



Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Orientation Checklist

PEER COUNSELOR INFORMATION

Name: _____	Hire Date: _____
Agency: _____	Breastfeeding Basic Dates: _____
Regional LC: _____	Completion Date: _____

RESOURCES (1.0 Hours)

Books/Periodicals

- Mother's Milk and Medications, Thomas Hale
- Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple Book, Nancy Mohrbacher
- Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, La Leche League

Internet

- [Ready, Set, Baby!](#) (Available English/Spanish/Arabic)
- Coffective: <http://coffective.com>
- WIC Breastfeeding Support: <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov>
- Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding
- Office of Women's Health: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/patient-materials/health-topic/breastfeeding>
- It's Only Natural: [Breastfeeding — It's only natural \(infographic text\) | Office on Women's Health \(womenshealth.gov\)](#)
- Hand Expression Video: <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/hand-expressing-milk.html>
- Pace Feeding Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGPm5SpLxXY>
- Hands On Pumping: <http://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/maximizing-milk-production.html>

- Infant Cues and Behaviors: [Baby Feeding Cues - Video | HealthLink BC](#)
- Michigan Breastfeeding Network: <https://www.mibreastfeeding.org>
- KellyMom: <https://kellymom.com>
- Breastfeeding State Laws: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>
- First Droplets by Jane Morton: <https://firstdroplets.com/>
- Ready, Set, Baby! [Printable resources](#)

Apps (Available on Android and Apple)

- Breastfeeding Solutions: An Interactive Guide to Solve Common Breastfeeding Problems
- Mother's Milk and Medications
 - InfantRisk Center
 - MommyMeds
 - Hale's Meds
- Coffective
- Breastfeeding Management 2
- WIC Connect

Supplemental Learning

- Womanly Art of Breastfeeding Study Guide (Ideally completed within 6 months of hire)

POLICY & GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS (1.0- 1.5 Hours)

Revised 1/7/2022



- MI-WIC 12.01 Peer Counselor Orientation
- MI-WIC 12.02 After-Hours Availability
- Breastfeeding Roles and Examples
- MI-WIC 1.07I Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
- MI-WIC 1.07L Staff Training Plan

Source: https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_4910_19205_48542-191418--,00.html

[Scope of Practice](#)

- Pregnancy Issues
- Baby Concerns
- Mother Concerns
- Illness in Mother or Baby
- Other Medical Situations
- Nutrition
- Other

When to Yield

- Pregnancy Issues
- Baby Concerns
- Mother Concerns
- Illness in Mother or Baby
- Other Medical Situations
- Nutrition
- Other

ORIENTATION (6.0- 7.5 Hours)

- Shadowing
- Observation
- Mentoring
- Clinic
- Home Visit
- Breastfeeding class
- Proper phone etiquette when performing phone contact(s)
- Documentation of contacts
- Ability to ask open-ended questions
- Supports exclusive breastfeeding
- Uses mom's, and/or baby's, name
- Uses analogies or visual aids to reinforce information
- Facilitate interactive group discussion that is participant-centered
- Incorporates handout materials into discussion
- Provides demonstrations when appropriate
- Explores client's feelings, thoughts and current knowledge of breastfeeding
- Ends counseling session on positive note
- Ability to demonstrate hand expression
- Clinic contact- prenatal, postpartum
- Demonstrates reflective listening and follows up with positive affirmations
- Cultural sensitivity
- Maintain confidentiality
- Provides evidenced-based, up-to-date breastfeeding information
- Yields to expert when appropriate
- Offers appropriate follow up care and referrals
- Communicates effectively and efficiently
- Prioritizes topics to discuss based on information obtained
- Probes using appropriate questions to assess mother's situation.
- Knowledge of use of pump, and storage/collection of breast milk

*6.0 – 7.5 hours is a suggested amount of time for the Regional LC. Some of the above topics can also be covered by the local agency's Peer Manager/Breastfeeding Coordinator.

Revised 1/7/2022



Orientation Narrative

GLOW
WHAT WENT WELL?

