

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;

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;

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)

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