

# NANNY MAGAZINE

WINTER 2022

**THE  
PRIVATE  
SERVICE  
INDUSTRY  
RECRUITMENT  
CRISIS**

**AVOID  
THESE  
FIVE  
NANNY  
JOB  
MISTAKES**

**HOW YOU  
CAN FOSTER  
A SECURE  
ATTACHMENT  
STYLE**

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**WINTER 2022**



# NM

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Michelle LaRowe

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## PUBLISHER

*Nanny Magazine*, a division of Longhorn Leads, LLC

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Michelle LaRowe

Happy New Year and welcome to our first issue of 2022!

As we welcome in the New Year, it is my hope that it is a season of health, peace, joy, and prosperity for us all.

As we continue to battle the global pandemic, we have dedicated this issue to supporting all of those in our industry as we continue to navigate the impacts of COVID. From landing the job you love during the labor shortage, to working with parents who have experienced trauma, this issue is full of practical strategies, advice, and tips that can bring positive change to you and those in your circle.

While I am not one for making New Year's resolutions, this year I do resolve to live more generously. From loving more to sharing more resources, it is my hope to bring hope to those who may still be suffering from the pandemic.

I challenge you, too, to resolve to spread joy, peace, hope, and love as you continue to navigate the new year.

*PS- Enjoy this issue? Let me know what you liked best by sending an email to [info@NannyMag.com](mailto:info@NannyMag.com).*



Michelle



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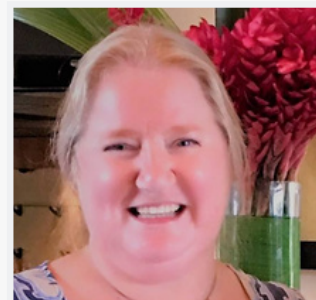
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## CONFERENCES

The **International Nanny Association** will be hosting its 2022 Annual Conference March 31 - April 3, 2022 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Please visit [inaconference.org/](http://inaconference.org/) to register or learn more about this event.

**International Nanny Training Day** will be celebrated April 9, 2022. More information about this event can be found at [nannypalooza.com/nntd.html](http://nannypalooza.com/nntd.html) as it becomes available.

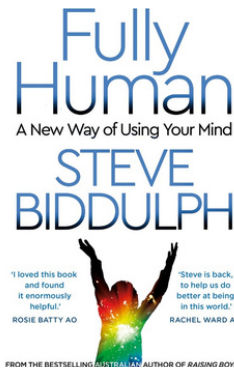
The **Great British Nanny Conference** will be held April 30, 2022 in Manhattan, New York featuring speakers from both the US and the UK. To learn more or to purchase your ticket, visit [uknanny.org/new-york/](http://uknanny.org/new-york/).

The 2022 Inaugural **NCS Enrichment Conference** will be held June 2-5, 2022 at the luxurious 5-Star Omni Resort & Spa at Montelucia in Scottsdale, Arizona! Visit [www.ncscon.com](http://www.ncscon.com) to learn more.

The **US Nanny Association** will hold its annual conference in September 2022. More information will be available on their website in April 2022. Visit [usnanny.org/conference/](http://usnanny.org/conference/) for conference updates as they become available.

**Nannypalooza** will be held October 7-9, 2022 in Raleigh, North Carolina at the Double Tree by Hilton Raleigh-Durham Airport location. For conference updates, to purchase your ticket, and to learn more about this annual event, please visit [www.nannypalooza.com](http://www.nannypalooza.com).

The 2022 **APNA Conference** details will be held October 19-22, 2022 in San Diego, California. Visit [theapna.org/](http://theapna.org/) for updates as they become available.



### Steve Biddulph Provides Professional Development to the Placement Solutions family in Melbourne, Australia

I imagine most of you know the name Steve Biddulph, psychologist, writer, and speaker. Steve has been a fixture in the Australian, and indeed international, parenting education landscape for over thirty years. His books, including *The Secret of Happy Children*, *Raising Boys*, *Raising Girls*, and many others, have been translated into dozens of languages and can be found in millions of homes.

We recently welcomed Steve to the Placement Solutions family where he presented a webinar about the release of his latest book, *Fully Human: A New Way of Using Your Mind*. Steve spoke to us about how the themes of this book can be applied to the care of children, whether as parents or carers.

He started by sharing a story from the book about a patient he encountered early in his career who who experienced anxiety. It turned out that her situation had been initiated after she went to help someone in a train station parking lot but, for no discernible reason, pulled back at the last minute. She drove away in panic.

"There's a part of us which knows what's what. It is always there, always functioning," said Steve.

In this case, the woman's gut reaction had been well founded. Later on the news, she saw that this same stranger in the parking lot had gone on to assault another person shortly afterward.

Steve made the point that our gut feelings, which form in the right side of the brain—the "wild creature side," as he called it—can very often be right, even when we aren't able to describe those feelings in words.

We can draw on these feelings in our dealings with others, including children. But the opposite is true as well. Steve spoke about how newborn babies are acutely aware of the facial expressions of those around them and of the mood between two people, such as their parents. Babies care very little about the physical conditions around them, but "they care a lot about the emotional vibes around them."

Steve spoke about how some research suggests that the connections between a baby and its carer are so strong, in the sense of the baby's right brain reflecting their carer's, that "carer and baby should be treated as a single unit." In other words, if we want to develop strong mental health in our children, we need to support the mental health of those who care for them.

A very important component of this is the need to be completely present with the child you care for. "You've got to be there for a child," he said. This takes time. "Hurry is the enemy of love."

His advice was to focus on yourself for a moment. "Go down the middle of your body and notice what's going on inside. As you notice, you will automatically start to settle. And the child will notice this."

Steve went on to describe the "four-story mansion" that makes up our minds, consisting of the body on the ground floor and our emotions, intellect, and spirit on the floors above. As is often the case with someone as knowledgeable as Steve, he ran out of time at this point. "I could talk for hours about this," he said, and we know he could!

Thanks, Steve, for a fascinating webinar. We look forward to reading your book!

*Submitted by Louise Dunham, CEO of Placement Solutions*



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT BULLYING

By Dr. Harshi Dhingra

Although it isn't a new problem, bullying has been at the forefront of the news in the last several years. The subject is more widely known due to tragic, high-profile situations of students committing suicide after being bullied. Bullying involves unwelcome, hostile behavior from one child to another, most likely repeatedly. There is generally an imbalance or perceived imbalance of power. Bullying can be verbal, social, physical, sexual, or racist, and cyberbullying has become common in recent years.

Verbal bullying consists of teasing or name-calling. Social bullying involves leaving one person out of a group or spreading rumors about them. Physical bullying includes kicking, hitting, punching, and stealing items or money. Obviously, sexual bullying is unwanted advances, comments, or criticism concerning sexual parts or sexual orientation. Racist bullying is the use of racial slurs or treating someone badly based on their race or culture. Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology, most often a computer.

A 2019 survey performed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) revealed that 16 to 19 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 were bullied on school property, while 27 to 28 percent of students in grades 6 through 8 experienced bullying on school grounds. The same study showed that mixed-race and female students are the most bullied. According to the CDC, around 40 percent of lesbian, gay, or bisexual students face bullying in school settings.

## Dangers and Effects of Bullying

Bullying doesn't just impact victims. It also negatively impacts perpetrators and bystanders. It can lead to drug or alcohol abuse, damaged mental, emotional, or physical health, and even suicide.

### Bullied Students

Bullied students are often lonely and withdrawn and lose interest in academics and school activities. They might experience depression, health issues, anxiety, decreased school attendance, and changes in eating and sleeping patterns. These problems can continue into adulthood. In some instances, a bullied child will fight back with a violent act. In 1990, twelve of fifteen school shootings were committed by students who were bullied.

### Students Who Bully

While it may seem as though a bullying child is a "bad kid" that should just be punished, there are repercussions that need to be addressed. A child or teen who bullies others is more prone to alcohol and drug use, fighting in school, vandalism, and dropping out of school. As adults, they often have issues with authority and display violent behaviors like spousal and child abuse.

### Observers

Youths who observe bullying are also in danger. Mental conditions like depression or anxiety can develop in teens who watch bullying occur. The use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco is common, as is skipping school.



Dr. Harshi Dhingra is a licensed medical doctor with a specialization in pathology. She is currently employed as faculty in a medical school with a tertiary care hospital and research center in India. She has vast experience gained from over a decade in diagnostic, clinical, research, and teaching work. She has a strong interest in medical content writing and reviewing. She also has several publications and citations in indexed peer-reviewed journals.

## How to Tell Whether the Kids You Nanny Are Involved in Bullying

Many students who are being bullied won't admit it easily. They may feel threatened or too embarrassed to discuss it. Some signs to look for in the child you are caring for include:

- A lack of friends
- Low self-esteem
- Reluctance to go to school, ride the bus, walk, or participate in school activities
- Scrapes, cuts, or bruises with no explanation
- Depression, sadness, moodiness, or loneliness
- Lost clothing and books
- Sudden changes in grades
- Loss of appetite
- Nightmares or trouble sleeping (If you aren't with them at night, check with the parents.)
- A tendency to make excuses about not attending school

If your charge is a bully, you may notice the following:

- An absence of compassion for others
- Violent behavior
- Controlling, domineering behavior
- Aggressiveness
- A tendency to be easily angered and frustrated
- Rule-breaking behavior

### What to Do about Bullying

If a child is being bullied, don't imply that they have done anything wrong. Acknowledge what's happening, and let them know you're on their side. Questions you could ask include "Is there anyone at school that teases you or makes you feel bad?" and "Do you feel left out at school, or are you being picked on?" The first course of action after speaking with the parents is to contact the school and the child's teacher. Schools are required to address bullying immediately.

