



7 HARM MINIMISATION TO THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG WORKER

The person that works with alcoholics and/or drug users operates under major stress. Burn-out is rampant for workers in this area, and it is the drug worker who often seems to be the last person whose needs are considered. At times the worker takes on the role of 'God' and tries to solve the drug users problems, to fix the users life. This is dangerous.

The worker needs to know his or her limitations. Provision should be made for workers to ventilate their feelings and to relieve stress. Counselling for workers in this field should be a high priority.

When working within a team, burn-out is less likely. The team members can look after each other by, for example, pointing out to each other the need for time-out. Continuous workshops and seminars on stress management should be provided. It is easy to forget that workers in this area are people too, and need to be cared for and protected against 'burn-out'.