

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELOR

General Description and Examples of Work

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A Breastfeeding Peer Counselor is a paraprofessional support person who gives basic breastfeeding and chestfeeding information and encouragement to pregnant and lactating clients to help initiate and continue breastfeeding. WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors provide a valuable service to their communities, addressing the barriers to breastfeeding and chestfeeding by offering education, support, and role modeling. Peer Counselors are familiar with the resources available to clients, have familiarity with the questions a new lactating client may ask, and recognize when to refer to other resources during critical periods.

Examples of Work

- Counsel pregnant and lactating clients by telephone or in the WIC clinic.
- Contact clients routinely throughout their breastfeeding and chestfeeding experiences.
- Provide close contact and follow-up to clients during the early postnatal period.
- Provide information and promote breastfeeding and chestfeeding to clients.
- Provide client with information on aspects of normal breastfeeding and chestfeeding.
- Provide anticipatory guidance to reduce the occurrence of breastfeeding and chestfeeding problems.
- Assist in teaching infant feeding classes and/or support groups.
- Teach use, cleaning, and assembly of breast pumps, hand expression and storage of human milk.
- Refer clients to the Certified Lactation Staff, CPA, or other appropriate health or social service agency, including outside community breastfeeding and chestfeeding resources, for situations outside their scope of practice.
- Maintain accurate documentation of contacts with clients.
- Maintain client confidentiality.
- Attend staff meetings and breastfeeding and chestfeeding conferences/workshops as appropriate.
- Available to clients outside of usual clinic hours for phone support.