If the child is the aggressor, take it seriously and don't say things like "Oh, she was just kidding around" or "Boys will be boys." Never make excuses for a bully, and accept any punishment the school deems necessary. Have a conversation about why bullying is happening, and determine whether the child needs counseling to address anger, negative ideas, and insecurities. Ensure that the student understands empathy and that bullying is not okay. Explain the different types of bullying and why each one is wrong. Continued communication and education about the subject are important to make certain it doesn't continue. Involving the parents of the child you nanny is essential so you can all work together to help the child.

*Dr. Harshi Dhingra provided the following sources for her article. These sources may also serve as helpful resources for nannies and families.*

### Bullying

[nces.ed.gov](https://nces.ed.gov)

### Preventing Bullying

[cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)

### How Bullying Increases Risk of Substance Abuse

[sunshinebehavioralhealth.com](https://sunshinebehavioralhealth.com)

### Effects of Bullying

[stopbullying.gov](https://stopbullying.gov)

### Signs Your Child May Be a Bully

[stompoutbullying.org](https://stompoutbullying.org)

### Signs Your Child is Being Bullied

[stompoutbullying.org](https://stompoutbullying.org)

### What To Do If Your Child Is A Bully

[stompoutbullying.org](https://stompoutbullying.org)



# ASK THE NANNY

Dear Stephanie,

*I interviewed with a family I like, but they told me they have nanny cameras in their home. I worry they might micromanage me. I also don't like the idea that the parents don't trust me enough that they need to use nanny cams. What should I do?*

*Feel Spied On*

Dear Feel Spied On,

Parents should never simply rely on surveillance cameras to protect their children or home. The best defense against child endangerment and theft is for parents to conduct comprehensive interviews, run diligent background checks and criminal checks, and speak personally with nanny candidate references before hiring a nanny.

But, like it or not, it is legal for parents to use nanny cameras in the public areas of their homes in all states in America. Most job sites, including day care centers, use surveillance cameras these days.

Many nannies welcome the use of surveillance cameras because it protects them from being accused of theft, child neglect, or child abuse.

Rather than not accepting a nanny position because a family has surveillance cameras, I would discuss with the parents that you are worried about being micromanaged and not being trusted. Before starting the job is the time to voice your concerns.



Using nanny cams in homes is an emotional debate between parents and nannies.

But surveillance cameras are just an extension of what is already present in most jobs and day care centers throughout the nation. I would focus on your concerns about not being trusted or micromanaged before starting the job, rather than declining a nanny job simply because they have nanny cameras.

I hope this helps,  
Stephanie Felzenberg

## Stephanie Felzenberg

Stephanie has worked as a professional nanny, family assistant, and household manager since 1993. She was the newsletter editor of the International Nanny Association for four years; she is currently the newsletter editor for the US Nanny Association and has been the advice columnist for Nanny Magazine since 2013. See her nanny blog at [www.bethebestnanny.com](http://www.bethebestnanny.com).

Stephanie



Submit Your Questions to Stephanie  
[info@NannyMag.com](mailto:info@NannyMag.com)



# AGENCY ADVICE

FROM LEIGH ABERLE + MAGGIE HOHNE  
FAMILY FIRST HOUSEHOLD STAFFING AGENCY

*I am ashamed to admit that a few years back, I filed for bankruptcy. My nanny friends always urge me to go through an agency to find a job, but I haven't because I am afraid that it will come up. Will filing for bankruptcy disqualify me from working with an agency?*

When job searching, some background checks may include a credit report, but you are not required to disclose this information to current or potential employers. Currently, private employers are not allowed to fire you based on your debt status, but they are allowed to consider it when making hiring decisions. If they ask for a credit report and you do not give permission to obtain one, they are allowed to reject your application. Most employers are not going to base their hiring decision on

your credit score alone unless the work you will be doing is related to financial responsibility. In our industry, this could be household management tasks like paying vendors, bills, and mechanics with family credit cards.

Filing for bankruptcy is not something to be ashamed of. If it comes up in the interview process, the best thing to do is be open and honest about it and frame it as a lesson well learned.

## **Leigh Aberle + Maggie Hohne**

Family First Household Staffing Agency was founded in 2017 to help busy professionals in Charlotte, North Carolina, and across the country find long-term career nannies. Recognizing that families did not have the resources or time to find exceptional nannies, they have made the process simple and seamless. Family First helps educate parents on how to employ household staff and supports them even after a placement has been made. Family First Household Staffing Agency aligns with the culture and regulations of the Association of Premier Nanny Agencies and the International Nanny Association and has been a three-time co-host of International Nanny Training Day.



## FINDING YOUR NICHE

# WORKING AS A CANADIAN NANNY

COURTNEY ENNS, THE NANNY COMPANY INC.



My name is Courtney, and I love children and have been looking after them for as long as I can remember. I started babysitting for families in my community as soon as I was old enough to do so. I took a babysitting course when I was twelve years old because I saw that helping children learn and socialize in a positive way was something important and worth investing my time in. After eight years of experience in babysitting and three years in nannying, my main goal has stayed the same: I want parents to know their children are in good hands when they leave the house.

### **Before You Leave**

I leave my house at 7:30 a.m. to arrive at my family's home at 8:00 a.m. My routine includes waking up at 7:00 a.m. and checking the weather for the day. This helps me choose appropriate clothing for myself and for the children once I arrive at the family's home. Part of my routine is getting enough sleep the night before since this affects my energy and attitude.

### **While You Are There**

I arrive at my work family's home at 8:00 a.m. The first thing I do is put my lunch bag in the fridge and wash my hands. With COVID-19, I want to do everything I can to help fight the spread of germs. After this, I wake up the twin girls, who are two years old. The twins then help me wake up their younger sister, who is fifteen months. They all stay in their pajamas until breakfast is over (they get to stay cozy in their PJs a little longer)!

While I prepare breakfast, the girls play while they wait. Sometimes they are eager to help me get breakfast ready. When they are playing and don't want to come sit down at the table to eat, I encourage them with, "I would like some help carrying your plates to the table. Can anyone help me with this?" This gets them to the kitchen right away!

Throughout the day, they help me with tasks—emptying the dishwasher, putting away toys before taking out a new one, and folding and hanging laundry. The family has laid out expectations about tasks for me to do throughout the day. Some of these tasks include washing laundry, sweeping and vacuuming, taking out garbage and recycling, and cooking and baking food the girls love. Good nutrition is very important to my nanny family. At snack time, I serve the girls their selection of fruit and sometimes a homemade granola bar. At lunch, I always serve fruit, vegetables, or both on the side.

When caring for the youngest child, I encourage her to do small tasks for self-care. This involves brushing teeth, putting shoes on or taking them off, eating alone with a utensil, putting trash in the garbage, and so on. Self-care for the twins looks like getting dressed, using utensils when eating, putting shoes on or taking them off, washing hands after eating, brushing teeth, and so on. The twins are potty trained, so I remind them to use the potty or tell me when they must go pee. This also means going to the bathroom before we get in the car, going outside, or having a meal. We have been spending most of our time learning letters and numbers, reading, coloring, and playing outside.

We have also been moving into independent play. This brings out their imagination, teaches them to learn to have fun on their own, develops social independence, and encourages calmness. I believe this also helps children to have confidence in their own abilities. Through independent play, the twins have found the world of pretending. Their favorite game is pretending to go shopping at the grocery store. They use their imagination to dream up riding in a van. It's during these times of pretending where I teach them skills: "Buckle your seat belt before you start driving" and "Wait your turn in line at the checkout."

I leave the family's home after the girls go down for a nap at 2:00 p.m. Before nap time, we clean up the toys and read a book to get settled. My goodbye to the children is getting them tucked in their beds and saying, "See you tomorrow morning!"

### **What You Do After**

When I leave the family's home, I go through the day in my mind. I ask myself questions like, "Did I respond to the children positively and effectively in every situation?" and "What new things did they learn today?" As a "parent for the day," I want to make sure I respond to them with love.

EXPERT TIPS

# 5 TIPS FOR WORKING WITH PARENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

By Imani N. Byers, LMSW, MPH, BCD



*Content Warning: This article discusses various forms of trauma, including pregnancy loss, sexual abuse, and violence.*

According to FHEHealth, “Trauma is defined as the result of an event that is particularly jarring for someone, whether it’s life threatening or harmful physically or emotionally, and have lasting effects on their psychological health.”

As professionals, it is crucial to be aware of the different types of trauma and how to appropriately interact with parents who have experienced traumas, whether physical (such as acts of sexual and domestic violence) or emotional (such as grief from the loss of a pregnancy or child). It is important to be mindful of the ways we interact with the families we serve to ensure we are coming from a space of trauma sensitivity.

