



## Norland Know-Hows

**Managing stress:  
taking care of  
yourself while  
taking care of others**

Managing stress and looking after our own wellbeing is essential to our health and happiness, and key to our ability to function well in our work. Research suggests one in six people report experiencing common mental-health problems such as anxiety or depression in any given week in England. Taking care of yourself is necessary to be able to effectively take care of others; to manage professional demands in the longer term, both must be woven together as part of your daily routine.

### **The five ways to wellbeing**

These have been developed in recent years as an evidence-based approach to looking after oneself.

#### **1. Connect**

Feeling connected with others is a fundamental human need. This could include family, friends, colleagues, neighbours and, for Norlanders, the Norlander community – other Norlanders and Norland Agency staff.

These relationships are cornerstones and need time invested in them on an ongoing basis. This can be hard when you work long hours in a physically tiring job; however, it is important to schedule in time when you will see or connect with people in person, on a phone or video call, or via messaging. Nannying has the potential to be isolating, so prioritise and plan how you can maintain and develop professional networks.

#### **2. Be active**

Rates of depression and anxiety are lower for those who engage in regular physical activity. This activity will be something different for everyone. For some, it might mean going for a run or bike ride, or it could be a walk, dancing or gardening. You will need to adapt it to your interests, ability, health and other factors, as it is really important that it is something that works for you, and something you can do on a regular basis.

You may be active as part of your work; if not, think about how you can build in more activity as part of your daily routine with your charges.

#### **3. Be curious**

This is about working to be present in the moment in order to be in touch with the 'here and now'. It links with mindfulness approaches, which many people find helpful.

There are simple things we can do that can increase our capacity to move away from troublesome thoughts and feelings. Here are a few ideas for starters:

- Take time to be consciously aware of nature, for yourself (and not just when it's part of an activity with your charges) – for example, grow some seeds, or notice the feel of the weather on your face.
- Prepare yourself a different meal or snack.
- Take a different route on a regular journey.

- Eat your favourite fruit while doing nothing else at the same time.

It is likely that you may do related activities in the course of your work, but for this way to wellbeing to have benefit, it is important that you have sufficient time and space to do it in your own way.

#### **4. Keep learning**

Learning new things or improving a skill helps to build confidence and self-esteem, alongside a sense of achievement. It can also be a form of relaxation, as the focus required can provide a break or escape from worries or concerns.

It could be that you develop an aspect of an existing skill, such as cooking; return to something you learned as a child, such as dancing; or learn something completely new. It's also an opportunity to connect with others, in person or online.

#### **5. Give**

Although being a nanny involves giving in so many ways, participating in giving in the wider community has strong wellbeing benefits. Extensive research into happiness in the field of positive psychology shows that more sustained happiness comes through helping others rather than through routes such as a good night out or a lottery win.

If you have sufficient time and energy, regular voluntary work can be very rewarding. This could include organisations such as Twins Trust, who will provide testimonials to add to your portfolio. If not, other ways of giving – such as through one-off projects, or acts of kindness and charity – also have similar effects.

### **Where to get more help**

GP – Make an appointment with your GP if you feel that you might benefit from treatment, talking therapies and/or medication.

NHS – There is a wealth of accurate and current information available online. This is one helpful link, but there is a lot of useful advice, on topics including sleep, low mood and coping with anxiety: [www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/tips-to-reduce-stress/](http://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/tips-to-reduce-stress/).

Togetherall – If you are an NQN, you can create an account using your Norland email address. Togetherall is completely confidential and has several helpful features, including measures to help you track your mood if you have concerns, and short, self-paced courses.

Mind – The Mind website ([www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)) is a good source of self-help material, including a detailed and very helpful guide on mental health at work: [How-to-be-mentally-healthy-at-work-2020.pdf \(mind.org.uk\)](#).

NQN and agency teams – You can always speak to the NQN and agency teams, who are a listening ear and happy to discuss work-related issues.