

Communicating with Families About Breastfeeding

Presented at Birth to Three Institute

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Presenter: Cathy Carothers, BLA, IBCLC, FILCA

Every Mother, Inc.

cathy@everymother.org

Session Description:

This is a lively session designed to assist breastfeeding educators with powerful tools for connecting with new mothers, including rapport-building strategies for building relationships, emotional triggers that uncover hidden motivators, and tools for building connection. The techniques are so effective they can be used not only with new mothers, but with difficult co-workers, and even your family! Each session builds upon the key points in the previous session for a full-day experience that will help you walk away with tools you can put to use immediately.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the session, attendees will be able to:

1. Explain the impact of verbal and nonverbal communication on one's ability to clearly share information.
2. Identify a technique for active listening when engaging EHS program staff or families in discussions about breastfeeding.
3. Assess an individual's ability to receive and process information on breastfeeding.

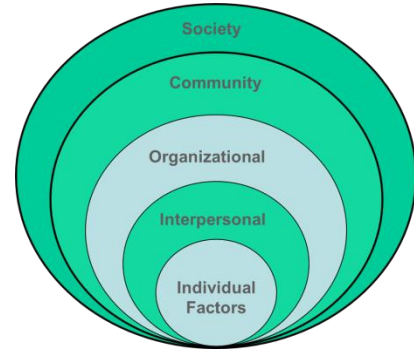
Impact of Breastfeeding

- Infant health (AHRQ 2009)
- Maternal health (Schwarz 2010; AHRQ 2009)
- Economic impact (Bartick 2010; Bartick 2013)

The Power of Listening

- The power of listening vs. talking (opening exercise)
- Temptations that lead us astray
- Ways to listen:
 1. Research (Holmes 2009)

2. The mother's influencers
 - Social Ecological Model
 - Maternal grandmother – may be strongest influencer in the mother's decisions (Grassley 2008; Susin 2005)
 - Baby's father – the more prepared they are during prenatal period the more confident they are in supporting their partner (Susin 2008; Giugliani 1994)
 - Culture – women are impacted by gender roles they have assumed, cultural practices and beliefs, and experiences both positive and negative that shape who they are (Gibson-Davis 2006)
 - Experiences
3. What SHE listens to. Parents typically turn to the Internet for their source of information about parenting and birth (Plantin 2009)
4. Barriers vs. Benefits – the “Exchange Theory” involved in decision-making (Andreasen 1995)



Emotional Triggers that Drive Decision-Making

- Building self-efficacy (Dennis 1999)
 - Performance accomplishments - Mastering
 - Vicarious experiences - Modeling
 - Verbal persuasion - Praise
 - Physiological and Affective States – Positive feelings
- What women want: Powerful Emotional Triggers (www.touchingheartstouchingminds.com)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
- Examples of emotional messages
- Telling people “it's good for you” doesn't work!
- Human beings are guided by EMOTIONS, not LOGIC. FEELINGS are more important than FACTS. People are feeling machines that think, not thinking machines that feel.

“If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow.”

--Rachel Carson

OLD MODEL: LEARN→FEEL→DO

NEW MODEL: FEEL→THINK→DO

- Female brains appear to be “wired” to connect and form emotional bonds (Arnold 2004; Becker 2005; Brizendine 2006)
- Women have powerful talents for reading faces, perhaps due to increased “mirroring” neurons that enhance sensitivity to emotional stimuli. This may help explain why some studies show women often make assumptions about their partner’s support of breastfeeding, even if they have never discussed it. (Cheng 2009; Rehnman 2007)
- Women tend to score higher in tests involving verbal skills. This might be explained in part to the fact that a woman’s corpus callosum (a major neural system connecting the right and left hemispheres of the brain) appears to be larger in women, which may permit better communication between the two hemispheres. Women also typically use their heightened verbal talents to cement emotional relationships. (Kimura 2002)
- When facing stressful situations, women are more likely to report seeking social support and using emotion-focused coping to a greater extent than men, whereas men reported using relatively more problem-focused coping than women (Ptacek 1994)
- Our challenge as counselors: build connection with women through emotion-based counseling that respects where they are in the learning process, affirms their efforts to be good mothers, and targets messages through powerful emotional “pulse points.”
 - Being a great mother
 - Having the power to make a meaningful impact on the family and children’s lives
 - Feeling good about herself
 - Being successful and intelligent

Communication Tools that Build Connection

- Language of Connection (Devite 1989)
 - Words account for _____% of the message received
 - Tone of voice accounts for _____% of the message received
 - Body language/facial expressions account for _____% of message received.
- Body Language
 - Varies across cultures and needs to reflect the client population.
 - Women rely on visual communication (body language, eye contact, etc.) to determine acceptance. (Brizendine 2006)

- Comfortable position creates a warm and inviting climate.
- Touch can convey warmth, caring, and encouragement.
- Learn to read the body language of mothers.
- Tone of voice – use moderate volume and rate of speed.