**Imani N. Byers, LMSW, MPH, BCD**

Imani is a licensed master social worker and BEST-certified doula. She owns and operates Rebyrth Wellness, where she provides holistic full-spectrum doula services, life coaching, and placenta encapsulation services. She has assisted over thirty families on their fertility, birth, and postpartum journeys as well as a host of families in the perinatal mental health space. She received her undergraduate degree from Howard University and her dual master’s in public health and social work from the University of Georgia. She currently resides in Atlanta with her partner Sheldon and their three-year-old boxer puppy, Khloe. Contact her at [hello@rebyrthwellness.com](mailto:hello@rebyrthwellness.com).

Having a trauma-sensitive or trauma-informed approach is having a working awareness of trauma in the context of our work. It's being able to appropriately engage with families in a manner that is not triggering or re-traumatizing. Here are a few ways you can interact with your families and offer trauma-sensitive comfort, support, and guidance.

### 1. Acknowledge Their Truth

Individuals who have experienced trauma sometimes have the feeling that no one believes their story. It's our job to not be one of those people. Not doing so can lead to feelings of helplessness, depressed moods, and mistrust. Our job is to show up and hold space for their story within our scope of practice. Acknowledge that what happened to them has caused a change in how they interact with the world. Offer encouraging words, not ones of opinions or ones that inadvertently silence their experience. Avoid using phrases such as "It's over now," "Calm down," or "Don't cry," and instead encourage them by validating their feelings with phrases like "It's okay to cry" or "You didn't do anything wrong."

### 2. Respect Their Boundaries

Do not assume that because your clients have shared information about their experience that they will always be willing to discuss it with you. Remember, it is not your duty to initiate conversations about their experiences, but rather offer your listening ear and words of encouragement. It is also important to note that clients will have moments of happiness, but that does not indicate that their experience was any less traumatic. When in doubt, unless your client expresses a need to talk about it, do not take it upon yourself to initiate a conversation about their experience. It is theirs to process and discuss as they choose.

### 3. Recognize Triggers

Triggers are situations that remind the person of their trauma. It is important to be aware of things that may cause "flashbacks" of the traumatizing event. Be mindful of the language you use when interacting with survivors of trauma. Always leave room for choice—sometimes that is what they were stripped of. Also, feel free to ask your client how they would like to be engaged. Find out what works for them, and never make assumptions. A great way to learn more about recognizing signs and triggers would be to take a Mental Health First Aid training offered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

### 4. Offer Your Support

Supporting a client who is a trauma survivor takes compassion, empathy, and understanding. It is important to know that it is not your job to save your client from what they experienced, but offer consistent validation and support of their experience. This ties the first three tips together. Being supportive involves acknowledging their truths, respecting their boundaries, and recognizing their triggers. However, if you notice that your support isn't enough, be prepared to offer additional resources.

### 5. Have Referrals Available

Sometimes, the journey our clients are on is too great for us to undertake. With that understanding, it is especially important to create a mental health resource list for your service area to provide to all of your clients. Building relationships with mental health professionals in the area can not only increase your reach of clientele, but it shows your families that you are prepared and equipped to help support them should a crisis arise. It is important to be cognizant of the signs of mental health crises so that appropriate measures can be taken when needed. I also recommend having the national crisis and suicide hotline and text number available for your clients should anything arise while you are not present.

The truth is, most people we encounter will have experienced some sort of trauma. While it is not our job to help them process the trauma they have experienced, we should have the due diligence to ensure we are capable of holding a trauma-sensitive space for others to discuss their feelings. Being able to acknowledge their truths, recognize their triggers, offer support, and have referrals available can make their experience that much better—and it could help save their lives.

If you have a client that is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact 1-800-662-HELP or text GO to 741741 to be connect with a licensed crisis counselor.

Nanny Magazine,

Wow! What a beautiful magazine, Michelle! I truly appreciate the free issue. Does it come in the form of a paperback (not sure what they're called) or only digital? I've been a nanny for over ten years, and I feel like it's time I venture out to possibly starting a nanny-placement agency. I just happened to stumble across a posting about your magazine, and I am so happy that I did. I would love to offer your magazine to nannies and their families if I am able to get my placement agency up and running. Is that okay with you? May I ask how much a subscription cost? How often it is sent out? Any and all help is greatly appreciated. Thank you again for the lovely issue. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Adriana Mazzola

*Nanny Magazine is published quarterly as a digital publication. A digital subscription is \$21 per year and includes access to all back issues.*

# NEED FOR NANNIES AND NCS HITS UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS

BY DONNA SHANNON

Since 2004, Donna Shannon has empowered job seekers with high-quality classes, resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and job-search coaching programs. With over eight years of experience in human resources and recruiting, Ms. Shannon knows the tactics that get past the screening process and impress hiring managers. In 2014, Donna was selected as DEMA's Educator of the Year and continued to work with private service professionals across the country. In addition, she has presented at conferences in Dallas, San Francisco, Tampa, New Orleans, and elsewhere, including the International Nanny Association and National Nanny Training Days.

The private service industry is experiencing a recruitment crisis. The problem? Not enough qualified applicants to fill all the open positions.

Since COVID-19 vaccines became widely available in 2021, high-net-worth (HNW) and ultra-high-net-worth (UHNW) individuals and families are more comfortable hiring staff and managers for their private estates. As a result, the need for estate managers, personal assistants, household managers, butlers, and private chefs has reached unprecedented levels.

In particular, the need for professional nannies and newborn care specialists (NCS) is exploding across the country.

### **The Recruiter's Opinion**

Over the past month, I spoke with many agency owners, and the news is the same across the board: they have the jobs—they just need the talent to fill them. From New York to California and everywhere in between, employers are eager to hire staff members.

Many staffing agencies are expanding their experience requirements to tap new talent pools. For example, some recruiters will consider a background in industries with transferrable skills instead of the traditional five years of experience of working in a private home.

"Eighty-five percent of the time, we need some level of private service experience," mentioned Daniel Wood with Domestic Match in San Francisco, California. "Although, now we are willing to work with what that definition means."

Early childhood educators, successful day care center employees, or people with a nursing background are making successful transitions into the private service realm.



### **How Do You Stack Up?**

Looking to explore this hot employment market?

Wondering how well your resume stands up to the competition? Feel free to book a complimentary thirty-minute consultation with one of our career coaches: <https://personaltouchcareerservices.com/contact/>

### **Seeking the Best of the Best**

True, the labor shortage is very real. However, these HNW employers don't want to just throw bodies into their open roles.

"Everyone wants the best of the best," stated Christopher Baker with the Christopher Baker Staffing.

Because of the competition for talent, salaries are increasing. It's definitely a candidate's market, especially considering the shortage of knowledgeable and experienced nannies and NCS who understand what top-level private childcare really means.

### **Are You a Generalist or a Specialist?**

One of the most significant growth areas for nannies and newborn care specialists lies in building a name for themselves. In particular, parents seek either one of two distinctions: a generalist or a specialist.

A generalist is someone who brings a broad base of skills and experience to the table. For example, a generalist nanny may work with different ages simultaneously. They know how to arrange a playdate for toddlers while still creating engaging activities for older children. Similarly, the generalist may be willing to help with other light duties around the house, although childcare is always their primary concern.

A specialist is an expert in a narrower field. While the NCS is a prime example of this, other nannies may specialize as well. For example, are you a master of working with multiples? Special-needs children? Traveling extensively with the family while keeping the young children on a healthy sleep schedule? All of these could be exactly what your next employer is seeking.

Without a doubt, employers always want a good match for their family, both in terms of skills and personality. So, it's no surprise that nannies want the same thing. When you can clearly define your expertise, personality, and broad knowledge base, employers and agencies alike will be able to find the perfect fit for you.

### **Invest in Your Education**

One of the recent interesting developments is the emphasis on continuing education. In all industries, professionals used the COVID lockdown time to invest in online courses. As a result, parents value continuing education for their nannies and NCS as well.

This doesn't mean you need to get a new degree. In fact, courses offered through industry moguls such as Newborn Care Solutions in Phoenix, Arizona, and the often-required CPR certifications through the Red Cross greatly enhance your qualifications. And that leads to higher salaries, more job opportunities, and shorter job searches.

### **Professionalism Is the Key to a New Job**

While the need for talent is substantial, a successful job search still requires the utmost professionalism, from your resume to your interview skills. After all, if the agency or the principals cannot see the value of your background right away, they will continue to search and wait for the perfect candidate.

Speed is of the essence for recruitment in a tight market. Resumes that clearly explain the candidate's talents, skills, experience, education, and drive will be presented to more employers, especially if the recruiter doesn't need to make any adjustments. On the flip side, recruiters can't invest two to three hours on rewriting a candidate's resume. In fact, some of the best candidates miss out on quality jobs just because of a bad resume.

The candidates who do secure interviews still need to present well to land a job. Job seekers who perform flawlessly in the interview end up with better compensation packages. Combine this with the competitive nature of today's market, and many nannies and NCS are earning their highest salaries ever.



