**The Helper’s Wellbeing Guide**

Helping others may make demands on you - not just your intellect, time, energy and practical help, but also your emotions.

The key to staying positive and well in your helping role is recognising and managing your emotional involvement with those you support.

***Here are some ideas on how to do this:***

**DO LISTEN** – listening is under-rated. It’s OK to just listen and be there. You don’t always have to have something to say in response to a situation. Show you are listening with your body and facial expressions.

**DO WITH, NOT TO** – Understand your role with the person you are helping and ask yourself if you are ***doing to or doing with*** them. To form a successful relationship, which is empowering and leaves them with the skills and confidence to act without your help in future, it must be ***with*** them. Don’t take over.

**BEWARE OF TRANSFERENCE** – The emotions being experienced by the person you’re helping might become transferred over to you, leaving you feeling helpless, angry or frightened for no apparent reason which may then impact on how you interact with others outside your helping role, like your own family.

**MANAGE YOUR STRESS** - Use whatever coping strategies you prefer to keep the stress at bay but remember to maintain confidentiality if “off-loading” about your role.

**DON’T FIX** – Don’t feel you have to solve all the problems of those you are helping, and don’t adopt their problems as your own.

**DON’T THINK YOU’RE SUPERHUMAN** – You mustn’t see the situation of helping another as an opportunity for achievement – it is a great strain to believe that all the responsibility for helping things improve lies with you. And when things don’t work out you can feel personally responsible for this too.

**OTHERS CAN HELP TOO** – Your help will not be the sole source of support. We need to work as a team with other agencies to provide the best help and must recognise our limitations.

**ASK FOR HELP** – Make full use of support structures available to you so you don’t feel overwhelmed or uncertain. Talk to a supervisor as much as you need to for reassurance and guidance.

**DON’T GIVE AWAY OR LOAN YOUR OWN MONEY** – How can you keep that up? How can you be fair to every different person? Would you give them all the same amount? What if you regret it later? What if you are not paid back?