- Active-Listening Skills
 - Open-Ended Questions
 - ✓ The problem with closed questions
 - ✓ How open questions work
 - ✓ Framing questions: *what, how, tell me*
 - Probing
 - Affirmation
 - ✓ The power of affirmation
 - ✓ 5 ways to affirm
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - Education
 - ✓ Assessing readiness
 - ✓ Simple principles
 - ✓ **5 Ways to Get a Good Start with Breastfeeding**
 1. Magical first hour
 2. Skin to skin
 3. Stay close to baby
 4. Feeding cues
 5. Get help

Putting it All Together

- Effective education using adult learning techniques – Moving from TELLING to ENGAGING
 - **TELLING**
 - ✓ Watch for “teachable” moments – assess readiness
 - ✓ Use simple language
 - ✓ Target message to what’s relevant
 - ✓ Explain the HOW and WHY; be honest
 - ✓ Give information in small bites
 - ✓ Provide 2-3 options

- **SHOWING:**
 - ✓ Make it visual
 - ✓ Provide demonstration opportunities
 - ✓ Consider multisensory learning opportunities
 - ✓ Share stories. The human brain is hard-wired to process stories better than scientific data
 - ✓ Repeat! Repeat! Repeat!

(Russell 2006; Green 2002; Maguire 1998)

- **ENGAGING:**
 - ✓ Allow the mother to take ownership of the plan
 - ✓ The mother conducts the demonstration with you
 - ✓ The mother summarizes the plan to confirm you are on the same page
 - ✓ Face the problem...and the solution...*TOGETHER*
 - ✓ Agree on a follow-up plan
- Humor. It reduces tension and integrates the right/left hemispheres of the brain for better critical thinking and learning (Chabeli 2008)
- Inspire and give hope
- Don't forget the power of praise

Resource List:

Breastfeeding Training Resources

- USDA WIC Program – Staff Breastfeeding Curriculum: *Using Loving Support to Grow and Glow in WIC*. Available at WIC Works at www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Learning_Center/BF_training.html
- USDA WIC Peer Counseling Training – *Loving Support Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together* – Available at WIC Works: www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Learning_Center/support_peer.html

Professional Resources

- **International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners:** www.iblce.org
- **International Lactation Consultant Association:** www.ilca.org
- **Professional Resources available from ILCA at:**
www.ilca.org/i4a/ams/amsstore/category.cfm?category_id=1
 - *Core Curriculum for Lactation Consultant Practice*
 - *Counseling the Nursing Mother*
 - *Breastfeeding and Human Lactation*
 - *Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple*

Government Resources

- *Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*: www.surgeongeneral.gov
- *CDC’s Breastfeeding Guide to Strategies to Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Babies*: <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/resources/guide.htm>
- HHS Office on Women’s Health – *Supporting Nursing Moms at Work: Employer Solutions*: www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/at-work

Breastfeeding Education Resources for Families

- **Books**
 - *Breastfeeding: Keep it Simple* or *Breastfeeding: A Parent’s Guide* (Amy Spangler): <http://babygooroo.com/store/index.php?route=product/category&path=59>
 - *The Breastfeeding Mother’s Guide to Making More Milk* (Diana West and Lisa Marasco): www.ilca.org/i4a/ams/amsstore/category.cfm?category_id=1
 - *Breastfeeding Solutions: Quick Tips for the Most Common Nursing Challenges*(Nancy Mohrbacher): www.nancymohrbacher.com/books/
- **Websites**
 - Baby Gooroo: <https://babygooroo.com/author/amy-spangler/>
 - KellyMom: <http://kellymom.com/>
- **Pamphlets**
 - WIC Works: wicworks.nal.usda.gov/breastfeeding
 - Childbirth Graphics: www.childbirthgraphics.com
 - Noodle Soup: www.noodlesoup.com/breastfeeding.aspx

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