# THE ABCS OF RESPECTFUL CARE

BY DANIELLE BUJNAK

**Editor's Note: This is part eight of the series entitled *The ABCs of Respectful Care*. Read all installments in the 2020/2021 issues of *Nanny Magazine* at [NannyMag.com](http://NannyMag.com)**

The Respectful™ Approach to Human Development, Education and Care is a multi-disciplinary and open-ended approach that combines elements from classic teaching methods and current research in the neuroscience of human development. The goal is to deliver a level of care that meets the genuine needs of all of the individuals involved in the care experience.

## V IS FOR VALIDATING

When a sensitive and responsive Someone provides validation for a child, the child feels seen and heard, and most important of all, the child feels valued. The good-enough Someone validates the child's experience (even while holding a limit, if needed) and thereby reflects back to the child that their feelings and experiences have value to their Someone, even when the Someone disagrees with the child in some way. To take a somewhat extreme (yet rather common) example that we looked at earlier in this series, this Someone can validate the child's feelings while holding necessary limits: "It sounds like you feel angry. I won't let you hit me, because it hurts me. It's okay to feel angry, and it's not okay to hit me, even when you feel angry."

This response validates the child's feelings and demonstrates to the child that they—and their feelings that don't feel good—are valued and important. When the child is feeling so angry, receiving the message that their Someone thinks their angry feelings are okay helps the child to see themselves as a person who might sometimes feel angry and sometimes feel not angry, and either way is okay (though being not angry feels a whole lot better). This communicates and fosters the development of a growth mindset, where the child sees their feelings as things that come and go and that are okay, rather than the overwhelming sense that the feeling currently happening will last forever and is not okay.

When we validate the child's experience of the current moment, whether it's a pleasant or unpleasant experience for them, we endorse their own internal perceptions while also providing a useful life lesson on taking a healthy perspective. Whenever we reassure a child about their own internal perceptions, we are actively supporting the development of their personal agency. This quality is critically important for all kinds of healthy emotional habits and choices throughout our lifespans.

When personal agency is lacking, the child will always look to others to solve their problems because they don't have confidence in their own internal perceptions and processes. Without receiving healthy validation of their internal perceptions, they are habituated to trust perceptions from outside themselves

(usually from adults), and that sets them up to be vulnerable in unacceptable ways. For an extreme example, consider a child cooperating with a predatory adult because the child doesn't trust their internal perception of wrongness and goes along even though it doesn't feel right. A child with a well-developed sense of personal agency will not automatically cooperate with something that feels wrong to them, because they innately trust their own perceptions. Therefore, that child receives important protection from their own personal agency, without any teaching about "stranger danger" or "good touch" and "bad touch" or other fear-inducing terminologies.

## W IS FOR WAITING

This concept is one of the most countercultural concepts on this entire list of countercultural ideas. Necessity and custom drive us to seek the most efficient way to provide the necessary care for those who need our assistance, so waiting seems like a waste of time. Dr. Emmi Pikler and Dr. Magda Gerber speak at length about the paramount importance of waiting for an infant or toddler to respond or to act, and our current understanding of developmental neuroscience explains why: infants, toddlers, and young children have very inefficient brains.

The neural pathways created by repeated experience (remember how "the neurons that fire together wire together"?) simply have yet not been wired together in fast and efficient networks that become insulated and protected by the myelin outside the neurons that guides and pushes the electrical impulses further along. It actually takes a noticeable amount of time for a young child to hear, then comprehend, then think of a response, and then act. If you make a point of pausing for at least five (or better, ten) seconds after calmly providing a neutral reminder to a child (e.g., "It's time to go now"), you will very often find that they complete the action they were in the middle of doing, pause for a moment, and then comply with the expectation. Try it next time and see!

Even I forget this sometimes because the realities of schedules and traffic and other extenuating circumstances do often place us in a position of needing things to be done quickly. When this happens, I make a mental note to change our habits and practices to allow ample extra time so I can wait for the child to be ready in a healthier and more internally motivated way. This is also an excellent example of how I am a good-enough but not

perfect Someone. When this happens and I realize that we have to rush, I explain that to the child. "Oh no! We have to walk out the door in two short minutes. And we still need to put our shoes on and find our coats. Usually I like to spend time watching you do that by yourself because you really know how to do it. But since I made a mistake and we are in a rush, may I put them on you today?"

The key component is that I do accept the child's response. If they say no and want to do it themselves, I respect their choice, and perhaps we are late—and that is on me anyway, as the only person who knows how to tell time! If I did not allow enough time for the child to do it on their own, then next time I can allow more time. Obviously there can be exceptions (an urgent or emergency situation), and in those cases, I similarly explain the context to the child so they can be prepared for what's happening next.

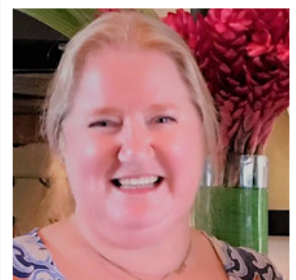
## X IS FOR X-TENDING

Okay, so I know this is a tiny bit of a cheat on our alphabet, but I did find a number of E-X terms in my initial list of so many potential terms for this glossary. I chose to use "extending the learning" in this initial A to Z series because the concept brings together a number of critically important ideas from our glossary: teaching and learning as correlative terms, the hundred languages, our image of the child and our ongoing antibias professional practice, and the role of the good-enough Someone in relationship-based care.

Extending the learning means learning from infants and children what is interesting to them in order to find new opportunities to explore those interests—as well as being open to extending our own learning based on the unique perceptions and ideas of the children in our care. It also means being aware of and open to the hundred different ways to further explore the details of what is being learned and to be mindful of the dimensions of meaning that the learning activates in our image of the child. That can prompt us to review and then expand and extend our image of the child through antibias practices, such as reflective dialogue with our colleagues and friends. Whether engaging in internal review or external dialogue about our choices and actions and any aspects that we wish to change, we can remember that our goal is never the unattainable standard of perfection but instead the fully attainable goal of being good enough.

## DANIELLE BUJNAK

Danielle Bujnak is an experienced Early Childhood Educator with more than two decades of experience guiding and caring for infants, children, and their families in a wide variety of settings. Danielle has been a nanny, governess, and Master Newborn Care Specialist, as well as a teacher for children of all ages. She has supported families in private family residences, through homeschooling, daycare, preschools, and Montessori and Waldorf-based early childhood programs. Her California Child Development Permit qualifies her at the "Master Teacher" and "Site Supervisor" levels, licensing her to run a multi-classroom preschool or daycare for infants and children, and to guide and mentor other teachers in best practices. After completing a graduate-level certificate in Early Childhood Education, Danielle is currently completing an MSc in children's mental health and special education, following the Constructivist approach.







# 10 REASONS NANNIES CAN BENEFIT FROM NEWBORN CARE TRAINING

By Tonya Sakowicz

Tonya Sakowicz is an INA Credentialed Nanny, newborn care specialist, postpartum doula, and parent educator. Along with her husband, Todd, Tonya founded Newborn Care Solutions, a company that trains high-level newborn care specialists and exclusively offers the Master NCS® training program. Tonya has served as co-president of the International Nanny Association, Scottsdale Chapter President for the Domestic Estate Management Association, and was voted the Professional Childcare Provider of the Year in 2003. Tonya has received the Domestic Estate Management Association Educator of the Year, the Domestic Estate Management Association Lifetime Achievement Award, and was an INA Nanny of the Year nominee and a National Association of Nannies Harriette Grant Memorial Award nominee. Tonya is called on to be a speaker at nanny and newborn care training events across the country and has been featured on television and in print, where she most notably made an appearance on the Today Show.

So often I get asked, "I am a nanny and have no plans to become a newborn care specialist, so would your training even benefit me?" And the answer to that question is a resounding "Yes, newborn care specialist training will benefit you as a nanny." While some reasons as to why this is true may be obvious, others may be less so. Let's look at the top ten reasons why nannies can benefit from newborn care specialist training.

### **1. Information and Resources Change**

Even with tons of newborn experience as a parent, a day care provider, or nanny working with parents who have a new baby, it is nearly impossible to keep current on everything all the time. A quality NCS training company takes the responsibility of keeping current very seriously and provides ongoing access to that updated information for their students. Ideally, in addition to making updates to online and in-person content, a training company also notifies their students of updates via email, social media, and student advisory groups to ensure the best possible chance that students will see it and stay up-to-date. For example, as this article was being written, BOPPY issued a recall of all their newborn loungers. Not only did that go up immediately on our social media, but it also was mentioned via an announcement on the training video that specifically mentions the use of the product with multiples.

### **2. Your Nanny Family Is Having a New Baby!**

We all know that when a new child is added to your responsibilities as a nanny, you should be getting a raise. Your employer is going to feel more confident in turning over responsibility of that new baby to you sooner when the parents know you have up-to-date specialized training in that area. The sooner you are responsible for that new baby, the sooner you are getting that raise. In many cases, if you bring this training up with your employer, they may even be willing to pay for part or all of it to ensure you are well informed.

### **3. A Twelve-Day-Old Is Very Different than a Twelve-Week-Old**

Maybe you have cared for tons of babies but never actually cared for a day's old newborn. Quality newborn care specialist training can provide you with great information about many things that are specific and unique to babies this young, including umbilical cord and circumcision care. You will also be introduced to newborn-specific medical information, including topics such as pyloric stenosis,

which can show up during these first few weeks of life and may be entirely new to you as a nanny if you haven't had a charge that was less than twelve weeks old.