GROW
WHAT CAN BE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

GIFT
WHAT I WILL WORK ON? – Quality Improvement Goal(s)

Regional LC Signature: _____

Date: _____

Peer Counselor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Breastfeeding Coordinator Signature: _____

Date: _____

Job Description 3: WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

General Description:

- A WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor is a paraprofessional support person who gives basic breastfeeding information and encouragement to WIC pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.
- Qualifications:
 - Has breastfed at least one baby (does not have to be currently breastfeeding).
 - Is enthusiastic about breastfeeding and wants to help other mothers enjoy a positive experience.
 - Can work about 10 hours a week.
 - Has a telephone and is willing to make phone calls from home.
 - Has reliable transportation.

Training:

- Attends a series of breastfeeding classes. Nursing babies are welcomed.
- Observes other peer counselors or breastfeeding experts helping mothers breastfeed.
- Reads assigned books or materials about breastfeeding.

Supervision: The peer counselor is supervised by the _____

Specific Duties of the WIC Peer Counselor:

- Attends breastfeeding training classes to become a peer counselor.
- Receives a caseload of WIC mothers and makes routine periodic contacts with all mothers assigned.
- Gives basic breastfeeding information and support to new mothers, including telling them about the benefits of breastfeeding, overcoming common barriers, and getting a good start with breastfeeding. She also helps mothers prevent and handle common breastfeeding concerns.
- Counsels WIC pregnant and breastfeeding mothers by telephone, home visits, and/or hospital visits at scheduled intervals determined by the local WIC Program.
- May counsel women in the WIC clinic.
- Is available outside the WIC clinic and the usual 8 to 5 working schedule to new mothers who are having breastfeeding problems.
- Respects each mother by keeping her information strictly confidential.
- Keeps accurate records of all contacts made with WIC mothers.
- Refers mothers, according to clinic-established protocols, to:
 - WIC nutritionist or breastfeeding coordinator.
 - Lactation consultant.
 - Mother's physician or nurse.
 - Public health programs in the community.
 - Social service agencies.
- Attends and assists with prenatal classes and breastfeeding support groups.
- Attends monthly staff meetings and breastfeeding conferences/workshops as appropriate.
- Reads assigned books and materials on breastfeeding that are provided by the supervisor.
- May assist WIC staff in promoting breastfeeding peer counseling through special projects and duties as assigned.

I understand the above job responsibilities, and agree to perform these duties as assigned.

WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

Date

Staffing and Supervision 5: Scope of Practice for the WIC Peer Counselor

A peer counselor provides basic breastfeeding information, encouragement and support to WIC participants and performs within the peer counselor scope of practice.

- **Perform in a professional manner in all aspects of the peer counselor role.**
 - Respect the participant's privacy, dignity and confidentiality.
 - Respect and respond sensitively to cultural attitudes and practices of participants and the community.
 - Work within the policies and procedures of the WIC program.
 - Maintain records according to legal requirements and ethical practices.
 - Recognize when assistance is needed and consult with the supervisor, Breastfeeding Coordinator and/or Peer Counselor Coordinator and other lactation specialists.
 - Identify situations outside the Scope of Practice and refer as appropriate in a timely manner.
 - Yield to the WIC designated breastfeeding expert for situations out of breastfeeding peer counselor Scope of Practice.
 - Acquire ongoing breastfeeding education to maintain and build knowledge and skills.
- 1. Encourage and support participants to breastfeed.**
 - Use participant-focused communication techniques to best meet participant needs.
 - Help participants identify the support available to them and educate family members.
 - Help women identify their breastfeeding concerns, barriers, and solutions.
 - Promote the reasons to breastfeed and the risks of not breastfeeding.
 - Counsel mothers about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding in the early weeks and ways to continue breastfeeding.
 - Assist in infant feeding classes and peer support groups.
 - Be available to WIC participants outside of usual clinic hours and outside of the clinic environment.
 - Refer mothers to resources for support.
 - Promote breastfeeding in the community, workplace, and health care system.
 - Support breastfeeding participants from pregnancy through growth spurts, introducing solid foods, and weaning.
- 2. Teach basic breastfeeding to participants and help them when difficulties occur.**
 - Teach basic, evidence-based techniques that help ensure a successful start in breastfeeding, including milk production, skin-to-skin care, positioning and latch, and milk expression and storage.
 - Identify signs of the normal course of breastfeeding, including breastfeeding frequency and duration, infant feeding cues, and normal infant weight gain and stooling patterns.
 - Provide anticipatory guidance to help prevent the occurrence of problems.
 - Provide guidance to mothers regarding non-evidence-based breastfeeding information they receive.
 - Help mothers plan for a return to work/school that supports the continuation of breastfeeding.
 - Provide basic and timely problem-solving and support.
 - Yield mothers experiencing difficulties to the WIC designated breastfeeding expert.

