



STRATEGIES FOR TRAINING PEER COUNSELORS

Learning Objectives

Identify 4 principles of adult learning that should be incorporated into peer counselor training, including:

- Face-to-face training
- Interactive learning
- Skills development
- Observational learning



Training is Essential



- Corrects myths and misinformation
- Broadens knowledge
- Gains confidence
- Builds communication skills
- Teaches the importance of making appropriate referrals



Types of Training

- Initial formal training is most effective when it is
 - Provided in person
 - Oriented toward skills building
 - Emphasizes discussion and interactive learning
- Other training opportunities
 - Independent learning
 - Shadowing opportunities
 - Continuing education
 - Ongoing access to resources



Who Should Train Peer Counselors?

- Lactation management experts
 - Provide reasons for breastfeeding
 - Getting a good start with breastfeeding
 - Dealing with common concerns
 - Offer counseling techniques
- WIC supervisors and coordinators
 - Explaining role of peer counselors
 - Providing overview of paperwork
 - Discuss becoming part of WIC team



The WIC Designated Breastfeeding Expert

- Each agency determines their designated breastfeeding expert and chain of command for peer counselors
- Designated experts can include
 - Breastfeeding coordinators
 - Breastfeeding experts
 - WIC nutritionists
 - Medical professionals



YIELD!

- In traffic
 - Ensures traffic flows smoothly
 - Drivers do not stay at the yield sign, but continue through traffic alongside other drivers
- For peer counselors
 - Ensures mothers get specialized help for concerns outside the peer counselor's scope of practice
 - Peer counselors continue to support the mother



Who Should Attend Training?

- New peer counselors
- Experienced peer counselors
- WIC clinic staff who will interface with peer counselors
- LIMIT inclusion of other people in the community



Training Structure

- Training is structured to adapt to needs of the peer counselors and WIC local agency
- Twelve modules (most are 1-2 hours)
- Module #4 (Counseling) is three hours and should be taught before management modules
- Limit training sessions to four hours per day
- Teach in numerical sequence
- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. is effective time frame



What to Teach

Core Skills for Peer Counselors

- Counseling skills
- Reasons to breastfeed
- Addressing barriers to breastfeeding
- Basic anatomy of the breast
- Prenatal preparation for breastfeeding
- Basic positioning and latch of the baby
- Tips for early success
- Preventing and dealing with common concerns



What to Teach

Core Skills for Peer Counselors

- Breastfeeding frequency and duration
- Signs of adequate intake
- Normal infant growth
- Being part of the WIC team
- When to make referrals



Training Logistics

- Select a centralized location easily accessible to peer counselors
- Select locations that are child-friendly
- Use rooms that are large enough to be comfortable caring for children and engaging in activities
- Don't forget healthy snacks and drinks



Use Adult Learning Techniques

- Traditional classroom-style teaching should be minimized with peer counselors
- DO use
 - Skills building
 - Interactive approaches
- Offer opportunities to increase confidence by offering opportunities to practice skills





Appeal to Varied Learning Styles

- Visual learners
- Auditory learners
- Kinesthetic learners





How Adults Learn



Keep the Pace MOVING

- Most adults have an average attention span of eight minutes
- Presence of babies and children adds to distractions
- Change the types of activities



Make Your Point as Visual as Possible

- Today's generation relies on strong visual images
- Visual images help many adults retain information
- Modeling activities and skills provides new dimensions to learning





Provide Skills-Building Opportunities

- Allows peer counselors to practice what they have learned
- Counseling skills are especially important to practice
- Peer Counselor Skills Checklist Card
 - Signed when each module's skill is completed
 - Helps peer counselors monitor their progress
 - Builds confidence
 - Provide reward when the card is completed



Teach Small Amounts

- Focus on core information and skills
- Avoid advanced level breastfeeding management concepts
- Build on the basic skills during continuing education



Repeat the Information

- Role plays
- Case studies
- Independent study



Reward Participants when Learning is Occurring



- Reward with public and private affirmation
- Rewarding throughout the training with treats or small trinkets provides tangible evidence of progress



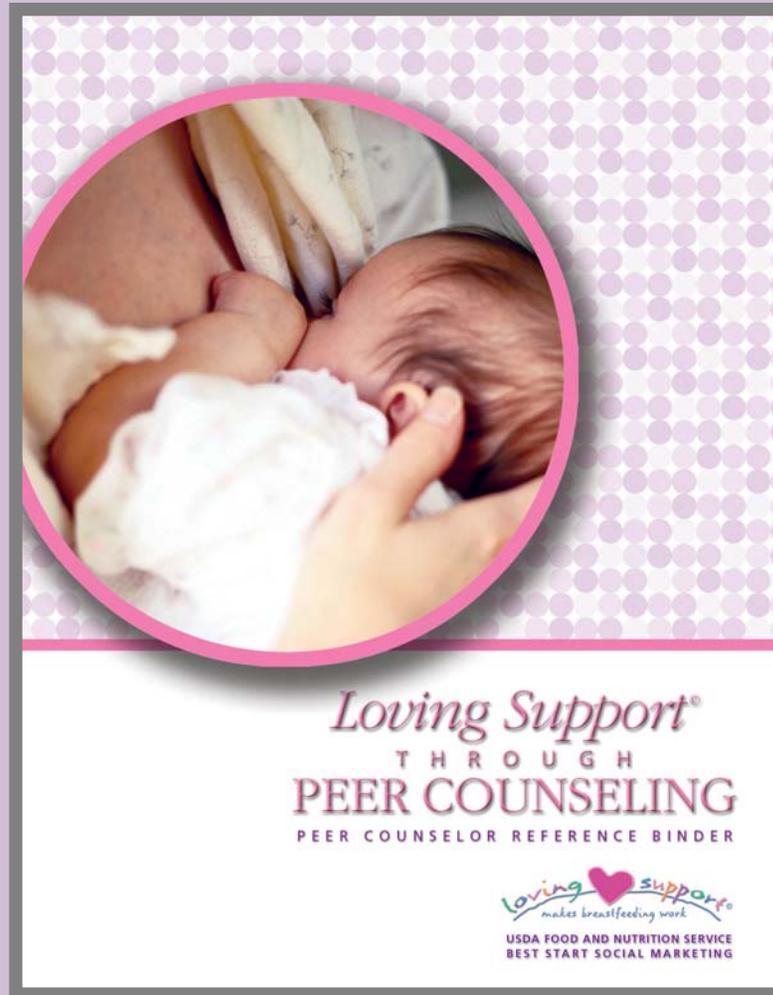
Make it Funny...and FUN

“The human race has only one really effective weapon, and that is laughter. The moment it arises, all our harnesses yield, all our irritations and resentments slip away and a sunny spirit takes their place.”

Mark Twain



Building the Peer Counselor Reference Binder



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