



The Buddy System Guide

Why

The buddy system is designed to provide direct one on one peer support for members who may find the idea of group meetings or Facebook daunting. The buddy system is also there as additional support to enable members to connect in between meetings should they need it. It works on a more personal, one to one basis than the open member's forum. It also allows members to share their problems in stages and give time to decide which areas of support might work best for them.

The buddy system is designed to reduce isolation for both the members in the relationship and is designed to provide mutual support for both parties. The relationship can be whatever the 2 members decide, phone, email, Facebook or face to face. The frequency of meeting is decided by both members. It is for both members to decide what they both need/want form the relationship.

What

A buddy is a new friend, but one that genuinely understands what is happening, a non-judgemental friend who "has been there". Sharing each other's problems on a regular basis helps dilute or diffuse issues going on at home and perhaps offers an alternate method to overcome obstacles.

How

On joining every new member will be "buddied" with an existing member by the Ripple Pond staff, unless the new member requests not to have a buddy. All of The Ripple Pond support is optional, nothing is compulsory.

Great care is taken to try and ensure that buddies are in a similar situation and should be able to provide mutual support and understanding. It is up to the 2 members to develop the relationship.

Where

A buddy can be someone local or someone far away who because of similar situations or particular issues is the most appropriate person to help.

How Many/Relationships

A member can have more than one buddy or can change buddies if required, the office staff will always facilitate this. Some buddy relationships last a long time, others only while a particular situation or event is taking place. On occasion some people just don't get on. A new buddy can be requested at any time.

Keeping the relationship going may be too much of a responsibility, in this situation it is fine to either pause the relationship or end it. Please let the office know if you choose this route. Keep in mind that this is a mutual relationship so responses to emails, phone calls etc are really important to keep the relationship alive and ensure isolation and rejection does not return to either member.

Sometimes relationships just run out of steam, that is fine as well, please let the office know if this happens. If you need help and advice about any aspect of the Buddy System please call or email the office and they will do their best to assist.