

WIC Breastfeeding Support Group: Dads and Partners

Who: WIC dads and partners

Why: Partner support is an important factor in a woman's decision to breastfeed her baby.

Time: 30 – 60 minutes

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will:

- Identify one benefit of breastfeeding
- List two ways to support their partner while breastfeeding
- List two ways to bond with their baby

Lesson

- Overview:**
1. Introduction
 2. Concept: *The Many Benefits of Breastfeeding*
 3. Concept: *How to Support Your Breastfeeding Partner*
 4. Concept: *Bonding with Your Baby*
 5. Closing

Materials: Provided by the State Agency:

- USDA Breastfeeding Basics for Dads: Your Breastfeeding Questions Answered
- Getting to Know Your Baby

Provided by Local Agency

- Computer and projection screen for online videos to be played
- Flipchart and markers
- Other relevant visual aids

Introduction

- Arrange chairs in a semi-circle before participants enter classroom.
- Greet the group. Introduce yourself and your role.
- Give overview of class session:
 - Time available for class
 - Class topics (refer to objectives/concepts)
- Introductions and warm-up activity to encourage participation and focus the conversation
 - Ask participants to share their name, when their baby is due and one thing that excites them about being a dad.



If preferred another icebreaker can be used

Concept: *The Many Benefits of Breastfeeding*

- **Set the stage:** Briefly explain why it is important to discuss breastfeeding benefits.
 - Research shows us that partner support, whether that partner is a dad, partner, or grandparent, is an important factor in a woman's decision to breastfeed her baby. Since their support is so important, partners should be provided with information on the benefits of breastfeeding.
- **Discussion activity:** Explore – Offer – Explore
 - **Explore:** “What have you heard about the benefits of breastfeeding?”
 - Encourage participation – “What else?”, “Any other benefits?”, “Who else would like to share?”
 - **OPTIONAL:** If participants are quiet, ask participants to share breastfeeding benefits with their neighbor. After a few minutes of sharing, ask if anyone would like to share with the rest of the class.
 - Consider writing responses on a flipchart.
 - Attachment A lists possible responses.
 - **Offer:** Discuss the benefits of breastfeeding
 - Offer the **USDA Breastfeeding Basics for Dads: Your Breastfeeding Questions Answered** handout
 - Review the benefits that were provided by participants and then provide the benefits that were not discussed.
 - For example, “This handout lists the many benefits of breastfeeding, many of which you have already provided. Let's look at each one.” Briefly review each bullet under *Why is breastfeeding the healthiest option for my baby?*
 - **Explore:** Ask participants about their thoughts or reactions
 - “What surprised you about what we just reviewed? What is a new benefit you learned?”


Tips for Handling Misinformation

When discussing breastfeeding, you may hear a lot of misinformation. Assure feedback is given in a manner that does not belittle the participant. For example, a participant states breastfed babies do not sleep as well as formula fed babies. Try responding to misinformation by:

- **Asking the group:** “That is an interesting thought. What do others think?”
- **Affirm, add, and move on:** “I have heard other parents express that opinion. We just covered additional information on the subject, including [Reiterate information].”
- **Normalize the misinformation so not to embarrass the participant:** “We've heard that from other parents.” or “A lot of parents feel that way.”
- **Explore pros and cons:** “Based on the information we just covered, what might some of the drawbacks be? What benefits would there be?”
- You may also find it is appropriate to acknowledge that each parent/caretaker is the expert on their child and offer an encouraging statement, “I know you will make the right choice for you and your baby.”

Concept: *How to Support Your Breastfeeding Partner*

- **Set the stage:** Introduce the topic by first discussing breastfeeding challenges so partners can better understand how important their support is to a breastfeeding mom.
- **Storytelling activity:**
 - Tell the story of Anna, a WIC mom, and her experience with breastfeeding (Attachment B)
 - Ask participants to share their reaction to the story.
 - Encourage participation – “What comes to mind after hearing Anna’s story?”; “Thank you for sharing. Who else?”
 - Use the story to transition to briefly review other breastfeeding challenges.
 - Attachment C lists common breastfeeding challenges.

