

## help tip 3

### Understanding feelings of guilt and mental illness

- Guilt is the feeling we have when we think we have done something wrong.
- When we have a loved one with a mental illness we may feel guilt because we feel responsible and want to protect them.
- We feel this guilt because we care.
- We might feel *'why him or her and not me?'*
- We might blame ourselves and say *'...if I'd done things differently he/she would be well.'*
- We might accept unreasonable behaviour from our loved one because we feel guilt. In this situation we need to ask ourselves *'would I accept this behaviour from anyone else in the family?'*
- We may feel we have lost control and need answers so we might blame family members or situations *'...if my husband hadn't brought us to Australia our son would be well...'*
- As carers we need to keep in mind that it is the illness speaking or acting and not the person.
- If you feel overwhelmed ask for professional help.

**Remember that looking for someone or something to blame may stop you from seeing what needs to be done and being helpful to your loved one.**

