



CIBS
CENTER

Helping a Loved One Who Has Delirium

What is delirium?

Delirium is a state of severe confusion.

People with delirium:

- Cannot think clearly
- Have trouble paying attention
- Have a hard time understanding what is going on around them
- May see or hear things that are not there
- May be agitated or withdrawn

What causes delirium?

Experts think delirium is caused by a change in the way the brain is working.

This can be caused by:

- Lack of oxygen in the brain
- Inability to use oxygen in the brain
- Chemical changes in the brain
- Certain medicines and drugs, including alcohol, sedatives, and pain medicine
- Infections or other illnesses
- Withdrawal from alcohol or nicotine
- Severe pain

Delirium is very common in an intensive care unit (ICU).

In fact, 2 out of 3 ICU patients have delirium.

What can I do to help my loved one?

Here are some things you can do while your loved one is in the hospital:



BRING

their glasses
and/or hearing
aids



TALK

with them
about family
and friends



REMIND

them where
they are what
day it is



TURN ON

the lights
during the day
and off at night



SILENCE

the room as
much as possible
at night

For more information: [ICUDelirium.org/Patients-and-Families/Overview](https://www.ICUDelirium.org/Patients-and-Families/Overview)