

RECOVER



PROGRAM

Rehabilitation and Recovery in Survivors of Critical Illness

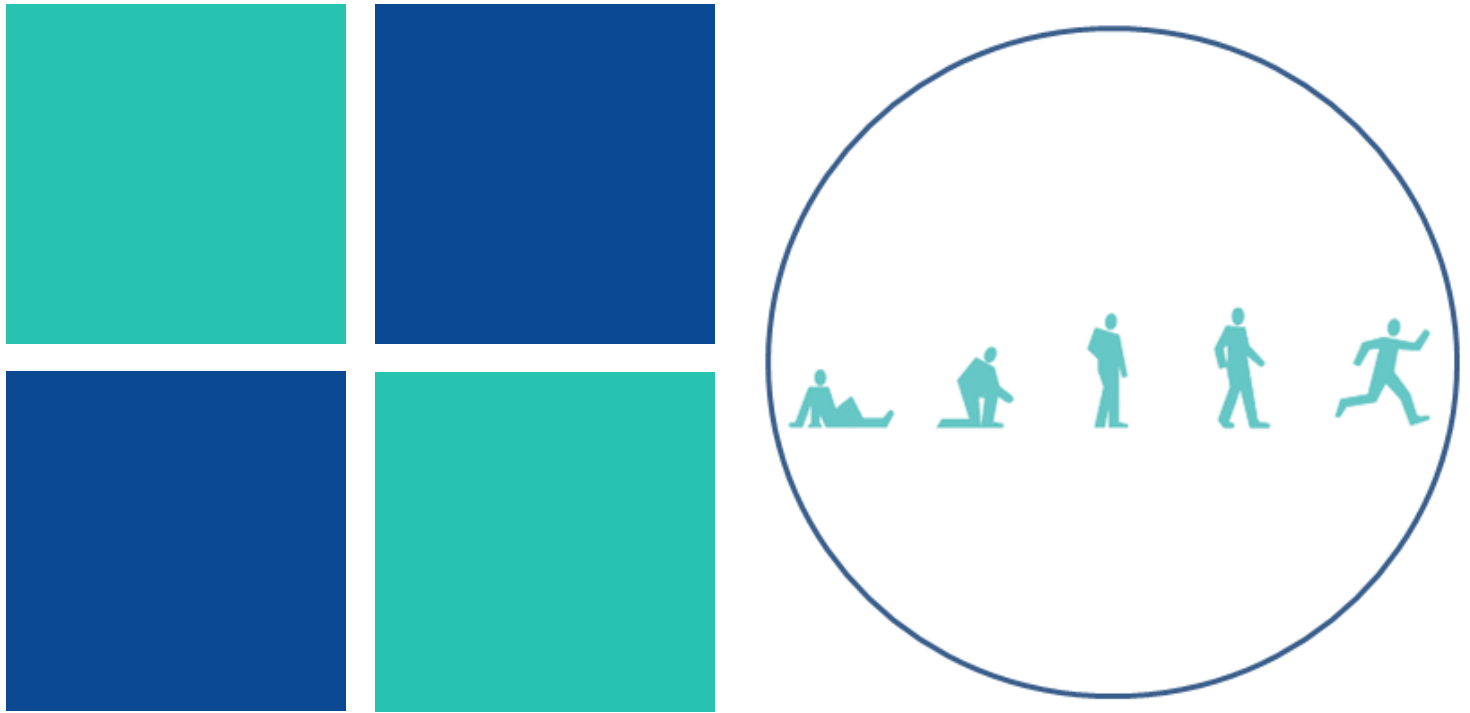
Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

RECOVER Program – A Patient and Family Centred practice standard for follow- up care after critical illness and National ICU-outcomes educational program.

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Intensive Care

When your loved one is first admitted to the ICU your greatest need may be for educational and emotional support as you try to understand what has happened and who you can talk to. You may feel helpless about the uncertainty of your loved one's outcome and you may wish to know everything you can about their chances for recovery.

Our RECOVER Program group hopes that this booklet can help you and/or your loved one to understand the effects of critical illness on the body and mind. This booklet may serve as a guide for each of you about what you may experience through the recovery pathway - from the ICU to community living.

