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## Module Five

### Breastfeeding Challenges and the Role of Peers

*best start  
meilleur départ*

by/par health *nexus* santé

- The breastfeeding journey
- Breastfeeding challenges
- Weaning
- The role of peers
- Breastfeeding advocacy

*“Any journey worth doing, takes effort...”*

Jen McDonough



# Activity: Breastfeeding Timeline

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# Activity: Breastfeeding Timeline

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Consider the following:

- When did this challenge happen?
- Did challenges differ from child to child?
- How did facing these challenges make you feel?



# Activity: Breastfeeding Timeline

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What challenges have you experienced in your breastfeeding journey?

- Plugged ducts
- Baby who spits up a lot
- Reduced milk supply
- Thrush
- Frequent night feedings
- Sore nipples
- Too much milk
- Baby with green poop
- Slow weight gain
- Nipple confusion
- Baby who prefers one breast

# Breastfeeding Challenges

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Challenges from society include

- Breastfeeding in public
- Unhelpful medical advice
- Separation from baby (work, etc.)
- Balancing roles - mother, partner, lover, employee, etc.



# Breastfeeding Challenges

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# Activity: Responding to Breastfeeding Challenges

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Many mothers who call about weaning are actually calling for help and information so they don't have to wean



Supporting mothers by providing strategies and understanding

Many women in Canada wean earlier than they had planned or wanted.

Common reasons mothers wean earlier than they want

- Unresolved breast or nipple pain
- Perception of having low milk supply
- Bottle-feeding/scheduling is viewed as the norm
- Lack of interaction with other breastfeeding mothers
- Difficulties with public breastfeeding
- Pressure from partners, friends, or family members
- Conflicting information/advice given by health care provider and others
- Misconceptions about weaning (e.g., breastfeeding is only necessary for the first few months)
- Working or being away from baby
- A mother's lived experience of past (or present) abuse



# Weaning

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## Weaning a baby under 1 year of age

Baby will need formula in place of breastmilk	Mother might need to pump or hand express <b>for comfort</b> when breasts feel full (not pumping vigorously as this will stimulate supply)
Baby will need extra physical contact with mother to compensate for the decreased physical contact from nursing	Mother may find information on weaning readiness and developmental milestones helpful
Baby will need to be held while fed	Mother may need extra support to discuss feelings and strategies
Baby may feel confused and unhappy and will need reassurance	Mother may feel sadness and a sense of loss
Baby needs weaning to be a gradual process	Mother needs weaning to be a gradual process

These feelings for mother and baby may also occur when weaning after the first year.

# Activity: Weaning Relationship

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## Four Types of Weaning

### **What is abrupt weaning?**

- Sudden end to breastfeeding with no warning or pre-planning
- Rare situations can make it unavoidable (e.g., emergency medical issues for the mother)
- Abrupt weaning is difficult for the mother and causes distress in the child
- Causes sudden shift in a mother's hormones that can lead to sadness and depression
- Mother can get engorged and/or develop a breast infection

## Four Types of Weaning

### **What is gradual weaning?**

- Mother encourages the child to wean by providing interesting distractions and other food to replace nursing
- Occurs over the course of a few weeks or months
- Child is less likely to experience distress
- Mother is less likely to experience extreme hormonal shift and physical side effects

## Four Types of Weaning

### **What is partial weaning?**

- Compromise between frequent nursing to occasional
- Mother gradually eliminates most nursing over a very extended period of time
- Mother chooses to keep the nursing that are most needed by the child (e.g., nursing to sleep) and eliminates the times that are the most difficult for her (e.g., night feeding)



## Four Types of Weaning

### **What is natural weaning?**

- Allows the child to outgrow nursing on his/her own timetable
- Uses age-appropriate limit-setting
- Mother provides guidance for the child
- Respects the mother's feeling about breastfeeding while taking the child's needs into account

## Strategies to Help Wean a Child over the Age of 1 Year



## Strategies to Help Wean a Child over the Age of 1 Year

- Don't Offer; Don't Refuse
- Redirection
- Substitution
- "Spot" Nursing
- Postponement
- Shortening the Nursing Time
- Weaning by Contract
- Pressure off Concept

## Activity: Dealing with Advice and Criticism from Others

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A visit from Aunt Ida...



# Activity: Dealing with Advice and Criticism from Others

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Possible responses to advice or criticism:

- **Agree to disagree:** “I’m glad that worked for you.”
- **Use empathy:** “I can see that you want the best for me and my baby, and I think that will help you support me in what I am doing.”
- **Acknowledgement:** “Thank you for the advice, I would really like your support for me doing it my way.”
- **Quote Professionals:** “My doctor/midwife or the Canadian Paediatric Society recommends to do it this way.”
- **Share information:** “I have some information on this topic that I could share with you.”
- **Use humor:** “I am really hoping that he is weaned by high school!!! (or university!)”



## Activity: Dealing with Advice and Criticism from Others

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*“When negative comments start to get under your skin, seek out like-minded mothers for support.”*

LLL leader

# The Role of Peers

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When do you need to refer to a health care provider?

- Mother has no improvement in nipple pain with correction of positioning
- Mother has flu-like symptoms with pain, redness, or lumps in breast
- Mother is supplementing baby with bottle/formula and wants to change her feeding plan/routine
- Mother and/or peer support volunteer have concerns that the baby is not getting enough milk as indicated by a low output of wet/soiled diapers, low weight gain, etc.
- Baby under 6 months of age refuses the breast
- Baby over 6 months of age refuses the breast despite the peer support volunteer's suggestions
- Peer support volunteer feels unable to support mother or identify cause of breastfeeding problem

# Activity: In Scope – Out of Scope

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- Breastfeed everywhere!! Breastfeed in stores, malls, restaurants, parks, recreation centres, public libraries, work places, schools, medical offices, etc. The more people see breastfeeding, the more normal it will become
- Participate in community breastfeeding events such as the Quintessence Challenge, LLL meetings, and breastfeeding cafés
- Join a breastfeeding committee to advocate for breastfeeding-friendly policies in your hospital and community
- Share peer breastfeeding program information with your health care provider, friends, work colleagues, and family
- Report code violations to the businesses you use; express your concern with their practices
- Smile at, sit beside, and/or express to a breastfeeding mother how great it is that she is meeting her child's needs by breastfeeding



Breastfeeding issue at city pool leads to apology and new city breastfeeding policy after mother challenges staff

*“A breastfeeding mother was told to stop breastfeeding her five-month-old baby at a city pool during family swim time. The city later apologized .....” 2010*

How can peer support volunteers promote and protect breastfeeding in their community?

Get involved!



## Host a Quintessence Challenge!



Support mothers who are breastfeeding in public





Use social media to normalise breastfeeding



[jonirae.com](http://jonirae.com)

Breastfeeding advocacy

Video: Building a Breastfeeding Environment (BaBE)

# Activity: Breastfeeding Dream Cloud

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Inspiration for your community





*Dream Big...*