The WE Breastfeed Program

• Started at Guelph CHC in 2007
• Peer-to-peer support, based on Kitchener Downtown CHC’s Breastfeeding Buddies model
• Initially focused on parents new to Canada
• Program less active/on hold from 2010-2012 during evaluation, staff turn over
• 2012/2013 – moved from RN/LC led model to community development model led by Health Promoter

The WE Breastfeed Program

• Currently 40 Active Volunteers
• One-to-One Matching
• Breastfeeding Cafés
• Community Breastfeeding Collaborative
Local Support Listing

Breastfeeding Support in Guelph

Reaching Out to Priority Parents

Effective Promotion Strategies – A Lot of Legwork Required

• Face to face & word of mouth still most effective
• Distribute promo materials everywhere
• Public Facebook page – attempt to post daily, choose admins carefully
• Emphasize the social aspect of the café, avoid calling it a ‘support group’
Reaching Out to Priority Parents

• Ensure strong, positive relationships with other agencies
• Receive referrals made by providers
• Become familiar in the community where priority populations are

Connecting With Parents At Risk of Not Breastfeeding

Mindset & Values – Foundation for Success
• Meet them where they are at in their lives and in the community
• Show acceptance and support their current situation

Building Relationships

• Be welcoming & inclusive
• Strive for a non-judgmental space for voice & choice
• Respectful learning environment
Representing Priority Families

Recruiting Volunteers From Priority Populations
- Where are they in your community?
- Draw on your community connections
- Posters, social media, emails, presentations, word of mouth – being specific about who you’re looking for
- Accommodate parents at risk that want to volunteer!
Our Image

WE Breastfeed Volunteer Training

- Discuss Commitment Level Individually
- Completely Free Training for all Volunteers
- On-going Support
- Create Anchors in the Community

WE Breastfeed Moving Forward

- Volunteer monthly meetings are kept informal
- Sharing personal breastfeeding and helping stories holds great value
- Make an effort to keep volunteers engaged with exciting and educational volunteer meeting plans
- Show appreciation to the volunteers, acknowledging often the hard and important work they do
Challenges

• Lives are constantly changing, parents at risk may have complicated lives

• Training is expensive and intensive to upkeep

• Takes a significant amount of time and effort in relationship building to gain momentum, particularly with recruiting parents at risk

Key Messages

• Use a community development approach

• Fully engage volunteers, recruit thoughtfully, focus on representing many different types of parents

• Collaborate & partner

• Be clear about and respect the different roles of professionals and peers

• Be inclusive and non-judgmental

Thank you for listening!

Do you have any questions or comments?

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