



# Empathy with limits

A guide for volunteers





**“Empathy without limits is exhaustion.**

**“Empathy with limits is love that lasts.”**



# Understanding empathy

- Sympathy: “Poor thing.” → Pity, distance.
- Empathy: “I feel with you.” → Risk of absorbing pain.
- Compassion: “I recognize you and wish to alleviate your suffering without losing myself.”

**Empathy with boundaries is compassion in action.**



# Warning signs

Tiredness or sadness after accompanying.

Difficulty “disconnecting” emotionally.

- Feeling responsible for improving the mood of others.
- Irritability, emptiness or desire to avoid visitors.

*“How do I know I’m absorbing too much?”*



# Take care of yourself before, during and after

- Before: focus, breathe, remember: “I’m going to be present, not solve.”
- During: listen without loading, accept silences, let go of judgments.
- After: closing ritual (write, pray, breathe).

# The water bottle



Illustration and dynamic





**“Empathy is not measured by how much we feel,  
but by how much love we are able to sustain with  
serenity.”**