

A Breastfeeding Helper's Personal Code of Ethics

As a breastfeeding helper, I will always try to:

- ensure that the baby is safe and adequately fed;
- leave the mother feeling better and more hopeful than she was;
- speak honestly but with compassion and empathy, choosing my words with her reality in mind;
- help the mother understand the normalcy and thus critical importance of breastfeeding and help her succeed at breastfeeding within the limits of her own life;
- help the mother feel proud of her breastfeeding and mothering experience, whatever it may be;
- make the health and well-being of mother and baby my highest counseling priority, within the limits of her wishes and my own conscience and comfort level;
- leave tidiness in my wake, so that my presence has decreased her workload instead of adding to it;
- maintain and improve my skills through current publications, internet sources, conferences, networking, and other available resources;
- know my allies and cultivate relationships with people who can help me or my clients;
- refer a mother to other appropriate resources – and seek other resources myself – well before the mother's own emotional reserves have been depleted;
- enthusiastically urge attendance at mother-to-mother support groups, and attend at least occasionally myself;
- take all necessary care of myself and my family while assuring reasonable coverage for the women currently and potentially in my care;
- suggest the minimum intervention necessary, and ensure that the mother can enjoy her baby throughout the process.
- avoid all interactions with companies that produce artificial baby milks - except to protest the manufacture, use, and marketing of their products - and be extremely cautious of any product that comes between a mother and her nursing.
- ensure that my workplace improves its overall care as a result of my having been an employee there;
- help newer and current breastfeeding helpers to find their place and improve their skills;
- help fight the medicalization of birth, as a way of improving breastfeeding outcomes;
- create a satellite milk bank at my local maternity center if perinatal supplementation is common;
- object in some way to any flawed research I read;
- leave my community a better place for women and babies as a result of my having been a breastfeeding helper;
- leave a mark – however small – on my larger society as a result of my having been a breastfeeding helper.

_____ (signed)

_____ (date)

2010 Diane Wiessinger, MS, IBCLC www.normalfed.com