Pebbles in a Pond
Implementing a Peer Breastfeeding Program at Kingston Community Health Centres

Karen Laidlaw:
Family and Community Support Worker and Facilitator of Breastfeeding Families (BFF)

Outline
• Overview of Breastfeeding Families.
• Our successes.
• Our challenges.
• Voice of the volunteer BFF peers – movie.
• Tool box for starting a peer breastfeeding program.

Overview of Breastfeeding Families (BFFs)
Goal: To increase the initiation, exclusivity and duration of breastfeeding among low-income women in north Kingston
• KCHC information and demographics
• Why we applied for the grant.
• Recruitment + Training
• How BFFs provide support.
BFFs - Successes

• Increased breastfeeding knowledge and visibility both at the health centre and in the community – from surveys.
• Reported increased breastfeeding confidence among peers and attendees at groups.
• Unexpected outcome – creation of a Facebook page by and for community members about breastfeeding.

BFFs - Challenges

• Expectations
• Competing demands on peers’ time and energy
• Communication
• Training and Evaluation
• Promotion

Voice of the peers!
Tool Box for Starting a Breastfeeding Peer Support Program

- **Education for peers** – train the trainer, accessing local free support for education.
- **Mentorship for facilitator** – with someone who has worked with volunteers.
- **Communication plan** – with each peer and with the group of peers but be flexible!

---

Tool Box for Starting a Breastfeeding Peer Support Program

- **Administration and budget support** – clarity re: who does what from the beginning and enlist management to delegate as needed. Peers can be called on to only do so much.
- **Evaluation** – involve data management person from the beginning, develop surveys/data collection methods with IT based on your goals.

---

Tool Box for Starting a Breastfeeding Peer Support Program

- **Sustainability**...the ripples in the pond!
  - Increased knowledge and confidence with breastfeeding.
  - Peers are excited about their role.
  - Peers are leaders in the community.
  - Breastfeeding is more visible.
- **Ask:** "What is working?" and focus on this.
  - For us- breastfeeding cafes, peers in existing groups and continuing 1:1 matches.
Breast Milk: Give the gift of Life

Fact 1:
Breastfeeding creates a wonderful bond between the mother and her child.
Fact 2: Breast milk contains antibodies that help your baby fight off viruses and bacteria.

Fact 3: Breast milk changes with the baby's needs as they grow.
Fact 4:
Breast-milk contains all the fluid and nutrients baby needs.

Fact 5:
Natural form of birth control, increases time between babies.
5 Benefits of Breastfeeding:

1. Breast milk is the best food to help your baby to grow and develop.
2. Breastfeeding provides a measure of protection against breast cancer and ovarian cancer.
3. It's easy on the budget.
4. It's convenient and portable.
5. It's good for the environment.

Together let's normalize breastfeeding!
Breastfeeding is the most natural way of feeding our babies.