### **4. Your Nanny Family Is Having Twins!**

Having two babies is lots of fun—and lots of work. Having specific and effective strategies for caring for two or more at once can make this very special time in your nanny family's life go much smoother. Quality newborn care specialist training is going to provide you with tips, tricks, and special nuances for working with multiples. You will also be provided with the information and confidence you need to support your nanny family well. The opportunity to work with multiples looks great on your resume for years to come, and having a great reference along with it is even better.

### **5. Sleep Makes Everyone Happy**

Although everyone has heard of sleep training, the recommendation that usually comes with it is that sleep training should not be started before four to six months of age. The reality, however, is that sleep training, as a formal practice, does not need to happen at all in most cases if things are set up correctly during the first twelve weeks of life. If babies and families are set up for success right from the start and the baby's needs are correctly met, then a baby will naturally and organically sleep through the night when their body is biologically ready to do so. For many babies (not all), this can happen between twelve and sixteen weeks of age. But knowing how to support that process, without the crying you often hear that accompanies sleep training, is important, and a quality newborn care specialist training offers that information.

### **6. The Postpartum Period Can Be Rough**

Having a baby has a huge impact on hormones, both for the birthing parent and their partner. Even families achieved through surrogacy and adoption experience shifts in their hormones related to the arrival of a new child. Having some understanding of what this looks like, how to approach it, and resources for help can be invaluable to



**Tonya Sakowicz**

someone serving a family during this period. Newborn care specialist training addresses the differing forms of postpartum mood disorders, ways to discuss them with your nanny family, and ways to help find and present resources, if needed.

### **7. New Babies Have Different Needs**

If you have never cared for a baby younger than twelve weeks of age, chances are you may have never learned specific newborn care techniques, like swaddling. If you are working only with older babies, you may know about the concept, but knowing how to do it effectively and safely are different things. Quality newborn care specialist training teaches you not only what swaddles are on the market, but how to do various methods of swaddling and, probably most importantly, when to stop swaddling.

### **8. Your Resume Is Strengthened**

You never know what the future holds. Your nanny family may adore you, but anything can happen. They could lose their job tomorrow, meaning you could lose yours too. Always thinking ahead and preparing yourself for the future is a wise nanny move, and having up-to-date training in a variety of areas makes you a stronger candidate in a competitive job market. Training in your industry makes you stand out from your peers. Many employers will view the fact that you are pursuing ongoing education as a plus in and of itself, as it demonstrates you are open to learning and growth—strong qualities in a potential hire.

### **9. You Are Strengthened**

Most of us in the nanny world are confident in our abilities. In fact, we don't last long working with children and for families unless we are passionate and knowledgeable. But almost all of us struggle at times with feeling confident about something we have

not encountered in a long time or possibly not even at all. Nannies report that having specific newborn care specialist training has helped them in their work and made them feel more confident when working with newborns and families.

#### 10. You can Overcome Objections

So often, when parents, particularly brand-new parents, are looking for a nanny for their new baby, they tell the agency, "I want someone with tons of recent newborn experience and who has a history of staying with families for a long time." What they don't realize is that those two things rarely go hand in hand. Staying for a long time is great, but it might mean it has been five or more years since a nanny has cared for a newborn. An up-to-date newborn care specialist training can overcome the objection to lack of recent newborn experience, and many nannies have reported newborn care training was what helped them land the job over other candidates.

Newborn care specialist training is not for everyone, but there are many reasons many nannies, even nannies with no plans of becoming a newborn care specialist, can benefit from quality NCS training. Be sure to thoroughly vet any newborn care specialist training you are considering, talk to people who have taken more than one training, talk to the instructors, and make sure the program is a good fit for you and your needs.

Never hesitate to invest wisely in yourself and your career. For most nannies, quality newborn care specialist training will be a wise investment.



# AVOID THESE FIVE JOB MISTAKES

By Michelle LaRowe

Working in a private household can be a real challenge. With no human resource personnel to serve as a go-between, parents and nannies are on their own when it comes to navigating the employer-employee relationship. For nannies who are concerned about job security, if you don't want to get fired, avoid these five common pitfalls.



#### Showing Up Late

For many nanny employers, there is nothing more off-putting than starting the day with their nanny rolling in just after her start time while leisurely sipping her coffee and putting her things away. Instead of arriving to work at your start time, arrive a few minutes before your shift begins so when the clock strikes your start time, you are ready to work.

#### Spending Tons of Time on the Cell Phone

When parents are seeking a nanny, one of the things they most commonly share is that they do not want to hire a nanny who spends a lot of time on her phone. Parents want to be sure that their nanny is actively engaging their child and fear that with a screen always out, that simply won't happen. When you are on duty, your employer is paying you for a service. Once you arrive at work, silence your phone, and keep it put away until you have designated downtime.

#### Oversharing

When your employer asks how your weekend was, she really doesn't want to know the details. She wants to know that you're well rested and ready to start the week. Pulling your nanny family into personal drama or sharing details about your love life or latest night out can damage the image they have of you and make them second-guess the trust they put in you.

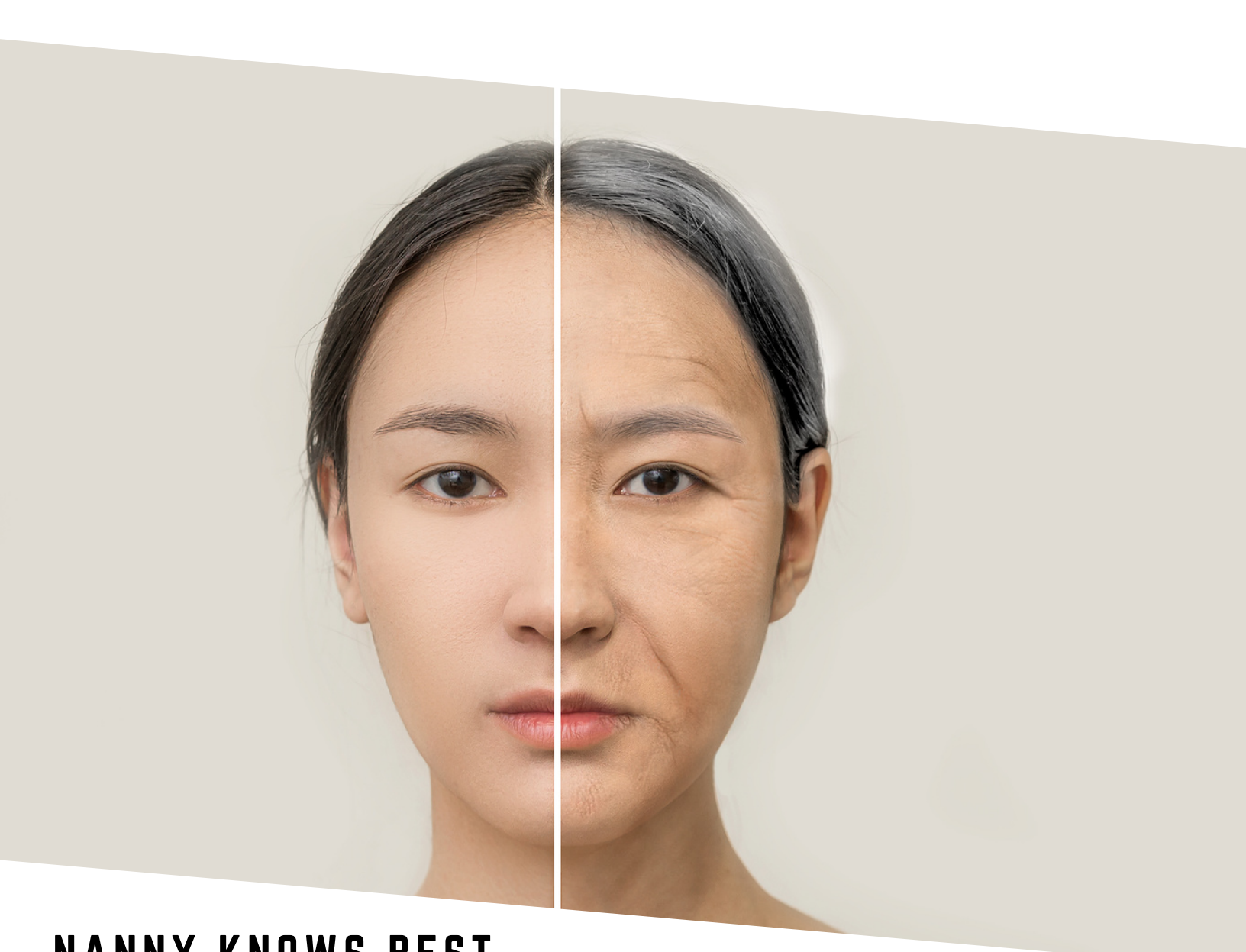
#### The Wrong Fit

While it's common practice to be on your best behavior during interviews, you still want your true personality to shine through. There's nothing more cringeworthy for a family than interviewing Mary Poppins and having Mrs. Doubtfire show up. If you're normally upbeat and energetic, let that shine through at the interview. If you're quieter and more reserved, let that shine too.

