HANDOUT: STAFF ROLES: PC MANAGEMENT
STAFFING/SUPERVISION 5
SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR PC

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

1. Perform in a professional manner in all aspects of the peer counselor role.
   A. Respect the participant's privacy, dignity and confidentiality.
   B. Respect and respond sensitively to cultural attitudes and practices of participants and the community.
   C. Work within the policies and procedures of the WIC program.
   D. Maintain records according to legal requirements and ethical practices.
   E. Recognize when assistance is needed and consult with the supervisor, Breastfeeding Coordinator and/or Peer Counselor Coordinator, or WIC Designated Breastfeeding Expert (DBE).
   F. Identify situations outside the Scope of Practice and refer as appropriate in a timely manner.
   G. Yield to the WIC DBE for situations out of breastfeeding peer counselor Scope of Practice.
   H. Acquire ongoing breastfeeding education to maintain and build knowledge and skills.

2. Encourage and support participants to breastfeed.
   A. Use participant-focused communication techniques to best meet participant needs.
   B. Help participants identify the support available to them and educate family members.
   C. Help women identify their breastfeeding concerns, barriers, and solutions.
   D. Promote the reasons to breastfeed and the risks of not breastfeeding.
   E. Counsel mothers about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding in the early weeks and ways to continue breastfeeding.
   F. Assist in infant feeding classes and peer support groups.
   G. Be available to WIC participants outside of usual clinic hours and outside of the clinic environment.
   H. Refer mothers to resources for support.
   I. Promote breastfeeding in the community, workplace, and health care system.
   J. Support breastfeeding participants from pregnancy through growth spurts, introducing solid foods, and weaning.

3. Teach basic breastfeeding to participants and help them when difficulties occur.
   A. 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.
   B. Identify signs of the normal course of breastfeeding, including breastfeeding frequency and duration, infant feeding cues, and normal infant weight gain and stooling patterns.
   C. Provide anticipatory guidance to help prevent the occurrence of problems.
   D. Provide guidance to mothers regarding non-evidence-based breastfeeding information they receive.
   E. Help mothers plan for a return to work/school that supports the continuation of breastfeeding.
   F. Provide basic and timely problem-solving and support.
   G. 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.

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Name Date

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