

Please search for the following websites, or scan the QR code which will take you to the website.

www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk/our-services
for more information about the clinical health psychology department and patient information leaflets on various psychological difficulties.



www.ICUsteps.org is a registered charity run by critical care staff. See the website for helpful resources and details of a local support group.



www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-NHS-talking-therapies-service/
is a free talking therapy service for adults. See the website to find your local service or speak to your GP who can refer you.



For urgent mental health support: call 111. If yours or someone else's life is at risk or are unsafe call 999 or go to A&E immediately.

If you just need to talk, any time of day, call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or text 'SHOUT' to 85258 to contact the shout crisis text line.

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www.MerseyWestLancs.nhs.uk

Clinical psychology and critical care

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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This leaflet gives an overview of how emotions and psychological health can be affected by a stay on a Critical Care Unit, also known as Intensive Care.

Psychological experiences during a critical care stay

Critical care can be a frightening place for patients, families and friends. Often the medical treatment a person requires may affect their body and mind. Common psychological experiences are:

- Not being able to remember much of what has happened.
- Hallucinations, nightmares or dreams that seem very real and frightening.
- Confusion and sometimes feelings of paranoia that others are trying to hurt you.
- You may feel scared and vulnerable as you try to make sense of what is happening.
- If your stay is prolonged, you may start to feel lonely or frustrated.

These experiences may resolve whilst on the unit, however, sometimes they may remain even after leaving the unit.

Psychological recovery after a critical care stay

It can take many months to fully recover, both physically and psychologically from being critically ill.

It is likely that your physical recovery will impact how you feel emotionally. You may feel tired and have limited strength, which can make it harder to do your activities of daily living such as washing and dressing. This can understandably make people feel low and sometimes frustrated. Many people also think about what made them so critically ill, this can bring on anxiety as well as just generally be upsetting.

Common psychological experiences post critical care

- Feeling upset and tearful.
- Feeling guilty for the worry your loved ones experienced.
- Feeling tired.
- Dreams, nightmares or flashbacks.
- Feeling irritable.
- Feeling different as a person.
- Loss of confidence.
- Not fully remembering what happened to you.
- Having strange memories of critical care.
- Sleep difficulties.
- Feeling scared and worried that you will get ill again.

What can help me cope?

Often, the above experiences resolve on their own after a few months of retuning home. Some people are invited to a critical care follow up appointment, in which they can talk about their experiences. You might meet with a clinical psychologist.

How can clinical psychology help:

- Manage and understand distressing thoughts and feelings.
- Consider the impact of the illness on yourself and those around you.
- Develop new ways of coping, as well as building on existing strengths.
- Help make sense and process the memories and experiences of your critical care stay.
- Cope with the uncertainty of future health and treatment.
- Adjust to life after a critical care stay.