#### Failure to Perform Job Duties

When it comes to being a nanny, the role typically includes taking care of all tasks related to the children, including the children's laundry and children's meal prep. While job creep can be a real issue, completing the tasks you are responsible for is essential. Forgetting to load the dishwasher, put away the laundry, empty the diaper pail, and do other seemingly trivial tasks can add up to big resentment quickly. Having a personal work ethic that includes exceeding expectations is one way to ensure that failing to perform doesn't become an issue on the job.

While working as a nanny can offer lots of flexibility compared to a traditional job, certain traditional workplace expectations still carry over. Avoiding common mistakes that lead to firing can help to ensure job security and a happy work environment.



**NANNY KNOWS BEST**

# **RETIRING WHEN YOU AREN'T READY**

**— BY MICHELLE LAROWE**



Michelle LaRowe is the editor-in-chief of Nanny Magazine. Michelle LaRowe has more than 20 years of nanny industry experience. As an International Nanny Association credentialed nanny and Nanny of the Year™ award recipient, Michelle has authored several parenting books including *Nanny to the Rescue!*, *Nanny to the Rescue Again!* and *Working Mom's 411*. Michelle has also served as executive director of the International Nanny Association, executive director of *Morningside Nannies*, editor in chief of *eNannySource.com*, and as an expert content contributor, product reviewer and consultant for a variety of major brands. To educate the next generation of nannies, Michelle launched *NannyTraining.com* where she serves as lead educator. Her formative course, offered exclusively in partnership with *NannyStella, Inc.*, is the only US Based CACHE Endorsed Customized Qualification for nannies.

When you ask a career nanny, "What made you choose to be a nanny?" the responses share a common thread: "I didn't choose to be a nanny. It chose me."

For these women, being a nanny is more than a job. It is a calling.

But what happens when you can no longer do the job you believe you were created to do?

For Maggie Rose, a nanny from Dallas, Texas, the realization that she could no longer do her work wasn't easy. "Since so much of my identity was wrapped up in being a nanny, it really shook up my life. I didn't know who I was outside of my job. I felt ashamed, embarrassed, and flaky when I was suddenly unable to do my job."

Being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in her late twenties, working fifty hours per week through pain and fatigue as a nanny and personal chef, her health began to rapidly decline.

"I had to move back in with my parents and spent the next nine months resting, taking care of my health, figuring out my medications, diet, and lifestyle, and spending lots of time in thought about what I wanted my next job to look like and what I could handle with my health challenges."

As a person of faith, she believed being a nanny is what she was meant to do with her God-given gifts, so she decided to focus on the childcare and drop the cooking, even though she was a classically trained chef. This allowed her to preserve her health and to do what she was most passionate about: providing quality childcare.

Like many nannies, Rose also tended to put her employer's needs before her own and committed to saying yes when she really needed to say no. "Another thing I stopped doing in my job to protect my health and my peace is overextending myself. I am an excellent nanny, but my time away helped me learn that my worth comes from the Lord. I don't need to operate out of a people-pleasing space anymore. Forsaking my needs and my health to please my employers didn't work for me, and I do it differently now. I've been in a new nanny job for about two months, and I'm so much more at peace having dropped the 'perfect nanny' facade."

For Andrea Brockelsby, a former nanny of more than twenty years based in Phoenix, Arizona, realizing she could no longer work

also wasn't easy. "When I realized I could no longer do my job, it caused depression, anxiety, and a huge lack of self-esteem."

After spending years working in pain, and hiding it quite well, once she realized she could no longer carry a child up the stairs safely, she knew she had to make a change.

"I was left with no choice but to speak with my employers. I let them know my hips were in serious pain, and that I had seen a doctor. I showed them my X-rays, and we both agreed it was time for me to slow way down."

But slowing down was challenging. "I became quite sad, worked a lot slower, and wasn't as active. At first, I handled this by eating and food became my friend." She then did some soul searching and realized that she wanted to stay connected to the work she was so passionate about. She pursued a position with a nanny agency that allowed her to continue her career and stay connected to the community she has grown to love, while minimizing the negative impact on her health.

After experiencing a bad fall in her late fifties, Anne-Marie Stanley realized that the work she loved to do was no longer something she was able to do safely. "I began to experience so much pain that I could not lift anymore." She wasn't steady on her feet and needed surgery to repair the damage done from her fall. But after recovering and returning to work, she realized something was still not right. She was later diagnosed with herniated discs, spinal stenosis, and severe Arthritis.

With over thirty years as a traditional nanny under her belt, when Care.com began to buy out agencies around the country and establish a robust backup care program, Stanley was the first nanny to be hired onto their elite care staff. Traveling across Massachusetts to take care of different children each day, Stanley found a niche that brought her great joy and satisfaction.

"The decision to end my career was the hardest decision of my life. I asked myself how I would pay for rent and food. How would I spend my days?"

Fortunately, because Stanley was employed through Care.com, she had access to benefits including health insurance and disability, which helped ease her financial concerns. She also had put away money in



her savings account, which she encourages all nannies to start doing now.

But when it comes to her mental health, these challenges are far greater than the financial ones. "Since I have not been able to work, I have been sad and depressed. I miss the children I cared for, and I miss going to work each day. Nannying was my life. I loved my job, and I feel that a part of me is gone."

Stanley equates what she is going through as a grieving process. "I deal with this every day." Feelings of anger, sadness, and depression can be overwhelming, but Stanley is convinced she made the right choice. "If you feel like you can't do your job safely, you need to consider the welfare of the children you care for." If a child could be hurt because of your inability to do your job, you need to make the choice to step back.

"As nannies, we learn to take care of other people first," said Brockelsby. But nannies need to prepare, plan, and explore other avenues that they can seek out to stay involved in this industry when they can no longer do the work that they love. "If you are a career nanny, know that sometime in your future, you won't be able to be as physically capable of doing all the things you do with the children anymore." And Rose agrees. "Put yourself first," she says, and start planning for that day now.



10

# QUESTIONS WITH MEGAN METZGER

PRESIDENT AT PREFERRED CHILDCARE, INC., AND MEGAN METZGER CONSULTING

### 1. How did you get involved with the nanny industry?

As an only child to a single, working mother, things could get a little lonely at times. So, when I was old enough, I started babysitting. I was getting paid to play with other children, and I was pretty good at it! I continued babysitting all through high school, and when I got to college, I could not keep up with the time demands of my family's needs while taking my classes. So instead of quitting my nanny jobs, I started running up and down the halls of my dorm yelling, "Does anyone babysit? Does anyone like kids?" until I found other students willing to take over for me.

From there on out, when I wasn't available to work, I would send a pre-vetted "newfound friend" to fill in. By my senior year, one of my clients suggested I incorporate what felt like a hobby and make it a business. I did just that, and twenty years later, we have helped thousands of families and hundreds of nannies, and now we're even working with several hundreds of agencies across the country through my consulting business, MMC.

### 2. What did you do before starting an agency?

I babysat, nannied privately, and taught KinderMusik. Music was a big part of my life, and I spent time doing theater and singing in choir, which included traveling internationally to sing. The passion for music and kids came together in KinderMusik, which became the source of some of my first clients of Preferred ChildCare, my nanny agency.

### 3. What made you get involved with the nanny community at large?

I remember leaving my first INA conference and feeling like I was finally part of something much bigger than myself. It inspired me to grow my business and get more involved. I've had some incredible mentors during my career, one of whom invited me to join her for an INA board meeting. The rest is history. I had a lot of board experience and believed I could be a strong asset. I ended up making some incredible friends while learning how I could support not only the organization but the industry.

My first APNA conference was not so welcoming. In fact, I went to my room and cried three times that first conference. I felt very out of place and after that, I made it my personal mission to have everyone feel welcome and still set out to do that today. Since that time, the culture of APNA has evolved tremendously. I respect both organizations and am honored to be a part of them both.

### 4. What made you start your consulting firm?

I originally started doing public speaking about my experience at conferences and hosting workshops. I received tremendous attendance and feedback. At the advice of another one of my fabulous mentors, I attended a program in Boston focused on helping small businesses serve their communities by creating new jobs. My first idea was simply to grow the church side of my business. My partner in the program helped me see that the size of my impact could be greater if I could not only implement but teach and support other women around the country in doing the same. So, I did just that. I created a blueprint that could be taught and followed, including systems, programs, and strategies that hundreds of agencies have used to achieve success quickly and more effectively. We combined the tried-and-true methods with a community of support. It has been an incredible journey and is my true passion.



Megan Metzger  
mmc CONSULTING

Preferred  
CHILDCARE |

## 5. What is the first piece of advice you give people considering opening an agency?

The biggest piece of advice I would give someone is to make sure you are passionate about doing this! There is lots of money to be made in this industry, but it should not be the driving force. Your heart and passion need to be in this before attempting to open an agency. After that, I would advise that you don't go at this alone. Just like raising children, it takes a village. A lot of time, energy, and love gets wasted when people try to figure it out on their own.

## 6. What is the one thing you wish people knew about having an agency?

Owning a nanny agency is one of the most incredible experiences you can have. You are impacting families and nannies every day. The intimate nature of what we do is often surprisingly stressful. You must remember it is not you they are upset with. It is the person's reaction to a situation, a process, or outcome—not you as a person. You are more important and differentiated from those things. It's easy to get in your head and be overwhelmed by others' reactions, which is another reason that having your village of support is so crucial.

