Website guidelines for writing your ICU experience

Step 1 – Write a full account on what happened and what you felt.

Write your story and be as complete and frank as you want. Some people have said that just putting things down on paper, putting them into the sequence in which they happened, though difficult to do, can help make sense of things, give perspective and be cathartic. This is your story and we hope you too find the process of writing out what you've been through is a help.

Step 2 – Edit your account so it is suitable to go onto a public website

While being true to your experiences, if you're going to share your story it needs to be edited down. The unedited version should be a help for you, but the edited version needs to be a help for other people. Editing your story down to the core elements will make it more readable for others, more powerful and of more help. For each sentence in the account, ask yourself the following:

- Does knowing this add to the story for the reader or can it be removed?
- Does this embarrass me or people who know or have cared for me? If it does, amend or remove the parts that do.
- Does it cause any problems for the staff at the hospital where I was treated?
- Is this helpful for other ex-patients, relatives and healthcare professionals to know?
- Can the hospital or can any member of staff be personally identified? Accounts are personal but it should not be possible to identify individuals from the story. No surnames should be included and for staff no first names either. With critical care being such a small area even a first name and city could identify them personally.
Step 3 – leave your edited version for a fortnight, and then read it again
Read again to check you are happy with the information you have provided and if you are, then submit it to ICU website.

Step 4 – the website editor will be in contact.

ICUsteps will not put every account on the website that they receive, and for those put on the website, will suggest changes if it is felt the account does not adhere to the guidelines above. If your account is put on the website, we will only use your first name, but you can give a different first name if you wish.

We really appreciate patients and relatives sharing their experiences because it can be a great help to others who have been through ICU treatment.

If after writing your account, you decide not to send it in to the website, there are still many other ways you can help ICU patients and relatives – look on our website or contact us for more details.

March 2020