

Module Six

Peer Support Volunteer – Ready Set Go!

best start meilleur départ

by/par health nexus santé

- Peer support volunteers: Roles and responsibilities
- Helping mothers in different ways
- Peer support volunteer opportunities
- Support for peer support volunteers



Peer Support Volunteer: Roles and Responsibilities

- Support and encourage women through their breastfeeding journey with non-judgemental, empathetic listening
- To act as a link between parents and existing breastfeeding and parenting resources in the community
- Share current breastfeeding resources with mothers to help them make informed decisions
- Encourage mothers to participate in community breastfeeding events such as the Quintessence Challenge, LLL meetings, and breastfeeding cafés
- To help normalise breastfeeding and create a vibrant breastfeeding culture
- Connect with assigned peer match on a regular basis; set a mutually agreed upon time and frequency for calls or meetings
- Recognize when breastfeeding challenges/questions are not within the scope of their training and make appropriate referrals
- Maintain contact with the peer support program coordinator
- Maintain contact logs or paperwork required by the program

Confidentiality

- Information about a mother is not to be shared with other peer support volunteers, health care providers, or friends without consent from the mother
- Keep all information about a mother and her family in confidence unless legally required to report a problem
- Information can be shared with program staff or coordinator if necessary

Activity: Body parts



Activity: Body parts

Think about when you felt supported by someone – this does not have to be in a breastfeeding situation

Consider the following:

- "What qualities did this person demonstrate?"
- "What made you feel supported?"
- "Would you go back to that person for help again and why?"



Helping by Telephone

Significantly more mothers receiving telephone peer support continued to breastfeed at three months postpartum compared to the group of moms who were not matched with a peer volunteer

University of Toronto study



Helping by Telephone

Challenges of telephone helping

- It is difficult to get a clear picture of what is happening when you can't see a mother's face or observe a baby's latch
- There are no body language cues to follow for mother or baby
- It can be challenging to describe things like latch without visual aids
- Language barriers can be more difficult

Helping by Telephone

The Love Method – a strategy for helping by telephone

- L is for listen
- o is for observe (ask probing questions to get a clear picture)
- **V** is for validate
- **E** is for empower and educate

Activity: Role Play





Activity: Role Play

My baby is 2 weeks old, and I am very worried that he is not getting enough food! How do I know?



Helping in Person



Helping in Person

When helping in person remember:

- Your facial expressions and body language
- Personal biases; share information not advice
- Practice a "hands off" approach to helping mothers with breastfeeding
- Demonstrate using visual tools (e.g., knitted breast, doll, or your baby)
- Your language (the words you use): positive, non-judgemental, and empowering
- Your speech (how you say the words): tone, speed, and volume

Helping in Person We learn by example!



Helping in Person

Video: Breastfeeding Baby Sounds (Mama Cabbage)

Helping in a Group



Helping in a Group

Tips for leading a group

- Greet group members as they arrive
- Be friendly and show enthusiasm for the program and activities
- Respect the ideas, opinions, values, and confidentiality of all group members (and your co-facilitator)
- Use appropriate body language:
 - Face the group
 - Smile
 - Make eye contact
 - Nod to indicate understanding
- Ask questions and encourage comments
- Listen to group members and be responsive to their needs
- Review where the washrooms are

Activity: Group Dynamics



Peer Support Volunteer Opportunities



Peer Support Volunteer Opportunities

Peer support volunteers can promote breastfeeding in their community by:

- Providing a display of your program at community events
- Offering a breastfeeding-friendly space for breastfeeding mothers at community events
- Presenting information about your program to other organizations or at programs for pregnant women or new mothers
- Participating in groups or networks that promote breastfeeding and/or BFI

Support for Peer Support Volunteers



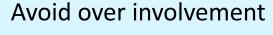
Where to get support as a peer support volunteer

- Connect with your program coordinator
- Call your public health unit for resources
- Seek out your local La Leche League Group
- Look up online resources (e.g., Best Start Resource Centre)
- Ask for support from fellow peer support volunteers

Note that support for peer support volunteers will vary depending upon the program structure and resources

Support for Peer Support Volunteers

Remember to practice self-care!



Avoid emotional burnout

Avoid over commitment of your time

Make personal well-being a priority

Make family well-being a priority