## 7. What is the biggest lesson you've learned as an entrepreneur?

The biggest lesson I have learned is to trust yourself and those who work for you. Create the systems, train, and invest in people to run the system and step back to let them do their job. They will build your business in ways you could never imagine.

Delegation and trust were hard for me, especially as an only child. I cringe thinking about my leadership when we first started out. I thought I was protecting what I'd built, and it wasn't until a few (or many) negative experiences that I realized I was holding us back. If you are always looking over their shoulder or questioning your team, you will never get to the next level.

Trust and delegation are two of the hardest things for all entrepreneurs to learn and two of the most important.

## 8. What do people value most when partnering with you?

My clients have said they value my openness and candid advice. I truly want my clients to be successful as business owners and women. We work together to create a business that matches their dreams. I will take their phone calls late at night, calm them down, hype them up, get on a plane, and be there when they need me. They are more than a client—they become family. For better or worse, I show up authentically, and it's this level of relationship that allows my client to grow. We work on all parts of the business, including the personal side that is so needed and often overlooked.

## 9. What is the first question people who contact you for advice typically ask?

Honestly, the first question most people ask is about the value of investing in my services. People tend to call me when they are struggling, so spending money to invest in consulting or my online courses feels like a big financial and emotional risk.



One of the first things I share is my personal experience with coaching and the changes it has made for my businesses. Regardless of the size of the business, there is always a next level. There is no shame in needing support, and it takes courage to keep pursuing it. You and your goals are worth it.

## 10. What is the best piece of advice you have for nannies who want to score their dream job or start their dream agency?

The best advice I have for nannies is to highlight the skills the family is looking for in both your interview and resume. Often, the family wants someone who takes initiative. Tell them how you take initiative, and give them examples. Do not be afraid to talk about your strengths as well. It's also important for a family to trust that if you have limitations or don't know what to do, they can trust you to ask for help. If you don't feel like you are a good fit for the culture of a family, set yourself and them up for success by waiting for another opportunity.

For someone who wants to open their dream agency, I encourage them to do it—and do it right the first time. Take the time to build the systems and processes that you and your team will follow. It is a lot harder to move a yacht against the wind than it is a small dinghy. While you are small, you are more agile, so make the right changes and choices now.

### ABOUT MEGAN METZGER

Megan Metzger is an entrepreneur, educator, and consultant. She is an expert and thought leader in the nanny and childcare industry. She founded her first business, Preferred ChildCare, over twenty years ago and since then has created Megan Metzger Consulting (MMC) because of her passion for helping other women become financially independent and able to comfortably provide for their families. With MMC, she candidly shares her secrets, processes, and expertise through her online courses and one-on-one consulting services. Additionally, Megan is an instructor at the UNC Greensboro Bryan School of Business and the previous president of the International Nanny Association and serves on numerous boards both in her community and industry. She is a proud mother of four amazing children and is grateful for the opportunity to be inspired and humbled as she witnesses the growth of women she serves daily.





*People Profile*

Erin Carroll-Manning

Erin Carroll-Manning has over 25 years of childcare experience and is the founder of Gentle Giraffes, a Massachusetts based full-service newborn care agency. Erin is a trained Master Newborn Care Specialist (NCS), a trained Postpartum Doula (PPD), a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST), and a lactation support specialist. She is also trained in Respectful Care for Newborns, Infants and Toddlers.

### **How did you get involved in the nanny industry, and what is your current role?**

I have always felt the draw of children for as long as I can remember. The first encounter that I vividly remember was when I was about five years old and was drawn to an infant and a toddler. I was so at peace spending time with them. I really wanted to be there. After that, whenever infants were around, I would always gravitate toward them.

Because of my rapport with infants and toddlers, my family thought I would go into teaching. They were right to an extent. Although I did not go down the traditional path, I do teach and guide children as well as parents now.

My first paying childcare position was as a mother's helper for our neighbor when I was eleven. She needed support with her two children, who were six months and three years old at the time, while she got things done around the house and studied for her nursing degree. This is where it all began. I then did as most do in this industry: babysit for date nights and take summer family nanny positions throughout junior high and high school. I loved every minute of it.

Many of us end up trying our hands in several other industries before coming back. I did this as well. I also fell into being a full-time nanny thanks to a friend who gave my name to one of her office mates needing support for her four children. From there I never looked back.

This career has been such a blessing to me. There have been many times I have wanted to up and leave, but something always keeps me here. I spent a good part of my teen years as a nanny before I started to really educate myself in child development and get into the professional side of the industry. I knew at that point I was not turning back. I also knew I needed more to help support families. The more families I worked with during the mom's maternity leave, the more I was noticing they lacked support, even with me being there. I was there for the toddler and other siblings, but not for the mom or the newborn.

That's how I became a master newborn care specialist and newborn sleep specialist, to name a few hats I wear while also owning a pregnancy and postpartum agency in New England today.

### **How has the industry changed since you became involved?**

I feel the industry has gotten stronger in many ways. It's great to see more nannies standing up for themselves as well as doing their research. I love how many are asking about continuing education, how to handle a challenging day, and the amount of love that nannies give each day.

As I have been one of those who fell into this industry and never left, I started out with no education in child-rearing or raising children in general. Facebook groups really didn't exist when I got my start, and the nanny community was not as widespread as it is now.

### **How did you get to where you are today?**

It's going to sound so cliché, but it's true. Hard work, determination, and vision got me to where I am. Along with that, I have taken the time to attend many workshops and trainings, pick people's brains, and learn to stand up for what I believe in, even if I'm the only one standing. At the end of the day, it only takes oneself to make truly powerful change.

With that, nothing mentioned came without a price. I have sacrificed a lot over the last ten years or so to get to my position. I have had to do a lot of work on myself to heal energetic karma that blocks me from tapping into my full potential. That continues and always will.



Healing my traumas and karmas is a lifelong process. I have had to retrain my mind and my thinking to have an abundant mindset and always know every hurdle is a lesson to make me stronger and that strength will support me in my journey. If I didn't have challenges, I would not know how to manage them when others are faced with the same or how to navigate the ship through rough seas. Life is all about lessons that heal us and make us stronger for the next rocky road.

Some of the biggest challenges I faced came from personal relationships within the nanny community. As in any group or collaboration, there will always be disagreements or the parting of ways, but there are several circumstances involving friends and mentors that really shook me to the core and even broke my heart.

Nevertheless, all that has made me stronger, more resilient, understanding, confident, and determined to keep walking the path I have followed—after shedding a few million tears and repairing my shattered heart, of course.

None of those things ever turned me away from my goals. They have only shown me where I need to turn to continue down the path I am meant to go. Though much sadness, pain, and insecurity have come out of those hurdles, way more joy, peace, education, and change have come from them. I would not change the path at all if I had to do it again.

Ultimately, I am where I am because of my determination, hard work, and vision. I continue to strive to bring support and joy to families during some of their most tender and vulnerable times.

### **Where do you see yourself in five years?**

This is a great question. I see myself still working in this industry but on a much larger scale. I see myself bridging the gap between so many

other professions that support pregnancy, birth, newborns, postpartum care, and beyond. I see myself and my company offering a full spectrum of support to families, be it one-on-one support, group support, or beyond. I'm a firm believer that the more education and information people have earlier, the more empowered and confident they will be about their pregnancy, birth, and postpartum time.

That's not all I see. Having worked so hard to be where I am, I deserve more time with my husband and the chance to foster that relationship. I see us spending more time together, traveling, doing some business adventures together, and really building the rest of our lives. We have both spent a lot of time healing our inner turmoil and putting lots of effort into our careers over the last ten years. It's our time to enjoy what we have built and will continue to build.

### **What is your best advice for nannies?**

My best advice for nannies is to heal your inner emotional turmoil and educate yourself on emotional development from birth to ten years old.

I see far too many nannies—and people in general, for that matter—who are not healthy emotionally and blame others for how they feel. This makes me so sad because if they are like this, how can they support, guide, and teach the next generation to develop healthy emotions? What we put out there is what children will mimic. How we speak or care for children will be taken with them for life, even if they are just a few days or months old. Children develop most of their healthy emotions in their first three to four years. This time determines how secure they feel within themselves and the world around them. This is where secure attachments are started. Then there is a whole slew of ways to further in each age and stage of development. Therefore, I suggest nannies take classes on healthy emotional development.

When we spend ten to sixty-plus hours with children each week when they are so vulnerable and impressionable, they look to us to learn and develop. We all want them to grow up being solid, happy humans who help foster a better world. I firmly believe this can truly only happen if the caregiver has healthy emotions but also understand how brains and feelings develop. Taking classes and trainings in this will only support them in guiding these little people to be the best versions of themselves they can be.

### **What do you like best about your job?**

The best part about this industry is the children. I love when I see their faces light up because I walked through the door or because they just accomplished something they have been working so hard on. I especially love those smiles that are "just because." Children really are the light of the world. They truly love everyone and everything. They bring me peace and comfort.

Teaching and guiding are a very close second. I absolutely love to educate people on whatever I personally can educate them on. I love educating parents, nannies, and others in our industry. I get excited to answer questions in Facebook groups and help our industry along in any way I can to make it a better one for us all and for years to come.

