

North-East Toronto Community Breastfeeding Support



Best Start preconference February 2016
Flemingdon Health Centre


Project Objectives:

- Increase access to in-person breastfeeding supports to population with lower breastfeeding rates
 - First time mothers
 - Lower income
 - Lacking social support
 - New immigrants
 - Less educational attainment
- Develop supportive culture and environment that promotes breastfeeding practices for those who have chosen to breastfeed
- In-service for community partners & Guest speaker lecture for service providers
- Development of collaborative sustainable model
- Peer-professional model

What is a Peer-Professional Breastfeeding Support Model?

PEER MODEL ELEMENTS:

- Support offered by women who have breastfed, are usually from similar socio-economic backgrounds and locality to the women they are supporting, and who have received minimal training to support breastfeeding women (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)
- A low-cost, non-medical intervention
- Access to experienced breastfeeding mothers
- Many different educational, ethno-cultural and socio economic backgrounds (La Leche League, 2010)
- Diverse communities and communities with high immigration trends benefit from peer support
- Peers provide important support especially to those who face barriers to accessing services and have lower rates of breastfeeding (Best Start)
- The Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) recognizes the value of peer support for breastfeeding mothers



PROFESSIONAL MODEL ELEMENTS:

- Health professional provide research based evidence breastfeeding support
- Support for complex breastfeeding cases, one on one as needed
- Provide health, breastfeeding information and referral to other community resources

Highlights: Peer Support

- Important to understand populations with lower rates of breastfeeding: peers with lived experience can connect with other mothers
- Peer support creates a breastfeeding culture that normalizes breastfeeding: in public, in discussion, with other support people
- Peer support promotes health equity by improving access to breastfeeding help (WHO, 2003)



Setting up breastfeeding support

- What is already in existence?
 - Established communities
 - Community agencies
 - Community centres, housing buildings
- Types of support
 - One-on-one or group
 - Drop-in or planned meetings
 - Online
 - Telephone support
- Rooted in breastfeeding support, but from which background
 - Mother-to-mother, peer support
 - "Expert"-led, professional support
 - Integrated professional support (cost effective)
 - Peer-to-professional support



Partners & Stakeholders: 3 agency partnership

Flemingdon Health Centre	Toronto Public Health	Victoria Village HUB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Promotion Lead • Lactation Consultant • Student/Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Nurse • Lactation Promotion Specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Women Community Centre • Aisling Discoveries (CPNP)

Collaboration with partners



- Partner agencies had equal commitment & buy-in
- Establishment of Steering Committee- frequent meetings & checks ins
- Referrals made from WWCC, TPH, FHC
- Clients also self-referred
- Opportunity for client follow-up
- Sustainability plan discussed continuously

Community stakeholder buy-in



- ▶ Launch "n Learn- in service for staff
- ▶ Posters, diversity represented
- ▶ Knowledgeable staff at first point of contact

Launch n Learn Sessions:

- ▶ Total of 25 staff and volunteers from partner agencies attended in-service during the duration of the project. In-service was designed as an interactive workshop to achieve the following:
 - ▶ Inform staff of benefits of breastfeeding
 - ▶ Coach staff to support and promote a supportive breastfeeding environment.
- ▶ Feedback: "The workshop was very informative. I think it will help us to support the families to breastfeed. Thank you."
- ▶ Pre and post test evaluations completed to assess change

Program structure

- ▶ Older children? Are space, supervision, childcare appropriate?
- ▶ Ample space: chairs as well as floor space
- ▶ Access to community resources and information to take home
- ▶ Translation/interpretation support
- ▶ Space for mothers to connect without staff/leaders
- ▶ Opportunities for more one-to-one support when needed: factual information
- ▶ Access to PHNs (prenatal and breastfeeding) and Lactation Consultant, who can offer follow up support as well as referrals as appropriate.



Peer support offers a sense of belonging to mothers

Victoria Village drop-in

- ✓ Women encouraged to attend during pregnancy
- ✓ Program runs immediately following the prenatal program (Aisling Discoveries, TPH, VV Hub)
- ✓ Crossover period of 30 minutes whereby prenatal and breastfeeding support group participants have snack/lunch together
- ✓ Mothers can hear ideas and suggestions from several other women
- ✓ Families able to ask questions in a safe and supportive environment



Better breastfeeding outcomes: women who attended prenatal breastfeeding classes had significantly increased breastfeeding at 6 months (Best Start, 2014)

Program Profile: April to December 2015

- Registered a total of 37 participants
 - 236 client visits
 - 79 visits by prenatal clients
- Total of 36 sessions- one drop in session is held each week
- 2 community residents trained as peers



Program Profile: April to December 2015

Feedback collected between August- November 2015 indicates that 54% of respondents report behaviour change and as a result doing something different with their children as a result of attending the drop-in program. The following is a list of examples of behavioural changes, as reported by participants:

- Not keeping a feeding schedule and instead breastfeeding on demand
- Breastfeeding directly, skin-to-skin, with no use of bottle
- More playing- dancing and singing
- Increasing physical touch with baby (more skin to skin contact)
- Breastfeeding in public (on demand)

Sustainability plan: professional-peer model

- Group meetings help form a breastfeeding community
- Mother-to-mother support has been shown to increase breastfeeding exclusivity and duration
- Clients expressed interest in taking on leadership roles
- Mothers attending group expressed interest in receiving more formal "training" to acknowledge ownership of group
- La Leche League leadership
- Best Start Peer Breastfeeding volunteers
- Professional support available to further support development & sustainability of the group



Beyond the drop-in

- Continuation of care/support
- Community engagement strategies, such as engaging in training of peers, offer the potential for leadership.
- During programming/events, facilitate access to other resources (campaigns, groups, other organizations)
- Ensure parents are clear on how they can get involved, discuss the numerous types of peer support
- Capacity development and training