 It is important to point out that breastfeeding may have challenges, but the benefits outweigh the challenges for many families. Knowing what to expect and when to get help is important. Remind participants Anna successfully breastfed for a year and a half with the support of her husband and WIC peer counselor.
- **Discussion activity:** Pair and Share
 - **Play video:** How Dads Can Support Breastfeeding:
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+wic+breastfeeding+support+dads&&view=detail&mid=903AD33C28F9DDF48F9D903AD33C28F9DDF48F9D&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dyoutube%2520wic%2520breastfeeding%2520support%2520dads%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQVR%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Dyoutube%2520wic%2520breastfeeding%2520support%2520dads%26sc%3D0-38%26sk%3D%26cvid%3D2110A41A43184F1395D669494B0B6DC2>
 - Spanish Class: Follow directions in Attachment D for subtitles in Spanish or additional languages.
 - Ask participants to reflect on the video with their neighbor and discuss additional ways they can support their partner and breastfeeding.
 - Invite participants to share with class how they can support their breastfeeding partner.
 - Attachment E lists ways partners can support breastfeeding. Be sure to offer additional support ideas from this list if not discussed by participants.
 - Refer participants to **USDA Breastfeeding Basics for Dads: Your Breastfeeding Questions Answered** *How can I support breastfeeding* section for additional ideas
 - Consider writing responses on a flipchart.

Tips for Supporting Breastfeeding in Public

Women may feel uncomfortable breastfeeding in public, at least the first few times. Partner support can help a breastfeeding mom feel more comfortable and stay confident while breastfeeding in public. Provide the following information to participants so they can better support their partner when breastfeeding in public.


- Let your partner focus on nursing while you take care of everything else. Tend to other children, get your partner food or a drink, grab things from her purse, etc.
- To cover or not to cover... Allow your partner to make the decision about whether to cover while breastfeeding in public. If she chooses to cover, ask her how you can help her get comfortable.
- Know your rights! In Nevada, and all states, it is your partner's legal right to breastfeed in public.
 - [Review NRS 201.232](#)- Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a mother may breastfeed her child in any public or private location where the mother is otherwise authorized to be, irrespective of whether the nipple of the mother's breast is uncovered during or incidental to the breastfeeding.
 - **OPTIONAL:** Play Breastfeeding in Public video for women's perspective:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CNqb_NXLIU&list=PLBccton6gOdozgS3ikqkl6GgemZrMXr84&index=4&t=0s
 - Spanish Class: Follow directions in Attachment D for subtitles in Spanish or additional languages.

Tips for Supporting Breastfeeding When Returning to Work or School

Women may be uncomfortable with requesting space to pump breastmilk in the workplace. Partner support can help a breastfeeding mom feel comfortable about approaching their employer about their pumping needs. Provide the following information to participants so they can better support their partner when returning to work or school.

- Encourage your partner to approach their employer or instructor prior to giving birth to discuss the accommodations they will need (a private, clean space that is not a bathroom) to pump breast milk.
- Help your partner get a breast pump from WIC. Call to make the pick-up appointment, etc.
- Learn how to clean and assemble your partner's breast pump.
- Know your rights! In Nevada, **some** employers are required to provide breastfeeding employees with a child under 1 year of age with a space to express breastmilk.
 - [Review NRS 608.0193 \(AB 113\)](#) - Except as otherwise provided in subsections 2 and 5, a public body shall provide an employee who is the mother of a child under 1 year of age with: (a) Reasonable break time, with or without compensation, for the employee to express breast milk as needed; and (b) A place, other than a bathroom, that is reasonably free from dirt or pollution, protected from the view of others and free from intrusion by others where the employee may express breast milk.
 - Please note there are exceptions to NRS 608.0193. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees are not subject to this law if it poses an undue hardship. An employer who is a contractor licensed pursuant to chapter 624 of NRS is not subject to the requirements of NRS 608.0193 with regard to an employee who is performing work at a construction jobsite that is located at least 3 miles from the regular place of business of the employer.

