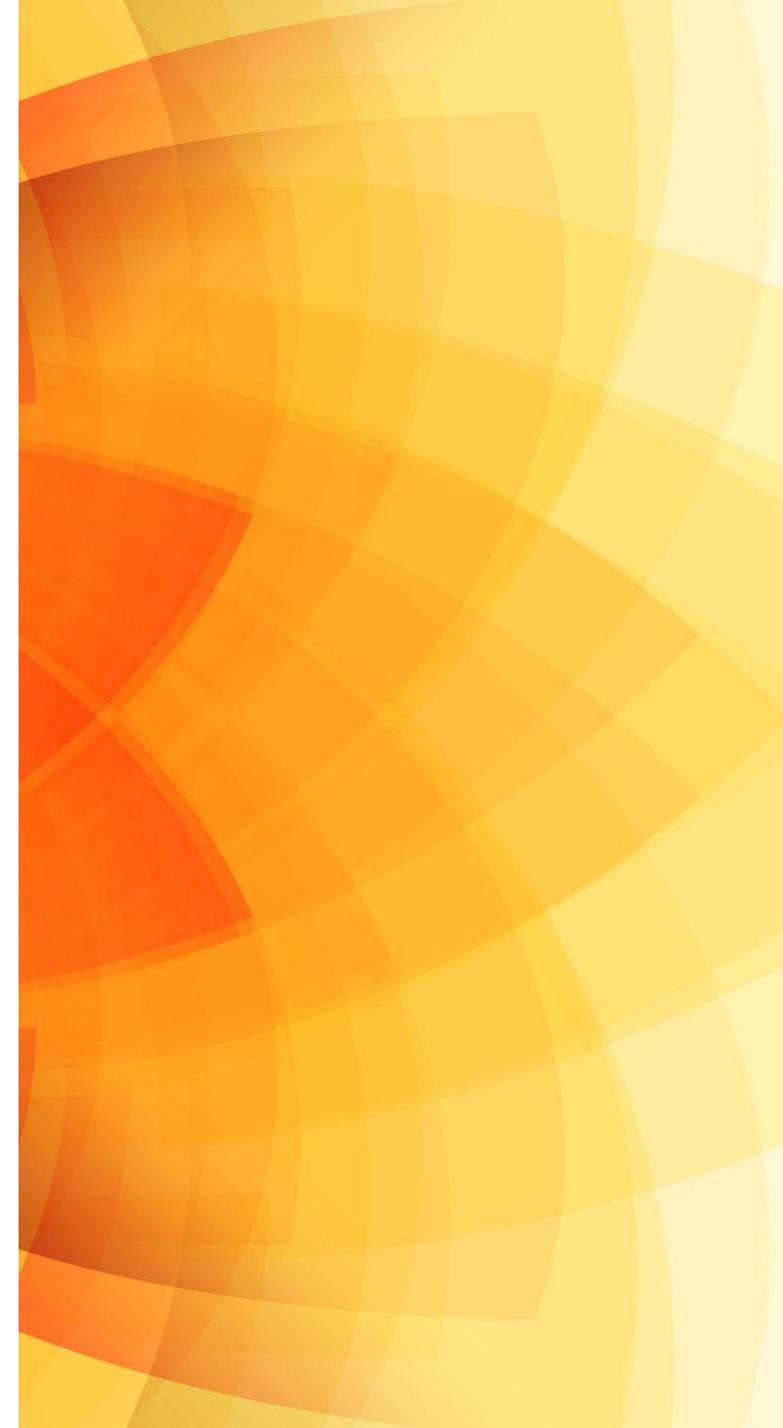

Finding My Voice Again: Turning Silence Into Strength

RICHARD DJAN-KROFA

European Life After Stroke Forum 2026

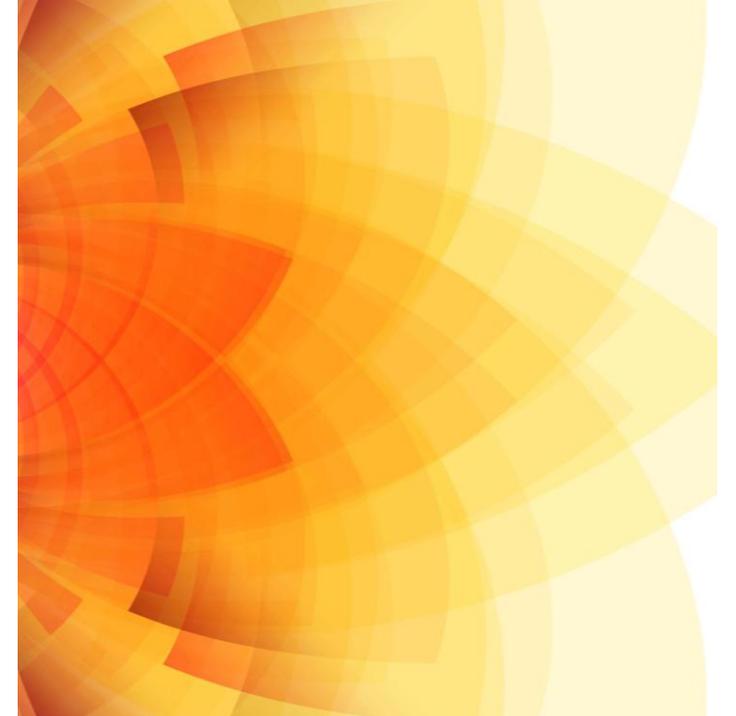
10th March 2026

10:30am



Conflict of Interest Statement

**NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST :
THERE ARE NO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST TO DECLARE**



AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. My Diagnosis
3. My Rehabilitation
4. How I Used My Experience to Create Change
5. How my Journey can help others



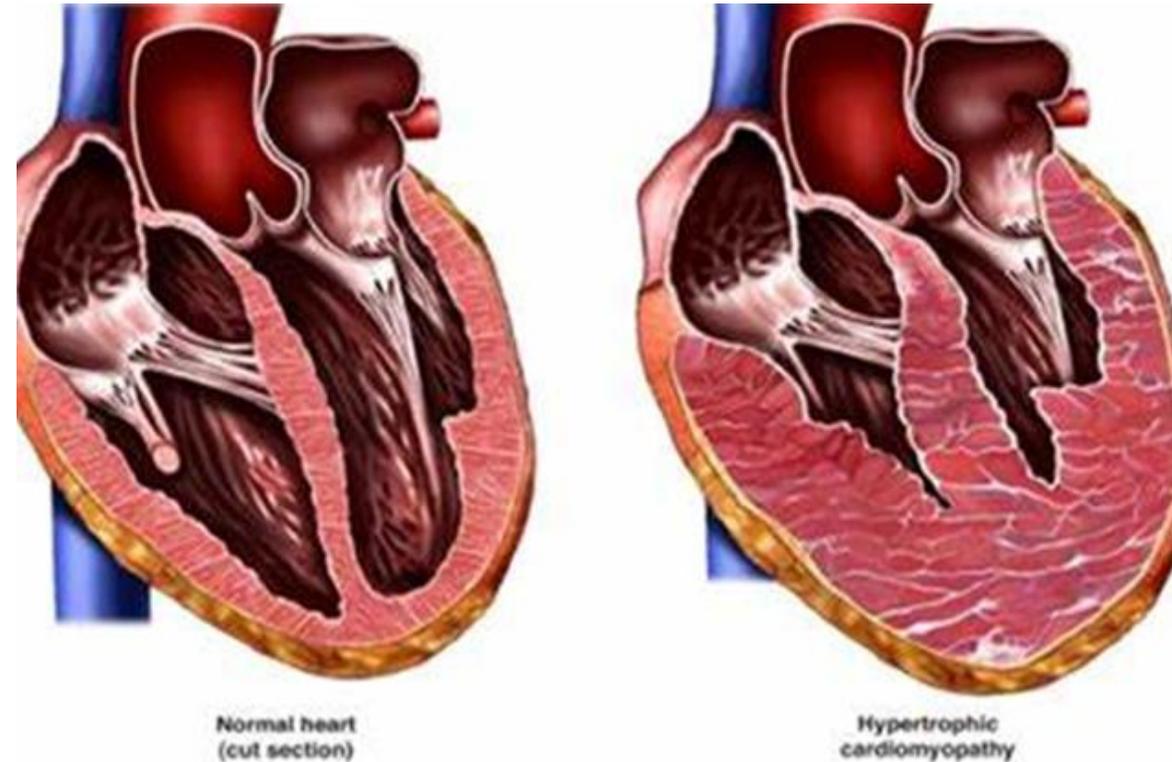


Introductions

- **My family**
- **At the time of the stroke**

My diagnosis

- 12th May 2008 age 36
- Left ventricular cardiomyopathy
- Aphasia, loose of speech & right-side weakness

