**Handout 02: The Helper-Client Relationship**

**What constitutes a healthy helper-client relationship?**

The following are key:

* Maintaining a professional relationship.
* Setting parameters on how services are delivered.
* Being aware of the inherent power imbalance.
* Being aware of your own potential conflict of interest: what are you getting out of helping?
* Being guided by what is in the best interest of the client, while not losing sight of how, ultimately…
  + You need to maintain self-care as the helper; and/ or
  + How your help to one particular client might affect the organization—in terms of risk, reputation & resource management.

**The following can lead to—or are in and of themselves--boundary crossings or violations:**

* Being too familiar with a client—emotionally or physically
* Blurring the lines between professional and friend;
* Intimate relationships—sexual or otherwise;
* Sharing personal information or experiences so that clients can relate – if those experiences are not firmly in the past, and resolved for you (otherwise, the client may feel you need support)

**Being appropriately involved, ie. In the zone of helpfulness below (or, as Vikki Reynolds refers to it, “The Zone of Fabulousness)**

Being appropriately involved is about figuring out what is neither under-involved or over-involved—and ties back to the “ultimately” part of our key question, *“Is my behaviour appropriate and, ultimately, helpful?”*

