Contacts/ Further information
The PICU psychosocial team can be contacted during your stay, please ask your nurse or doctor to contact us and we will visit you to find out the best way of supporting you.

If you have left the hospital our contact numbers are:
Counsellor practitioners: 01223 256312
Clinical psychologist: 01223 216878

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.
Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.
When you have a sick child it can feel as if your whole world has been turned upside down. Some parents say everything feels unreal and it is almost as if they are watching themselves in the situation.

Naturally your focus is on your child and helping them recover/cope with what is happening to them. However, keeping yourself well will help your child. We all have different ways of coping. Think about what helps you to relax and de-stress. Some ideas that other parents have reported to find useful include:

**Exercise**
If you are normally active, sitting in hospital will be very hard. Check with staff when there is a good time to leave the ward, and go for a run or a walk near the hospital. However active you normally are, it is important to try to get fresh air regularly, many parents report that it is useful to take breaks from being on the unit/ward.

**Eating**
Ensure that you eat a balanced diet as much as possible. Ask people to bring in fresh food for you. Eating little and often can help you feel better, as can drinking plenty of fluids.

**Sleep**
If you are having trouble sleeping try the following; have a calm time in the few hours leading up to going to bed, have a warm bath/shower, read a book, avoid caffeine/alcohol close to bedtime.

**Doing something nice**
Everyone needs time to get away from worries and have a change. Perhaps it would be possible for you to meet a friend for coffee, go into town, read a book or try another activity that absorbs you… whatever works for you.

Please remember that it is normal to feel stressed in these circumstances. If you feel really overwhelmed, please ensure you talk to one of the counselling/psychology team or visit your GP for support. You are not on your own.

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**Accepting help**
When you are suddenly thrown into being at the hospital a lot, it is normal to feel worried or overwhelmed about keeping on top of the everyday things at home.

Often friends and family say “I wish I could help”. Obviously they cannot make your child better; however, there are many things that others can do to make life easier for the family. That in turn will ease the stress on the parents which can help them to care for their sick child.

Some people find it very hard to accept help from friends and family, and may be used to doing everything for themselves. Friends and family who offer to help usually welcome the chance to be able to help and to feel they can do something to make a difference.

**Things friends and family can help with:**
- Taking/collecting your other children to/from school
- Having your other children after school/to stay overnight
- Make a meal, either for now or for the freezer. Say what is liked and disliked by you and the family, don't be afraid to be specific.
- Organise a treat/outing for your other children
- Play games with your children
- Help keep the garden tidy
- Any household cleaning – bathrooms, vacuuming, cleaning the kitchen, clearing out the fridge, washing/ironing.
- Help out with pets – walking/caring/feeding.

The list can be endless, think about what helps you to feel less stressed and enables you to cope with what is going on for your child in hospital.