

SESSION 2

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Breastfeeding Promotion and Support

A Training Course for Health Professionals

*Adapted from the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative:
Revised, Updated and Expanded for Integrated Care (Section 3)
WHO/UNICEF 2009*



Session Objectives:

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify communication skills of
 - listening and learning
 - building confidence
2. Practice the use of these skills with a worksheet

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Health workers are trained to look for and fix problems **BUT**
- Good communication means respect for the women's own thoughts, beliefs and culture
- **NOT** tell or advise a person what **YOU** think they should do



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Health workers should be able to do more than just offer info
 - Help mothers to look at cause of any difficulties
 - Suggest courses of action to help fix problem
 - Sometimes just offer assurance she is doing well

1. Identify Communication Skills of Listening, Learning and Building Confidence

Skills to Listen and Learn

- Helpful non verbal communication
- Ask open questions
- Encourage the mother to talk
- Emphasise
- Avoid words which sound judging

Skills to Listen and Learn

Helpful non verbal communication:

- Sit at same level and close to mother
- Remove any physical barriers- desk/folders
- Pay attention to mother -Avoid getting distracted
- Show you are listening – nod/smile/gestures
- Take time without hurrying – don't look at your watch
- Only touch in appropriate way (hand/arm)
- Don't touch her breasts/baby without permission

Skills to Listen and Learn

Ask open questions

- You need to assess the situation/difficulty
- Ask questions that encourages the mother to talk
- Open questions start with *“How? What? Where? Why?”*
- Close questions do not give much info
 - Start with *“Are you? Did you? Has the baby?”*
 - Sometimes suggest the “correct” answer

Skills to Listen and Learn

Encourage mother to talk

- Show we are interested in what mother is saying
- Use responses such as
 - Nodding/smiling
 - Phrases such as “Uh Hmm”, “Go on...”
- Reflect back what the mother is saying
 - Can help clarify the mother’s statement
- Mix reflecting back with other responses

Skills to Listen and Learn

Emphasise

- to show you are hearing and trying to understand her feelings
- Looking at it from **HER** point of view
- Emphasise with her good feelings too, not just bad feelings
- Find out how she feels about the situation
- Then ask for more facts

Skills to Listen and Learn

Avoid judging words

- Judging words include: *right, wrong, well, bad, good, problem*
- Can make a woman feel
 - like she has a standard to reach
 - Baby not behaving normally

Skills to Build Confidence and Give Support

- Good communication skills help mother to feel good and confident to carry out her decisions
- To help her build confidence:
 - Accept what a mother thinks and feels
 - Recognise and acknowledge what is right
 - Give practical help
 - Provide relevant information using suitable language
 - Make one or two suggestions.

Skills to Build Confidence and Give Support

Accept what a mother thinks and feels

- Acceptance without disagreeing
- Does not mean we agree she is right
- Accept what she is saying, give correct info later
- Helps mother to trust you and encourages her to continue the conversation

Skills to Build Confidence and Give Support

Recognise and acknowledge what is right

- Recognise and praise what mother and baby are achieving
 - Tell mother how well baby is attaching
 - Point out how clever the baby is in detaching himself after feed

Skills to Build Confidence and Give Support

Give practical help

- Milk will flow better if mother is comfortable
 - Offer another pillow
 - Offer to hold baby while she goes to wash
- May need clear practical help e.g how to express milk

Skills to Build Confidence and Give Support

Provide relevant information using suitable language

- Find out what she needs to know at this time
- Use suitable words that mother understands
- Do not overwhelm her with information

Make suggestions, not COMMANDS

- Provide choices and let her decide
- Do not tell her what she should do
- Limit suggestions to 1 or 2

Arrange follow-up and on-going support

- After a discussion, mother may
 - still have questions but not time to discuss
 - think of something else
 - find it difficult to put practice into action



Arrange follow-up and on-going support

- Important to arrange follow-up and on-going support
 - Learn what is available from family and friends
 - Offer a time to see or talk to her again
 - Encourage her to see you or another person for help
 - Refer to community support group if possible
 - Refer her for more specialised counselling if needed

2. Practice Communication Skills

SUMMARY

- Communication involves listening and building confidence, and not just giving information
- Listening and learning
 - **Use helpful non verbal communication**
 - **Show interest, reflect back and emphasise**
 - **Avoid judging words**
- Building confidence and giving support
 - **Accept what a mother thinks and feels**
 - **Recognise and acknowledge what is right**
 - **Give practical help and relevant information**
- Arrange suitable follow-up and support



THANK YOU