


The Maryland Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene
Hospital Breastfeeding Policy
Maternity Staff Training Program

Communication Skills
Session 2




Objectives

- › Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively about breastfeeding
- › Learn effective communication techniques
- › Standards of effective communication

Adult Learning

- › Adults expect honesty
- › Make them participants in learning
- › Effective learning leaves a positive impression
- › Individualize
- › Levels of learning
 - Verbal
 - Visual
 - Participatory



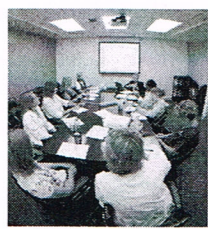
Source: United States Breastfeeding Commission

Components of Communication

- › Delivery and reception
- › Reception depends on
 - The message as it is spoken (7%)
 - Tone of voice (38%)
 - Body language (55%)

Communicating With Families About Breastfeeding

- › Listen and learn
- › Build confidence, give support
- › Arrange support specific to mom's situation
- › Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate about breastfeeding

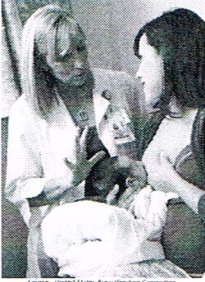


Source: United States Breastfeeding Commission

Standards of Effective Communication

- › Clear, easily understood
- › Complete
 - Refrain from using unnecessary details
- › Good timing
 - Provide information for right now
- › Acknowledged and verified

Education



Source: United States Breastfeeding Commission

- ▶ You spend a lot of time each day with your patients
- ▶ Much of this time includes communicating and educating
- ▶ Education is more effective when the learner is motivated or recognizes relevance

Communication

- ▶ Relevance
- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Keep the content safe



Source: United States Breastfeeding Commission

Showing Respect

- ▶ Acknowledge – Establish a sense of trust
- ▶ Affirm – Make them feel heard and respected
 - Maintain esteem
- ▶ Articulate – Motivate and educate



Source: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Acknowledge

- ▶ Ask open-ended questions
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Allow the other to talk
- ▶ Be sincere
- ▶ Care more about the person than the issue



Source: United States Breastfeeding Commission

Example: Acknowledge

- ▶ Open-ended question
 - Nurse: "Good morning! What are your concerns about breastfeeding?"
 - Patient: "Oh, well... I think the baby isn't getting enough milk."

Affirm

- ▶ Make them feel heard and respected
 - Maintain esteem – do not be judgmental
 - Avoid criticizing
 - Validates the patient's concern
 - If you have had a similar experience, you may choose to relay that to your patient. This will focus a mistake or misconception on the nurse/counselor (you).

Affirmation and Validation

- › MOST important step
- › Reassures mother that her feelings are not unusual
- › Builds her confidence and self-respect
- › Allows a mother to feel confident by drawing attention to what she is doing well
- › Does not mean you have to agree with her
- › Builds trust in you

Affirming Statements

- › Doing a good job is important to you.
- › I can tell you are going to be such a good mother.
- › Breastfeeding is not supposed to hurt.
- › It is not uncommon for breastfeeding to be frustrating at first.
- › This can be difficult.
- › Many moms I work with feel the same way.
- › I used to think the same thing.

Example: Affirm

- › Nurse: "I can understand your concern. Many mothers wonder how much milk their babies are getting."



Source: Maryland WIC Program

Articulate

- › Motivate/Educate
- › Provide information in a non-judgmental tone
 - Move forward
 - Make it relevant to them
 - Ask if you can assist with a feeding to demonstrate while you are teaching

Example: Articulate

Nurse: "Counting the number of wet and dirty diapers that your baby has in a 24-hour period lets us know if your baby is getting enough to eat. In the first day of life, we only expect your baby to have at least one wet and one soiled diaper. We also want to be sure that your baby is feeding at least 8-12 times during these same 24 hours."



Source: Maryland WIC Program

Acknowledge

Nurse: "Hi Mrs. Jones. I am nurse Nice and I will be caring for you and your baby tonight. How can I help you with breastfeeding?"

Patient: "I had a lot of company today so I want to send my baby to the nursery so I can sleep."

Affirm

Nurse: "Having a lot of company can be tiring."



Source: Nandini Program

Articulate

Nurse: "Something that I learned not long ago really surprised me. Studies have shown that mothers actually sleep better and more restfully when their babies are in the room with them. I will check on you often to make sure that you are doing okay with the baby in the room if you will give it a try."

Effective Communication

- › Builds positive relationships with patients
- › Allows you to provide needed information so they can make informed choices



Source: Nandini Program

Counseling Techniques

- › Use open-ended questions when talking to mothers
- › An open-ended question cannot be answered with a yes/no response
- › Using open-ended questions will elicit more information, like the mother's feelings and thoughts



Source: United States Breastfeeding Committee

Practice Changing the Following:

Closed: Are you going to breastfeed or bottle feed?

Open: Tell me what you have heard about breastfeeding.

Closed: Have you nursed your baby at least 8 times over the last 24 hours?

Open: Tell me when your baby has nursed in the last 24 hours.

Closed: Do you feel that your baby has been getting enough to eat?

Open: Tell me how many wet and dirty diapers your baby has had in the last 24 hours.

Digging for More Information

- › Probes
 - Extending
 - Clarifying
 - Reflecting
 - Redirecting



Source: United States Breastfeeding Committee

Extending Probe

- › What else have you heard about that?
- › How do you feel when he says that?
- › Tell me more about that.



Nurse: Shariel Mann
Breastfeeding Counselor

Clarifying Probe

- › Are you afraid breastfeeding will make you tired *or* that it will make the baby too dependent?
- › When you say "It's too hard," do you mean it will be too hard to learn to breastfeed?



Nurse: Shariel Mann
Breastfeeding Counselor

Reflecting Probe

- › So you are saying you don't think you can breastfeed?
- › You think your mother won't approve of breastfeeding and that bothers you?



Nurse: Shariel Mann
Breastfeeding Counselor

Redirecting Probe

- › Susan, besides the issues with your boyfriend, what other concerns do you have about breastfeeding?
- › Heather, other than the shape of your breasts, is there anything else that worries you?



Nurse: Shariel Mann
Breastfeeding Counselor

Practice Responding to the Following:

Patient: I could never do that!

Nurse: What about breastfeeding do you feel you could not do?

Patient: It would be too embarrassing, especially in front of a man.

Nurse: Are you saying you would be embarrassed if a small part of your breast is exposed?

Patient: I need some formula.

Nurse: Tell me what about breastfeeding makes you concerned.

Padding

- › Use the participant's name
- › Repeat her words
- › Add extra words
- › Pause before responding

Adults Learn Best When You:

- › Target information to their concerns
- › Feed information in small bites
- › Give 2-3 simple options
- › Keep it simple
- › Reinforce the information



Source: United States Breastfeeding Campaign

Conclusion

Clear communication helps families learn and promotes successful breastfeeding outcomes



Source: United States Breastfeeding Campaign

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