The **RECOVER Navigator** will be introduced to you in the ICU. The Navigator is an experienced critical care nurse with extensive knowledge of complex critical illness and the patient and family needs during recovery.

She will:

- ⇒ Provide education, emotional support to you starting in ICU
- ⇒ Support you with regular follow-up during your time in hospital, inpatient rehabilitation and throughout one-year follow-up clinics
- ⇒ Coordinate communication between healthcare team members and any services needed.

Common challenges



This is a very stressful time for you. It is normal to feel stressed, anxious and tired. This can be an emotionally difficult experience and it may take time for you and the patient to adjust to what has happened.

There are many questions you may have about what is wrong with your family member: will they survive? How long will they be in the ICU? What can I do to help? When will they get better? The health care team can answer your questions to the best of their ability

As a caregiver you might be wondering what you can do to help?

- Talk to your loved one even though they are not awake. They may be able to hear and may be aware of being touched even though they do not appear to be awake. It is unlikely they will remember things as clearly when fully awake. It is comforting to hear a familiar voice when you are not feeling well.
- You could also try reading a newspaper, magazine or book to them.
- Bring in photos for your loved one to look at and it will assist the healthcare team to get to know what your loved one was like before they became ill. Music maybe soothing and may distract from the noise in the ICU.
- If your loved one is awake, you may find it hard to communicate with them if they can't speak or are weak. They may be able to write, or spell out words by pointing to letters or numbers on a letter board and common words you have written on a piece of paper.
- Help your loved one do routine activities (brushing teeth/hair, washing face, etc.) after speaking to
- Be patient. Ask simple questions. Wait a few seconds for a response.
- Ask frequent question about the health condition of your loved one and what to expect. Stay
- If you wish and are able to, join the medical team on rounds. Ask questions and ask for clarification if you don't understand what is being said.

Children visiting the ICU

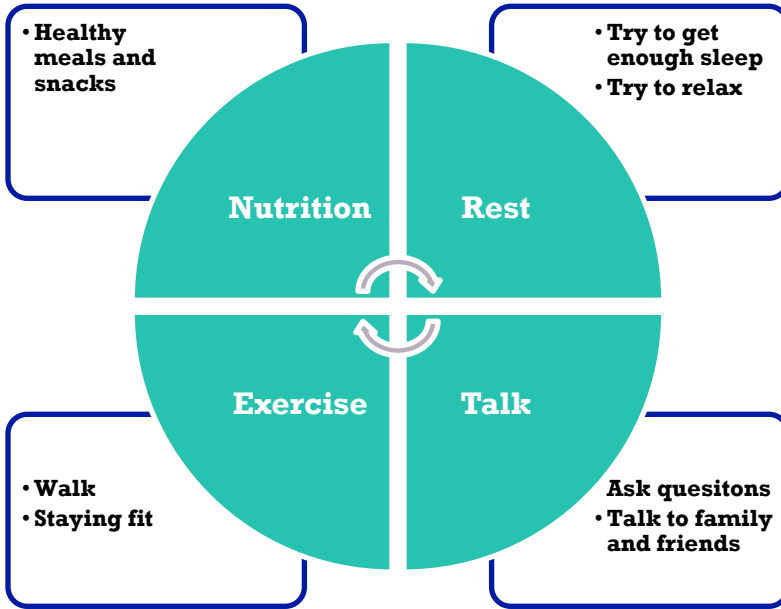
You may be wondering if it is ok for children to visit your loved one in the ICU. This can be a difficult place in the eyes of a child. Please think about the child's age and emotional understanding before bringing them into the ICU. Take time to talk with children and prepare them as to what to expect before visiting a loved one. Visiting a loved one may have a positive effect on the child. It may help them to cope and may also reduce their feelings of fear and separation. However, do not force your child to visit if they do not wish to.

While in the ICU, children must be accompanied by an adult. Please let the nurse know if you have any questions or concerns.

What may help my child cope

- Contact with a loved one or other close caregiver
- Honest explanations of what happened and what is happening, with frequent updates using words that are easy for the child to understand
- Provide reassurance and comfort
- Try to maintain rules at home and the expectations of the child's behavior
- Take time to talk and or play, about the challenges and changes that may be at this time
- Try and make sure the child feels included and part of the family, to help in feeling like they are a part of the process
- Plan for time to talk about their questions or worries
- Help the child feel connected to the loved one's or care giver by phone calls, Face time, Skype, etc.

