

# Fiona Bardon

MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE STROKE  
CONNECT SERVICE AND BEYOND



# Disclosure Statement

There are no conflicts of interest to declare

# Post Hospital Care

- When I had my stroke in August 2019 I was discharged home with no medical supports
- I had great support in hospital but upon discharge issues emerged
- I had a lot of appointments to keep on top of but nobody to help with scheduling
- No psychological support

# How was I feeling?

Accepting

Confused

Frustrated

Anxious

Low Mood

Grateful

Mis-  
understood

Afraid

Nervous

Guilty

Elated

Weak

Vulnerable

Isolated

Untrusting

# Hope...

- ▶ Lack of information
- ▶ Rehabilitation was very intermittent
- ▶ Difficulty in finding support
- ▶ Finding Irish Heart Foundation – Nov 2020

# Irish Heart Foundation

- Life After Stroke IHF private facebook group
- Online exercise class (during covid and continues)
- Easy communication with IHF staff who signpost, research and communicate with us about services in the community
- Provide services and support that we are not receiving – counselling, information talks and courses

# Irish Heart Foundation

- WhatsApp group for Young Stroke Survivor Network members
- In-person exercise class, coffee and chats with people who understand and are non-judgmental
- Peer Support - people my age, older & younger who I can relate to and build friendships with

# What else helped me in my recovery?

- ▶ Diet, exercise and building a routine
- ▶ Counselling
- ▶ Acceptance – recovery is non-linear
- ▶ New “colleagues” – stroke survivors, brain injury classmates
- ▶ Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, National Rehabilitation Hospital and Headway



# Services and supports needed for other stroke survivors going forward:

- ▶ Treat the patient, not the condition
- ▶ Provide information of where patients, carers and their family can go to for help. Explain who does what – S.L.T. to O.T. to V.T.
- ▶ New difficulties can emerge as life progresses – mental health, financial, family or relationships, physical as an after effect of stroke. We need a longer-term support plan
- ▶ What is “better” ?

# Key Learnings For Me...

- ▶ Proper funding saves money long term
- ▶ Early rehabilitation and timely interventions means less pressure on staffing and resources in the future
- ▶ Listen to and reflect on the patient experience to effect change
- ▶ Signposting to other supports is key

# Key Learnings For Me...

- ▶ F.A.S.T. campaign inclusive of all ages
- ▶ Be mindful of non-F.A.S.T. symptoms – especially in the younger stroke survivors
- ▶ Effective communication – don't assume understanding, ensure understanding.
- ▶ Access to professional support and expertise – referrals

# Giving back...

- ▶ As patients are discharged home, we HAVE to fight for ourselves regardless of whether we can form thoughts, speak, read or write. Once we are deemed physically fit, we are discharged and left to fend for ourselves.
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Trying to make a difference
- ▶ Peer Support