I have read and understand my responsibility to provide peer counseling services within the defined peer counselor defined scope of practice.

Name _____ Date _____

Adapted from Scope of Practice for Peer Counselors materials from Michigan, California and Virginia WIC.

Staffing and Supervision 7: When To Yield

When peer counselors identify any of the following problems or situations, they must immediately consult their WIC designated breastfeeding expert (such as the local agency breastfeeding coordinator, local agency WIC coordinator, or International Board Certified Lactation Consultant [IBCLC]) to discuss the best plan for supporting the mother and infant, including the referrals that are appropriate. The peer counselor will continue to provide support while the designated expert or health care provider (HCP) is addressing the issue, unless the supervisor or peer determines that it is best to discontinue peer support.

Pregnancy Issues

1. Spotting or bleeding
2. Excessive vomiting or nausea
3. Swelling
4. Contractions, suggesting premature labor
5. Baby stops moving
6. Other troublesome medical situations

Baby Concerns

1. Baby is born preterm or low birth weight
2. Baby is sick
3. Baby has fewer than 6 wet diapers and 3 stools per 24 hours in the first month after the baby is 4 days old
4. Baby fails to gain weight or gains weight slowly:
 - Baby loses more than 7% of birth weight
 - Birth weight is not regained by 2 weeks postpartum
 - Weight gain is less than 4.5 ounces per week
5. Baby has difficulty latching or remaining latched after several attempts
6. Baby appears unhappy at the breast or refuses to breastfeed
7. Baby is still hungry after feedings despite 24 hours of increased frequency and duration of breastfeeding
8. Breastfeedings typically last more than 45 minutes
9. Baby is jaundiced
10. Baby has a congenital defect such as cleft lip/palate or Down Syndrome
11. Baby has restricted tongue movement from a tight frenulum

Mother Concerns

1. Mother has engorgement or plugged ducts that are not resolved after 24 hours

2. Mother has a fever (suggesting possible mastitis)
3. Mother has nipple discomfort that does not improve after 24 hours
4. Mother is supplementing with formula before the baby is 1 month old and wants to increase her milk production or reduce/eliminate formula supplements
5. Mother has been formula feeding the baby since birth and now wants to breastfeed
6. Mother is exclusively pumping her milk and now wants to put her baby to breast
7. Mother wants to breastfeed an adopted baby
8. Mother is breastfeeding more than one baby
9. Mother wants to breastfeed but has been advised NOT to by her HCP
10. Mother finds a lump in her breast

Illness in Mother or Baby

1. Mother or baby have symptoms of thrush/yeast infection
2. Mother or baby are vomiting or have diarrhea
3. Mother or baby are hospitalized
4. Mother has symptoms of mastitis
5. Mother has a physical handicap
6. Mother or baby has a chronic or acute illness
 - Hepatitis B or C, tuberculosis, CMV, or chicken pox
 - Renal, liver, intestinal, heart problems, or cystic fibrosis
 - Metabolic disorder such as diabetes mellitus
7. Mother has been diagnosed with AIDS/HIV

Other Medical Situations

1. Mother has been prescribed medications that have not been approved for breastfeeding by current established authorities such as the AAP or Lactmed

2. Mother has prior breast surgery (breast implants, breast reduction, biopsy, breast cancer), chest surgery, or trauma
3. Mother has had gastric bypass surgery
4. Mother has a history of PCOS, hypothyroidism, or other hormonal conditions that could affect breastfeeding

Nutrition

1. Mother has nutrition questions
2. Mother is nutritionally at risk for underweight, has bulimia or anorexia
3. Mother has no food

Social

1. Mother appears depressed

2. Physical abuse of the mother or another family member is suspected
3. Mother is abusing or suspected of abusing alcohol or street drugs (such as heroin, marijuana, meth, cocaine, etc.)

Other

1. Mother or baby have any other medical problems that are outside the peer counselor scope of practice
2. Mother feels there is a problem that needs a referral
3. Peer counselor feels there is a situation that needs to be addressed by a lactation expert
4. Mother is not following suggestions given by the peer counselor

Adapted from the Minnesota WIC Program, "Yield List"