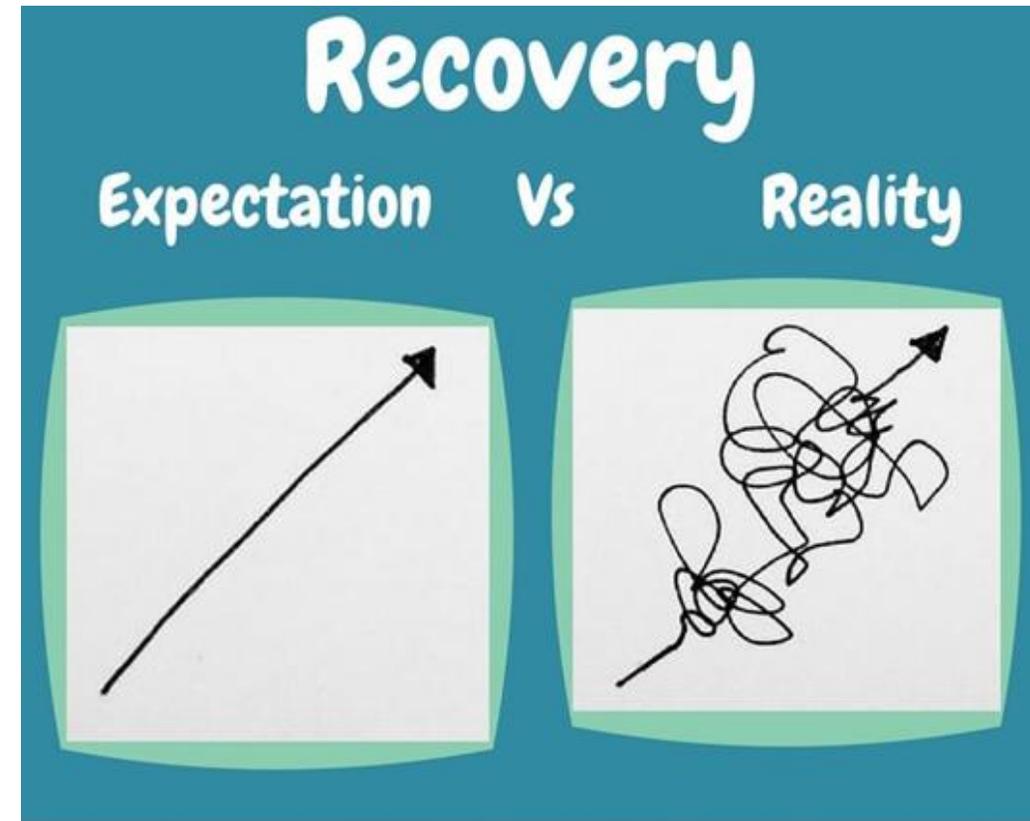


MY REHABILITATION

**3 weeks @ Kings College
Hospital**

**3 Months @ Frank Cooksey
Rehab centre**

**Speech therapy - Intensive 3
month**



different **Strokes**
Support for Younger Stroke Survivors





HOW I USED MY EXPERIENCE TO CREATE CHANGE

- 1. Sink or Swim – Resolved to swim**
 - 2. Get Involved**
Connect – Different Strokes – Community Groups – Advocacy
 - 3. Journey sparked a deeper purpose.**
 - 4. Lived Experience Ambassador for the Global Stroke Action Coalition - WSO**
- 

HOW MY JOURNEY CAN HELP OTHERS

- Advice
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations



Rehabilitation is a journey, not a race:

recovery from stroke, especially with aphasia, takes time and patience. Celebrate small victories, even a single word regained is progress.

Use your story to Connect: sharing my lived experience builds trust and understanding, especially in underserved communities.

Engage with professionals: collaborating with healthcare providers and researcher's helps bridge the gap between lived experience and clinical practice.

ADVICE



- **The power of communication:** Losing speech taught me how vital communication is, not just for expression, but for identity and connection.
- **Community matters:** Support from organizations like Different Strokes and Connect was essential. Recovery is stronger when shared.
- **Representation is critical:** Black and Asian communities face higher stroke risks. Advocacy must be culturally relevant and inclusive.

LESSONS LEARNED



- **Promote early intervention:** Campaigns should emphasize FAST (Face, Arms, Speech, Time) and other acronyms to improve stroke outcomes.
- **Improve access to speech therapy:** More funding and awareness are needed for post-stroke communication support.
- **Include survivors in policy-making:** Lived experience voices should inform stroke care guidelines, research, and healthcare training.
- **Empower through education:** Public speaking and storytelling are powerful tools to raise awareness and inspire change.

RECOMMENDATIONS





CLOSING REMARKS

Individuality

Every stroke is different, so each survivor requires personalised support and treatment.

Valuing Survivors

Stroke survivors bring lived experience, insight, and capability; they should be actively included, meaningfully engaged, and fairly rewarded for their contributions.





THANK YOU

ANY QUESTIONS?