

Quick Guide To HOSPITAL STAY

JOINING THE TEAM

I had not been hospitalized since I was 14 years old. Hospitals were a place to visit as little as possible. Most patients I visited over the years had time to adjust to the idea BEFORE being admitted.

I landed in a hospital setting after a short 15 min ride in an ambulance. I was in good hands, but anxious about the days and weeks ahead.



I don't think I had so much structure in my adult life as the kind I found surrounding me when hospitalized with my Stroke.

I had several things going for me.
I had retained all my cognitive abilities.
I was in a facility with a great Stroke Team.
And, I had my wife and sisters available
to help me sort things out.

I quickly learned that in a hospital stay, particularly for a Stroke, you get out of it exactly what you put into it.

This Quick Guide will cover my experiences with

My Medical Team
Survivor Responsibility
Aspiring To Acute Rehab
Transition Into Rehab

I am so glad I decided to join my RECOVERY TEAM !

JOINING THE TEAM



On admission to the hospital Stroke Unit, I was reluctant to be tested for COVID. The nurses had to be disappointed because this meant they had to completely “Gown Up” each time they administered to me for any reason. I quickly recognized this was a major imposition. So I asked a very compassionate nurse about the COVID test and explained my fear of having my brain stabbed in the process. I asked her if she had administered such a test. And, was she confident she could do so with minimum discomfort to me. She smiled and said “I am very good at performing this test.” I had the test, the results were negative, the staff did not have to put on a “space suit” to refill my water carafe. And, most importantly, I was now a committed member of my Care and Recovery TEAM.

The term TEAM began to have so much meaning in my life. I could actually feel the incredible power of a diverse group of individuals, each with a specific responsibility, working in concert with one another over obvious lines of responsibility. This teamwork was in evidence through each shift change and specialty visit. I marveled at the sharing of responsibility. Doctors, nurses, technicians, and specialists were eager to assist one another to make sure I was being cared for properly. I have been around many corporate “teams” and observed the petty jealousies and back biting that can plague such teams. This type of behavior was never in evidence by any member of My Roseville Stroke TEAM.

For these reasons I felt it was my obligation to take seriously and quickly my responsibility as a member of the TEAM.

MY TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

BE RESTED AND READY

The easiest thing you can do for the Team is get rest whenever you can. Don't fight sleep. Your brain does its best healing while you sleep.

GREET EACH STAFF MEMBER

Team members like to be addressed by their name. It shows you are paying attention and that you respect them.

SHOW INTEREST

Showing interest in all that was being done for me had two principal values. First, it showed my continuing interest in, and being engaged in the process. And second, that I was receptive to taking on such daunting a challenge.

ASK QUESTIONS

To this day, I wish that I had asked more questions and recorded the answers. This is especially true with regard to my medications. There were so many that I lost track. The one I did keep track of was of course the four-a-day shots in my stomach ! I had lots of time to formulate my questions.

JOINING THE TEAM



MY TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES (Continued)

It quickly became apparent that as a Team Member, I had certain responsibilities to myself and my team members. If this was going to work I needed to discover which responsibilities were mine, and how important was my delivering on them.

KEEP IT SAFE. BE ALERT TO FALL RISKS

Very quickly, the responsibility for avoiding a fall became primarily my responsibility. The Team members of course never let their guard down on this point - but, I was sold on its importance and took this serious concern home with me for the remainder of my recovery.

STAY HYDRATED

After rest, this is your most important responsibility. Because there were so many shift changes and so many staff offering to replenish my carafe, no one person kept track of my hydration. Here again is something that I did and have struggled with. My team kept an eye on my water carafe in the hospital. It was not until I returned home that I began to share the responsibility for my hydration.

SHOW RESPECT FOR TEAM MEMBERS

We have kind of a built-in respect for Doctors, but I soon discovered that everyone on my Team, from doctors on down to the hospital housekeeping staff, brightened with enthusiasm when I remembered their names, and more importantly showed them respect and gratitude for their many tasks. I quickly learned that they are a network of souls that keep track of your behavior and attitude toward them. Best, to remember who can rustle up that late-night snack, or other patient perks.

BE RECEPTIVE

I learned that if I did not appear open to new topics or procedures that later I might be behind the curve and not enjoy all that was available to me in my recovery and my potential.

BE RESPONSIBLE

To have a successful period of hospitalization, I had to take some of what needed to be done on my own shoulders. My responsibilities were to be conscious of fall risks, drinking enough water, being respectful of the people and processes around me, getting enough rest, and staying alert.

JOINING THE TEAM



MY TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES (Continued)

SHOWING MY POTENTIAL

Early on I was being judged for my potential to qualify for the best Acute Rehabilitation Kaiser had to offer. That meant that I had to demonstrate my readiness to my Doctors, Nurses, Occupational and Physical Therapists. I had to show them that I was capable of a higher level of rehabilitation. And, that I was prepared to do the work necessary each and every day as the early rehab trials were initiated.



UP FROM THE MINORS

Fortunately for me, I made the cut for the Varsity level acute rehab offered to a select few stroke survivors who had shown they were made of the right stuff. I went from being fussed over in a private room to sharing a four bed ward, a rigorous schedule of sleep, meals and therapies 2, 3, and 4 times a day - with no days off. This was the Big League of acute rehabilitation. These doctors, nurses, med techs and therapists were incredibly proud of those Stroke Survivors that met all of their challenges and graduated to at-home recovery with the best start possible.

I was lucky. I benefited from the Best. But, even had I done the work, and there was no room for me on the bench in Vallejo, I had proven to myself that I would have prospered in a Skilled Nursing Facility or even a direct-to-home outpatient rehabilitation. The people that had worked to get my stroke under control had given me the incentive to succeed regardless.