### **What do you like least?**

The least favorite part of it for me is marketing. Marketing dos and

don'ts change so quickly that I can never keep up with what is needed for this algorithm or that. Transitioning from text to videos has also been challenging. I have been learning to step out of my comfort zone, but this has been the hardest part for me.

### **What is your educational background?**

My educational background is a little eclectic, but it has helped me in this industry in many ways. I have never been the type for traditional learning, although I do love to learn.

After high school, I took a good five years off before heading to community college. I started down this route as I believed this was the best way for me to learn and better myself at the time. I received an associate's degree in business with a concentration in hospitality management along with several certifications in the hotel industry. I enjoy setting up and organizing events and parties, which has served me well in the nanny industry, especially in family's homes when they had parties. But it also has helped me organize International Nanny Training Day over the past five years. I then went off to a local four-year college that specialized in hospitality management and culinary arts. I did not graduate, as life took hold of me at almost thirty years old, and I got married and started that chapter of my life. I nannied all through this time and just continued to do so and never looked back.

It wasn't till I was in my early thirties that I started to really look into ways to educate myself on child development and different ways to support families. Since then, I have done my best to keep abreast of new findings and teachings for all things related to newborns and child development.

### **How do you give back to the nanny community?**

I organized International Nanny Training Day for five years. I have organized other trainings in Massachusetts as well. I have testified before the state senate regarding the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. My inbox has been and is always open to anyone looking for help and support. I'm always willing to help anyone and everyone, be it for a conference or for a single person. Others who work for a different company than mine, reach out to get their questions answered. I will not turn people away, and I will always recommend what I believe to be the best, be it workshops, trainings, classes, and so forth. The more we can support each other, the better our industry becomes. We can all learn from each other and never turn someone away when someone asks for help or support.

### **Biggest nanny industry myth?**

That all we do is play all day.

### **What is the one thing you'd like parents who employ nannies to know?**

The more you show your nanny appreciation, respect, and understanding, the more they will do for you and, more importantly, for your children.

### **Anything else you want us to know?**

Never stop believing in yourself and in what you have to offer to families. Your special talent, spark, or quirkiness is exactly what that right family is looking for.

# FOSTERING A SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE

## BY JAMI CARDER BSN, RN, CTRC

We all know people who struggle with repeated failed relationships. Maybe you've had difficulty with intimacy yourself. While many of us believe that who we feel chemistry with is out of our control, it might be surprising to learn that our adult relationship patterns are a direct byproduct of our experiences with our childhood caregivers.

These experiences shape our attachment styles—how we interact and attach to others. If you are one of the many nannies who average forty to eighty hours of work per week, it's important to understand how your response to the children you care for influences their ability to give and receive love later in life.

The concept of attachment styles was developed by John Bowlby and is based on the belief that infants are hard-wired to form a connection with their mothers for survival.

It's during our first year of life that our attachment style is formed. As infants, we depend on our parents or caregivers to respond to our cries and cues, relying on them to regulate our emotions. Without their response, we simply shut down from being overwhelmed.

We continue with this need from our caregivers as we begin to navigate the world. Having a stable relationship at home not only demonstrates how to bond with others but also lets us interact with the world without excessive anxiety. Ideally, the security created by responsive caregivers in the home gives us a safe place to return to when we encounter fearful situations.

But what happens to children who don't have secure parental and caregiver relationships in those formative years?

Without emotional security, children are forced to develop coping and bonding skills on their own. Personalizing and internalizing the emotional distance of caregivers, they develop an insecure sense of self and have difficulty trusting others.

Not surprisingly, those who are taught that love is painful as children continue to struggle with love as adults. As healthy connections seem out of reach, they repeatedly sign up for the familiar heartache they are used to experiencing. Each failed relationship perpetuates this cycle. Without intent, they raise the next generation of children through the lens of insecurity. These parenting styles are passed down through the generations as normalized behavior.

Now that we understand the important role childhood caregivers play in healthy adult relationships, let's look at how we identify attachment styles.

Continued development of this theory has resulted in attachment styles changing in name over the years. This can make learning a challenge. For this article, we will refer to the four attachment styles as

- Secure attachment
- Anxious attachment (also referred to as preoccupied attachment)
- Fearful avoidant attachment (also referred to as disorganized attachment)
- Dismissive avoidant attachment



Jami Carder is a registered nurse at the Visiting Nurse Association of Cape Cod. A certified trauma recovery coach, she works as a coach mentor for the International Association of Trauma Recovery Coaches. Her specialty areas include changing toxic relationship patterns, healing from narcissistic abuse, medical trauma, and scapegoat roles.

Jami's writing has been featured in multiple peer-reviewed nursing journals. Her essay, "Someone's Son," (American Journal of Nursing, October 2017) won the 2018 Women in Communication Association's Clarion Award.

She lives on Cape Cod with her two children.

# NANNIES CAN PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH HEALTHY EXPERIENCES OF CONNECTION

## Secure Attachment Style

Raised by caregivers who freely and consistently provided them with support, praise, love, and affection, those with secure attachment styles feel comfortable with who they are, whether they are within a relationship or not.

This secure foundation allows them to believe their romantic partners will be responsive to their needs. Comfortable expressing emotions, they do not become overly reactive during conflict. They can be up front about their wants and needs without fear of retaliation or rejection. Secure attachers confidently approach unions with trust and optimism, believing they are worthy and lovable.

## Anxious Attachment Style

Those who have childhood needs inconsistently met end up with this style. At times, their caregivers may have responded to their needs with excessive love and affection. Other times, they may not have responded at all. Never knowing what to expect, these children lived with constant fear of emotional abandonment.

Confusing anxiety for love, the anxiously attached adult is known for quickly falling head over heels. They require heavy validation and assurance in the form of high levels of contact and intimacy.

Just as when they were infants, they rely on others to regulate their emotions. This manifests as clingy, impulsive, and emotional behavior. Red flags are ignored in hopes of receiving the love they crave. In an attempt to avoid abandonment, they obsessively monitor partners for subtle changes in behavior, which are then blown out of proportion as their attachment response is activated.

This emotional hijacking feels uncontrollable and often pushes their partner to do the one thing they fear the most: leave. Devastated, they reinforce the faulty inner narrative, which tells them they are difficult to love.

## Fearful Avoidant Attachment Style

Adults with this style might have been raised by parents who ignored their attempts to be intimate or withheld praise, attention, and affection. They may have experienced abuse or neglect. These children learned that the parents or caregivers they loved were a source of pain. Therefore, they internalized the belief that relationships cannot be depended upon.

As children, their coping skill for dealing with these unmet needs was to act as if they did not have any needs at all, even though they craved connection. Hoping to avoid pain, intimacy was avoided.

Again, these internal beliefs were carried with them to adulthood. We typically find the fearful avoider in chaotic relationships. Afraid to be alone, while simultaneously fearing connection, it is difficult for them to trust others or themselves. They enter relationships knowing they won't last.

Feeling unsettled whether in a relationship or alone, they are often described as pessimistic, frequently demonstrating inconsistent codependency behavior. This tortuous conflict causes them to feel jealous about the partner they aren't even sure they want. Anxiety levels are high as they try to balance their internal chaos, alternating from one extreme to the other. Displays of affection are balanced by

pushing their partner away. These relationships disintegrate every time. Each time they sabotage a relationship, it reinforces the excruciating inner narrative that reminds them of how difficult they are to love.

## Dismissive Avoidant Attachment Style

Likely raised by emotionally unavailable parents, the dismissive avoider received consistent rejection when seeking emotional support. Many were not allowed to demonstrate emotions at all. Taught at an early age that people could not be relied on, emotions became shame inducing, so they simply stopped seeking or expecting anything from anyone.

Like the fearful avoider, dismissive avoiders feel vulnerability is dangerous. However, there is no push-pull dynamic. Seemingly cold and distant, relationships are kept casual, and emotional space is guaranteed as they keep busy with work, hobbies, or social time with acquaintances. Living productive lives, they pride themselves on independence as a way to avoid acknowledging needs.

Often, they will choose partners who are unavailable themselves, as there is no better way to avoid the threat of intimacy than to couple with someone who cannot provide it.

Like the anxiously attached, these non-attachers vigilantly monitor their partner's behavior, looking for any clues of being controlled.

And if conflict does arise, there is no chaos. They simply walk away.

Using their sense of high self-worth as armor, the dismissive avoider pushes their emotions down to a level of seeming nonexistence. The sad reality is that in doing so, they are denying themselves the most basic of human needs: connection.

## What Can Caregivers Do to Break These Cycles?

The silver lining to insecure attachment styles is this: if we can be taught that love hurts, then we can also be taught that it does not.

Nannies can foster a secure attachment style by providing their children with healthy experiences of connection. Responding to their cries, making eye contact, offering praise, setting realistic expectations, practicing being fully present, and providing structure are just a few of the easy ways we can create trusting relationships.

An equally important intervention is to recognize insecure attachment styles within ourselves. If you recognize these traits or patterns in your own life, consider seeking help from an experienced professional to begin the process of rewiring your faulty conditioning. It is only through awareness and personal growth that this painful cycle of generational heartbreak can be resolved.

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