

## “Beyond COVID-19” Webinar Series

### Webinar #2: Connecting with Participants during Unsettling Times

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#### Personal Disclosures

- *No personal disclosures for this talk*

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Name at least three active listening principles to build rapport and empower Healthy Start participants about breastfeeding.
2. Identify safety considerations and strategies to improve communication during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. List options for using virtual communication methods to reach participants during a time of social distancing.

#### Build a Bridge

*When dealing with participants, our role as educators and counselors is to build, not burn, a bridge. Take the time to read between the lines and listen more deeply to build understanding, and acknowledge feelings by affirming. The power of connection helps us build that bridge.*

#### Quote:

*People don't care what you know until they first know that you care.* (Harry S. Truman)

#### Building Listening Skills

- Counseling is not the same as talking. Counseling is more about listening!
- Listening involves:
  - Observing body language and tone of voice
  - Tuning in to the whole person
  - Reading between the lines
  - Being curious!
- Temptations that interfere:
  - Doing all the talking
  - Projecting authority
  - Persuasion
  - Paper pushing
  - Complicating things
- Improving listening skills (Schilling 2012)

- Face the other person/maintain eye contact
- Minimize distractions
- Be curious!
- Avoid jumping in with solutions
- Try to “picture” what the person is saying
- Keep an open mind

**Remember:**

**CONNECTION before Content**

### **The Power of Human Emotions**

- Human beings are guided by emotions
- “People are feeling machines that think, not thinking machines that feel.”
- Women in the early postpartum period are especially susceptible to emotion-based messaging.
- Universal motivators
  - Acceptance
  - Curiosity
  - Family
  - Honor/Need to Belong
  - Idealism/Independence
  - Order
- Emotion-based triggers for new mothers (Touching Hearts Touching Minds)
  - Desire to be a good mother
  - A strong family
  - Love and happiness from children
  - Sense of success

### **Tools that Build Connection**

- Body language accounts for 55% of messages given. Tone of voice accounts for 38%. Words account for 7%. (DeVite 1989)
- Women rely on visual communication (body language, eye contact, etc.) to determine acceptance. (Brizendine 2006)
- Step ONE: Be curious! Listen and learn.
  - Seek to understand
  - Open-ended questions: what, how, tell me
- Step TWO: Build rapport. Affirm her feelings.

- Agree with her
- Show the person they are not alone
- Read between the lines
- Acknowledge successes
- Appeal to strongest universal motivator
- Step THREE: Give options.
  - Meet the person where they are
  - Three stages of education in order of importance:
    1. ENGAGEMENT
    2. SHOWING
    3. TELLING
  - Appeal to emotions
  - Shared decision-making...palatable solutions that are arrived at jointly, acknowledging that new parents are the experts in their lives, while you may have expertise in breastfeeding.

### **Engaging Family Members**

- Dads are extremely important to the decision-making process. 98.1% of women breastfed when their partner was supportive vs. 26.9% who breastfed when their partner was not supportive.
- Dads often want practical suggestions of how they can help. This helps extend breastfeeding duration.
- Dads often want a close, loving relationship with their baby.
- Partners in same sex relationships may have varied needs. Be sensitive to their goals and provide assistance that will help them reach those goals.
- Grandmothers may also seek a loving relationship with the baby.

### **Connecting During COVID-19**

- Strategies for safe counseling (CDC 2020 at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>)
  - Avoid large gatherings
  - Maintain physical distancing
  - Wash hands frequently
  - Wipe surfaces
  - Wear a mask
- Connecting while wearing a mask:
  - Find a quiet place to minimize distractions
  - Face the other person directly to maintain eye contact
  - Use gestures to add meaning to your words
  - Smile with your eyes!
  - Practice in front of a mirror
  - Be mindful of your speech volume

- Check in to be sure others understand what you are saying
- Avoid clear masks except when counseling people who are hearing impaired
- Look for emotions in participants and seek to understand
- Virtual communication options
  - Virtual education/classes for pregnant and postpartum women (e.g., back to work classes and prenatal education). Use interactive options such as breakout rooms, polls, and the “chat” feature. Invite participants to have certain items handy such as dolls or other teaching tools.
  - Postpartum support groups (e.g., Baby Cafés - see Baby Café USA at <http://www.babycafeusa.org/>)
  - Videoconferencing for lactation consultations
  - Partner with other community virtual opportunities (e.g., faith community, other healthcare programs, WIC, hospitals, and other groups)
  - Mobile apps such as “Pacify” - <https://www.pacify.com/>
- Community Connections
  - Healthcare providers
  - Hospital outpatient clinic for postpartum mothers
  - La Leche League groups
  - Private practice lactation consultants
  - Partner to provide hotline/warmline for community breastfeeding support

*I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.*

--Brené Brown



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<http://www.pinterest.com/cathycarothers/breastfeeding-resources-workplace/>

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