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Module Two

The Importance of Breastfeeding

best start
meilleur départ

by/par health *nexus* santé

- The importance of breastfeeding for baby, mother, and the community
- Making informed decisions
- Guilt

A newborn baby has only three demands... warmth in the arms of its mother, food from her breasts, and security in the knowledge of her presence. Breastfeeding satisfies all three.

Grantly Dick-Read



Activity: The Importance of Breastfeeding

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Reasons to Breastfeed

for baby

Activity: The Importance of Breastfeeding

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The importance of breastfeeding for the baby:

- Human milk made for human babies
- Contains stem cells and other living cells
- Supports normal brain development
- Provides unique protection from viruses, germs, and illnesses including cancer, Crohn disease, etc.
- Lowers risk of developing diseases such as diabetes later in life
- Increases bonding and helps mom become attached to her baby
- Lowers risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

*Breastfeeding is a
mother's gift to herself,
her baby and the earth.*

Pamela K. Wiggins



Reasons to Breastfeed

for mother

Activity: The Importance of Breastfeeding

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The importance of breastfeeding for the mother:

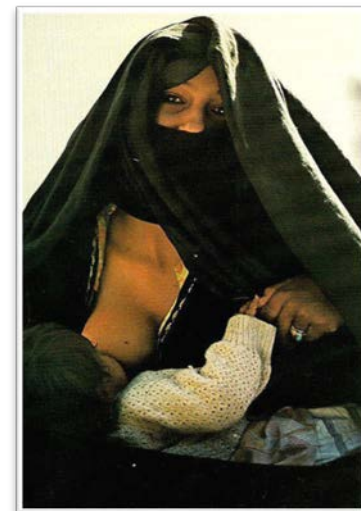
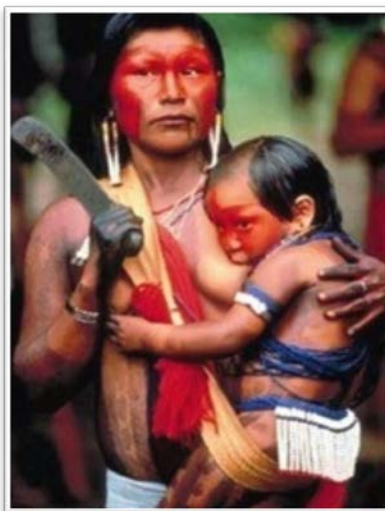
- Helps uterus to return to pre-pregnancy size
- Reduces risk of post-birth bleeding
- Delays return to fertility
- Reduces risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Lowers risk of developing diseases such as diabetes later in life
- Increases a mother's sense of happiness and confidence in parenting
- Reduces financial stress on families; mothers can feed their babies without the cost of formula feeding

The importance of breastfeeding for baby, mother, and the community

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Imagine that the world had created a new “dream product” to feed and immunize everyone born on earth. Imagine also that it was available everywhere, required no storage or delivery, and helped mothers plan their families and reduce the risk of cancer. Then imagine that the world refused to use it.

Frank A. Oski



Reasons to Breastfeed

for the community

Activity: The Importance of Breastfeeding

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The importance of breastfeeding for the community:

- Cost effective for families
- Environmentally friendly; no garbage or waste
- Decreases health care costs
- Helps with long-term health care savings
- Improves attendance and decreases sick time for moms returning to work

Making Informed Decisions (Part 1)

2



Activity: Do You Remember?

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Activity: Do You Remember?

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Questions:

- Do you remember when you first saw anyone breastfeed?
- Do you remember who it was?
- What did you think about breastfeeding at the time?
- When did you first decide about breastfeeding your baby?
- Who talked to you about it?
- When did you first look for breastfeeding information?
- Who did you ask for help/support/information?

Activity: Do You Remember?

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Many women report:

- They did not see a baby breastfeed before they gave birth
- Their decision to breastfeed was made in the early parts of pregnancy
- They went to prenatal classes but did not look for breastfeeding information before their baby was born
- They barely discussed breastfeeding with a doctor or midwife before having their baby

Making Informed Decisions (Part 2)

2



Peer support volunteers can help mothers learn the importance of breastfeeding before they give birth!

Peer support:

- Sets mothers up for success; their confidence increases when they understand breastfeeding basics
- Helps to normalize breastfeeding before birth
- Lets pregnant mothers watch a baby breastfeed without any discomfort
- Creates a support group that will continue after their baby is born
- Helps mothers find community resources and make decisions based on accurate information

What does this mean?

- Being able to find and understand the information related to the decision
- Understanding the risks and benefits and having the chance to discuss these
- Making a decision that is based on the benefits and risks and what is right for each mother in her situation and context

Making Informed Decisions (Part 2)

2

Easy and hard choices

People make thousands of decisions every day. Some decisions are simple; “What socks should I wear today?” Some decisions are more difficult than others. These take time and need information.



Activity: BRAIN

2



How can peer support volunteers help mothers make informed decisions?

- Listen to mothers' stories without judgement
- Empathize with mothers' struggles and the decisions they are trying to make
- Provide mothers with fact-based information and resources to help guide their decision-making process
- Encourage mothers to use the BRAIN process
- Be aware of personal biases (your own and the mothers')

Activity: BRAIN

2

Helping mothers make decisions

- B** — What are the **benefits** of going ahead with this decision?
- R** — What **risks** are part of making this decision?
- A** — What are the **alternatives (other choices)**?
- I** — What is your **intuition (gut)** saying?
- N** — What would happen if you do **nothing**?
What is **next**?

Continue to explore these concepts until a decision is reached



A tale of two mothers ...

Story 1

“Breastfeeding my new baby has been going well, yet I feel a bit guilty because my partner and 3-year-old feel left out. I know this has been a big change, but breastfeeding is the best choice for our family. We based our decision on all the research, and I feel good about it ... that doesn’t mean it isn’t hard some days.” anonymous mother

Story 2

“I breastfed my little girl for almost eight weeks. Long story short, she is now exclusively formula fed. I felt guilty while trying to make the decision to quit because I knew the risks of formula feeding. However, my emotional well-being was more important to my being a good mom than being able to breastfeed. I made the right decision for us.” anonymous mother

Why do mothers experience guilt?

- Guilt occurs when mothers realize or believe that they have compromised their standards or someone else's standards

What contributes to a mother experiencing guilt?

- The expectations we put on ourselves are too high
- Real or perceived pressure from others (i.e., media, family, friends)
- Information and resources can be unclear and inconsistent
- Poor support
- Feeling alone and isolated
- Not taking care of our own needs



How can feelings of guilt be resolved?

- Having the opportunity to talk about guilt can help resolve these feelings
- Accepting you made an appropriate decision at the time based on the information available

The importance of self-care

- How do you feel stress?
- In what part of your body do you feel stress? (stomach, shoulders, head?)
- How do you take care of yourself?



The role of the peer support volunteer:

- Listen! Listen! Listen!
- Empathize with mothers that making a big decision(s) can be difficult and stressful
- Provide mothers with current information to help make a decision(s) based on what is best for them and thier family
- Support mothers in their decision(s), even if the decision(s) is different from what you may have chosen
- Share the idea that “one size does **not** fit all”
- Encourage mothers to take care of themselves and to practice self-care

Activity: Role Play

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Activity: Role Play

2

“Mother”

My partner wants to feed our new baby formula at night so I can get more sleep; I’m also worried about my milk supply

“Peer support volunteer” can consider:

- How do I respond?
- What questions should I ask?
- What information should I share with this mother?
- How will I end the visit/conversation?