Diagnostic activity. The main task:

- to monitor the dynamics of recovery of the psychological health of people who have suffered a stroke,
- to create an individual developmental programme for independent work,
- to study the effectiveness of our rehabilitation programme.

Dynamics of the number of participants & workshops in "Vigor" society



5. Advisory activities. The main task:

- to determine individual priority psychological needs and interests,
- to determine physical and mental limitations associated with the disease,
- to help in the passage of the crisis of losses,
- to open up internal recovery resources to help solve problems of a person who has suffered stroke.



6. Examining a productive stroke recovery experience - description of living recovery stories of our participants and their wives; publication of information booklets.

The main task:

- to help a stroke survivor assess the value of their recovery path,
- to see their results and their strengths,
- to inspire other participants, introducing them to successful experiences,
- to acquaint with productive experiences of our participants.



On the basis of "Vigor" society, with the participation of our volunteers, and the implementation of the psychological rehabilitation programme, the following **scientific works** have been defended over the years:

- Master's Thesis "Phenomenological analysis of the relationship between motivation and expectations from rehabilitation in stroke survivors" (London Metropolitan University, Ksenia Loginova, 2006);
- Bachelor's thesis "Image of the sick person and ideas for helping the most sick and their relatives in the rehabilitation of people who have had stroke" by Vadim Levikin (2008);
- Qualification work "Development of the ability to receive sensual pleasure in everyday life" by Irina Trigubyuk (2009);
- Master's thesis on the subject "Specifics of time perspective of people who have had stroke" by Neonila Brusova (2010);
- Master's thesis "Personal sense of responsibility for the health before a disease and during the rehabilitation" by Alla Lapshevskaya (2015);
- Master's thesis "Personal activity of stroke survivors before a disease and during the rehabilitation" by Irina Trigubyuk (2016);
- Dissertation "Awareness and understanding of stroke in people with stroke and their relatives" (LU, Christine Vibane, 2018).

Conclusions

The model of psychological rehabilitation is dynamic, creatively reworked, supplemented, and, as our experience shows, contributes to the restoration of psychological health:

- leads to stabilisation of the Self image,
- strengthens his will, initiative, readiness to be active;
- a person is involved not only in the rehabilitation process, but also in social processes in general.

This model implies the need for psychological rehabilitation after stroke, along with medical rehabilitation, social assistance and support.