Quick suggestions on how to deal with stress

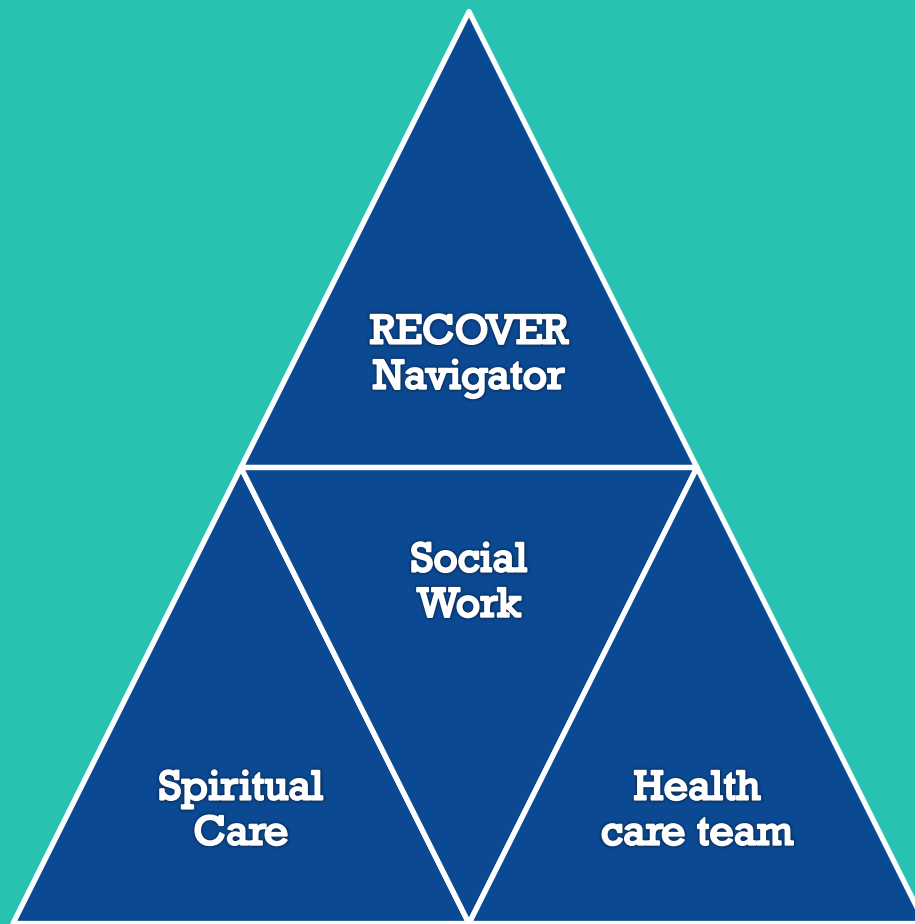


Supporting a loved one with a critical illness while in the ICU may be very stressful and emotionally and physically difficult. You may not realize how much stress you are facing. The effects of stress add up over time even though you may feel that you "are coping with things." Stress may weaken your ability to handle new challenges. We would encourage you to take breaks throughout your visit.

A few basic facts you should know about how to deal with stress:

- **Good nutrition:** Try your best to eat healthy meals and snacks.
- **Rest:** Try to sleep when possible and go home to sleep in your own bed. The ICU nurses are taking care of your loved one 24hrs a day and will notify you when there is a change in your loved one's condition. Take rest breaks to step away and focus taking care of yourself.
- **Exercise:** Try to exercise, stay fit and go for a walk. It can make you feel better and may relieve a bit of stress.
- **Asking questions and Talking to others:** The healthcare team along with the RECOVER Navigator will be able to provide information/education regarding what is going on with your loved one and what the various treatments are, and what the medications do. The RECOVER Navigator will give you information about the next step in the RECOVER pathway once your loved one has been transferred to the hospital ward.

We are here to Help



If you are concerned about coping with the stress of your loved one in the ICU we are here to help. The RECOVER Navigator is able to help. The ICU has a dedicated Social worker and a dedicated Spiritual Care worker who are available if you feel the need. We have mental health professional available.