

Module 3 Communicating with WIC Families about Breastfeeding

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Core Competencies

- Develops rapport and fosters open dialogue to successfully communicate with mothers and their families about breastfeeding.

Learning Objectives

- Identify rapport building techniques that establish a positive relationship with pregnant or breastfeeding mothers.
- Demonstrate the ability to use participant-centered techniques (e.g. active listening, reflection, and affirmation) when communicating with or counseling pregnant or breastfeeding mothers.

Planting Seeds



Knowledge Isn't Always Enough

- People do not always adopt healthy behaviors based on information alone
- Effective counseling principles help mothers explore ways to work breastfeeding into their lives

First Things First: Connection Before Content



"People don't care what you know until they know you care." --Anonymous

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Tools for Connection: Active Listening Skills

- Use open-ended questions and probes to explore concerns
- Affirm feelings
- Educate to target concerns
- Information comes last

Step One: Open-Ended Questions



North Miami Beach WIC, Miami, FL

- Help mothers feel safe sharing thoughts and feelings
- Avoid making clients feel interrogated
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Build trust and openness

Examples of Open Questions

- **WHAT**
 - What has your mother told you about breastfeeding?
 - What paperwork did you bring with you today?
- **HOW**
 - How do you feel about breastfeeding?
 - How is breastfeeding going?
- **TELL ME**
 - Tell me why you feel you will need formula.
 - Tell me about a typical day at your house.

Open or Closed?

- Do you work?
- How do you feel about that?
- Have you started feeding your baby solid foods yet?
- Are you going back to school?
- What options have you already tried?
- What can you tell me about your pregnancy?
- What has your partner said about breastfeeding?
- How many times a day does the baby feed?
- What's a good plan for you?

Practice

- Are you going to breastfeed or bottlefeed?
- Have you talked to your mother about breastfeeding?
- Are you going back to work after the baby is born?
- Have you gone to a prenatal class yet?
- Do you have other children?
- Are you going to room in with your baby at the hospital?

Digging for More Information



- Probes:
 - Extending
 - Clarifying
 - Reflecting
 - Redirecting

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Extending Probe

- What else have you heard about that?
- How do you feel about what she said?
- Tell me more about that.

Clarifying Probe

- Do you mean breastfeeding will be painful?
- What part about breastfeeding do you think will be most uncomfortable?
- When you say, "It's too hard" do you mean it will be too hard to learn how to breastfeed?
- Are you concerned breastfeeding will be embarrassing to *you* or to someone who might see you?

Reflecting Probe

- So you're saying you don't think you can breastfeed.
- You think your mother won't approve of breastfeeding.
- You feel he is possessive of you and will not like it if you pay more attention to the baby.

Redirecting Probe

- I can see you're worried about your finances, and we're going to give you some names of people who can help before you leave. Other than that concern, what other concerns do you have about breastfeeding?

Step Two: Affirm Feelings

- Most important part of a successful communication exchange
- Mothers are not ready for information until they feel their opinions have been heard
- Allows mothers to GLOW by drawing attention to what they are doing well

How Affirmation Builds Connection



Miami-Dade WIC Program, Miami, FL

- Builds confidence and self-respect
- Helps mothers relax and feel safe, which builds trust in you and your information
- Does not imply agreeing with her choices

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Ways to Affirm

- Agree with her
- Show her she's not alone
- Read between the lines
- Shine the spotlight
- Show her how she is a good mother

Practice: Affirming New Mothers

- My breasts are too small. The baby will starve.
- I'd be too afraid to breastfeed since I smoke.
- I don't want my dad to see me breastfeed.
- I'm afraid breastfeeding will be too painful.
- I want some formula, too, since I don't think I'm making enough milk.
- She wants to nurse all the time!

Step 3: Education

Adults learn best when you:

- Target info to mother's concerns
- Feed information in small bites
- Give 2-3 simple options
- Keep it simple
- Reinforce the information



Miami-Dade WIC

Start with Heart



Pennsylvania WIC

- Tie messages to what mothers value:
 - Being close to baby
 - Being good mothers
 - Sense of success
 - Happiness
 - Having their children love them
- State WIC Resources

More Tools for Connection : The WIC Welcome



Hialeah West WIC, Miami, FL

- The power of "first impressions" to WIC
- Rolling out the welcome
 - Smile, helpful attitude
 - Non-judgmental approach
- Role of clerks
- Clinic environment

Clerical Language that Supports Breastfeeding

- "You're a great mom for breastfeeding."
- "Look at how your baby is looking at you. He definitely knows you're his mom!"
- "WIC has some great new food packages for breastfeeding moms! The nutritionist will tell you more about them today!"
- "WIC has peer counselors, WIC moms just like you, who you can talk to about making breastfeeding fit into our life."

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More Tools for Connection : Body Language



- Words
- Facial expressions/body language
- Tone of voice

Setting the Tone



- **CLERK:**
 - A breastfeeding mother demands formula *today* because she is running out of milk.
- **CERTIFIER:**
 - A pregnant teen is very shy and gives little information when you ask her about her thoughts on breastfeeding.
 - A postpartum mother looks worn and haggard when she enters your office with her 1-week-old baby.
- **WIC MANAGER:**
 - A clerk in your office complains that a very rude participant insulted her as she left. The clerk begins to cry.

Using 3-Step in Challenging Situations



Utah WIC

- Ask open-ended questions to explore concerns
- Show empathy through affirmation
- Respect the mother's decisions

What About Mothers from Other Cultures?

- Be careful about broad cultural assumptions
- Respect beliefs, even if different from your own
- Affirm each mother

Planting Seeds

- Seeds take varying amounts of time to take root and grow
- Mothers require different levels of support
- Our job: Faithfulness in planting the seeds and watering them with support
- My Grandfather's Blessings by Rachel Remen