Concept: *Bonding with Your Baby*

- **Set the stage:** Discuss the importance of bonding with baby.
 - The relationship between mom and baby is special, but so is baby's bond with dad. The strong bond between parents and their baby provides the first model for intimate relationships and encourages a sense of security and positive self-esteem. Parent's responsiveness to their baby's needs can affect their social and cognitive development.
 - Breastfeeding may leave dads feeling a little left out and unsure how to connect with their baby. It may help dads to realize they too can share special activities with their baby.
 - **Group Discussion**
 - **Play video:** What is a Dad? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2awgcyn82U>
 - Spanish Class: Follow directions in Attachment D for subtitles in Spanish or additional languages.
 - **Discussion questions**
 - Ask participants to share:
 - What was one take away from the video?
 - What does being a dad mean to them?
-  Before discussing bonding, highlight how the video discussed a new generation of dads who are more hands-on and involved with raising their children.
- **Discussion Question #1:** Thinking about what it means to you to be a dad, what are some ways you can bond with your baby, even before your baby is born?
 - Attachment F provides a list of ways dads can bond with their baby.
 - Provide additional ways dad can bond with baby from this list.
 - **Discussion Questions #2:** How can you contribute to your baby's development, for example interpreting baby behavior, supporting brain development and active play?
 - Attachment G provides a list of ways dads can contribute to their baby's development.
 - Provide additional ways dad can contribute to baby's development from the list.
 - Offer *Getting to Know Your Baby* brochure and refer to it while discussing baby behaviors as a way for partners to contribute to their baby's development.

Tips for Keeping the Conversation Going

It can be challenging to lead a group of people in a discussion, especially during moments of silence or if the conversation comes to a lull. Here are some tips to keep the conversation going.

- Ask open-ended questions
- Ask for examples
- Describe a common experience in a personal way, share another person's experience
- Share a handout and ask for personal examples that relate to what the handout says
- Ask participants to raise their hands if they have a relevant opinion or experience
- Always say "thank you" after someone shares
- Be okay with silence
- Consider rephrasing an open-ended question
- Pair and share activity to provide a safe environment for participants to start a conversation

Closing

- Briefly review concepts reviewed during class
- Provide the opportunity for questions
- Thank participants for their participation

Resources

- Ben-Joseph, E. (2018). Bonding with Your Baby. Retrieved from: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/bonding.html>
- California WIC Association. (2015). Engaging Men and Dads at WIC: A Toolkit. Retrieved from: <http://www.calwic.org/what-we-do/engage-wic-families/engaging-men-a-dads/>
- Cross, L. [New Father Chronicles]. (2017, August 17). What is a Dad? [Video file]. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/user/laguardiacruz/videos>
- USDA. [WIC Breastfeeding Support]. (2019, June 4). Breastfeeding in Public. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CNqb_NXLIU&list=PLBccton6gOdozgS3ikqkl6GgemZrMXr84&index=4&t=0s
- USDA. (2019). WIC Breastfeeding Support: Dads. Retrieved from: <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/dads>
- USDA. [WIC Breastfeeding Support]. (2019, June 4). How Dads Can Support Breastfeeding. Retrieved from: <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+wic+breastfeeding+support+dads&&view=detail&mid=903AD33C28F9DDF48F9D903AD33C28F9DDF48F9D&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dyoutube%2520wic%2520breastfeeding%2520support%2520dads%26qs%3Dn%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Dyoutube%2520wic%2520breastfeeding%2520support%2520dads%26sc%3D0-38%26sk%3D%26cvid%3D2110A41A43184F1395D669494B0B6DC2%26FORM%3DVIDVXX>