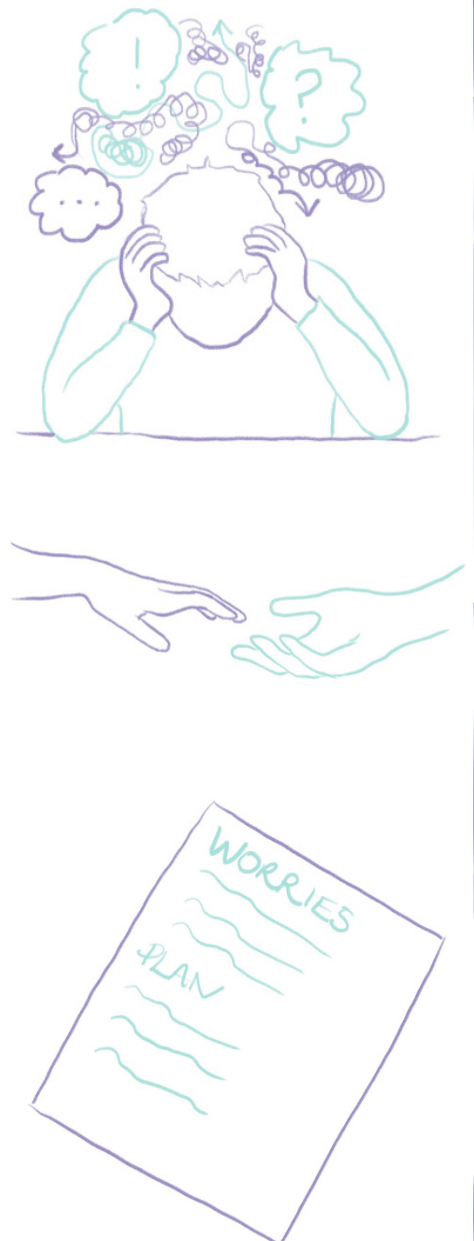


Adjusting to life changes following a PICU admission

For some families, life following a PICU admission may undergo a significant change, due to their child receiving a new diagnosis and/or requiring long term follow-up care. This can be an enormously stressful time, as families are both processing the recent events that have happened, grieving for the old way of life, and adapting to the new life changes. The process of coping with this can look different for everyone, but here are some ideas that might be helpful.

- During this period, it is normal to go through heightened emotional experiences, as your brain is processing all of these changes. The tipsheet on 'Dealing with Difficult Emotions' might give you some ideas of how to respond when these emotions are around.
- Have you been through anything similar before? If so, how did you respond that was useful and helpful in the long term? Was there anything that you learned from this experience that you could apply now?
- People often find it helpful to speak to close friends and family about what they are going through, or ask them for help with specific tasks. If you think this could be helpful, what friends, neighbours or relatives could you contact? A list of professional support is listed under the 'Recommended Support and Information' sheet.
- If you are noticing that your mind is constantly worrying, can you schedule in some 'worry time' into your day (e.g. for 20 minutes)? During this period, write down all of the worries that come to your mind. Pause and ask yourself if there is anything that you can do to help yourself in any way? Are there any small steps that you could take that could be helpful? Can you make an action plan and write down ideas? If there is nothing you can currently do, how can you spend your time and energy in a helpful way right now? Outside of worry time, make a quick note of any recurring worries, and bring them to the next scheduled 'worry time'.



COPING AFTER A PICU ADMISSION

A guide for helping young children and their parents

PICU CARE

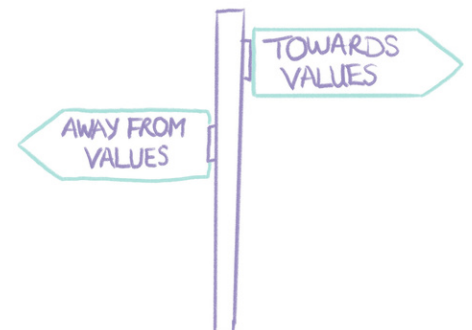


- If you can, practice compassion towards yourself. It can be helpful to ask yourself 'If someone I cared about very deeply was going through this experience, and feeling the same way as me, how would I treat them? What might I say or do? What would they need right now? Can I apply this to myself?'

- The things we might take for granted, such as eating regularly, hydration, sleep, and movement can be thrown off during very stressful periods such as this one. Missing out on these activities can play a big role in how we are feeling. If these are out of sync for you, can you take some steps to bring yourself, and your family, back into a routine again?



- During uncertain and stressful times, our values can be a guide for how to respond. What small steps can you take towards your values right now? Consider the values that are most important to you and your family, and think about whether you are still doing activities that are in line with those values. For example, if close family connection is an important value for you but some usual activities aren't possible right now, what new activities could you engage in as a family unit?



Some ideas adapted from 'What to do in a crisis' by Russ Harris