

### 3. Talk to someone

It is really important that you, as a parent/carer, have someone to talk to and ask for help. This can be anyone, as long as they are someone who listens well and takes your feelings seriously. It is okay to need a bit of extra support to help your child adapt to their health condition. This is so you can both be positive about the future and better tackle any difficulties that come along. Having someone to talk and go to for help has many benefits, including:

- It helps you to adapt to changes in your life by talking them through with someone.
- It can help you to feel more supported, as you know there is always someone else to turn to when you are in need.

### 4. Be physically active

Being active is not only good for your physical health, but it can also improve your mental wellbeing by raising your self-esteem and releasing chemicals in your brain to positively change your mood. It's best to find activities you enjoy and make them a part of your life.

For example:

- Go outside and walk or run
- Practice yoga at home (or go to a class)
- Other ideas include: gardening, walking to places and dancing

**These steps will help to reduce stress in your bucket. Try different ones to see what works for you.**

**Remember to keep doing them. Often the difficulty is that we stop doing these things when we are stressed as we feel too busy.**

## Further Support

Children tend to be influenced by the way you talk about their condition, so it is important for you to have the support and time to understand their condition and be able to talk openly with them. If needed, it is important to seek some extra support if you feel you would benefit from it. Some places to look for extra help include:

- Call Just One Norfolk on 0300 300 0123
- Text Parentline on 07520 631590
- Call the Young Minds Parent Helpline on 0808 802 5544

Alternatively, speak to your close friends, family members or your GP about how you are feeling, so that you can get the best support available.

### Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

**Telephone:** 01553 613351 or 01553 613343

**Email:** pals@qehkl.nhs.uk

**Letter:** PALS, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust, Gayton Road, King's Lynn PE30 4ET

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

# Looking after your wellbeing

## A Guide for Parents and Carers

### Department of Clinical Health Psychology

This document can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact:

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## What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy. Looking after your own mental health and wellbeing is really important.

## Stress

Parenting is a full-time job - as well as the rewards, it can be tiring and stressful.

Stress is a normal part of everyday life. When your child has a health condition, there can be several triggers for stress e.g. worry about the impact of their condition on them and managing practical demands including hospital appointments and medical treatments.

Stress can be a positive thing - pushing us to get things done, challenging ourselves and finding out we can cope with more than we thought.

However, we all have times when the pressure of life can feel a 'bit much'. It may be for a short period or can be something long lasting. It can be hard to manage. There are many ways that stress affects us physically and emotionally and it is important that we find ways to look after ourselves.

The stress bucket is a helpful way of thinking about stress and ways to help...

## The Stress Bucket

Everyone has a stress 'bucket'. The size of the bucket is different for everyone. This is based on genes, life experiences etc.

Imagine stress as water filling the bucket.

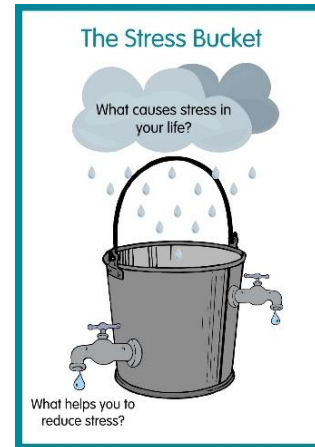
Our buckets can only take so much before they get full. When they get full, they overflow. This is when our stress gets too much.

The "overflow" looks different for different people, some may go quiet, some may shout, some may cry...

We can do things to help.

- 3) We can learn what is filling the bucket and look for ways to reduce it:  
There are lots of things that make us feel stressed, such as worrying about work or juggling responsibilities. We can help by reducing things that make us stressed, or stopping them completely. These steps help to reduce the water flow into the bucket.
- 4) We can also insert taps or holes in our bucket. These help to empty the bucket. We need to remember to keep doing these things.

Here are some examples of ways to create holes in our bucket that other parents have said are helpful...



## 4 ways to improve wellbeing and create holes in our bucket

### 1. Allow time for yourself

It is important to look after yourself and take a break if you need one. We know this is hard as we all have busy lives, but it will be helpful for your own mental wellbeing and will also benefit your child. If you can, allow a bit of time each day to do things that you enjoy and that are just for you. It doesn't have to be for long. Here are a few examples of how to do this:

- Take time for yourself after your child/children have gone to bed
- Wake up earlier than everyone else
- Spend an extra few minutes in the shower
- Ask someone to help

### 2. Practice mindfulness activities

Mindfulness helps you to pay more attention to the present moment. If you are feeling stressed or anxious, mindfulness can help draw your attention back to the present moment. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges. Try to practice this when you are feeling well so that you remember what to do when you are stressed. Tips for mindfulness:

- Focus on your breathing – take deep breaths if you are feeling stressed
  - Try some grounding techniques like **sensory grounding**
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|---|----------------------|--|
| 5 | THINGS YOU CAN SEE   |  |
| 4 | THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH |  |
| 3 | THINGS YOU CAN HEAR  |  |
| 2 | THINGS YOU CAN SMELL |  |
| 1 | THINGS YOU CAN TASTE |  |