

# Peer Counseling

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program Newsletter



## What, Who, Why, How

**WHAT?** The Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Program utilizes Peer Counselors (PCs) to encourage and support WIC moms to breastfeed their infants via a *mother-to-mother* connection.

**WHO?** PCs are moms with personal breastfeeding experience who serve as role models to WIC breastfeeding moms. These dedicated paraprofessionals are recruited and hired from within the WIC population. They support breastfeeding moms and help them overcome challenges.

**WHY?** The BFPC Program extends the WIC services provided to moms by offering extra breastfeeding support.

**HOW?** In 2019, the BFPC Program is supported by 191 PCs, 86 International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) and 57 BFPC Coordinators in WIC clinics.

**38 of 83 WIC agencies in California provide Breastfeeding Support Groups on a monthly basis!**

(2019 WIC Internal Breastfeeding Assessment)

**In May 2019, 780 moms in the BFPC Program received lactation consultant services.**

(Peer Counseling Database)

**Moms are supported in person, on the phone, at home, and in the hospital.**



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2019

## What moms say!

*"Breastfeeding was very exhausting and stressful in the beginning. I worried about supply and had pain. However, my Peer Counselor helped me understand what my baby was telling me, and how to best fix the issues I had. It is so rewarding to see my baby grow. I get to bond with him, and I feel like I am needed to keep him healthy."*

May Keu, WIC Mom (top left)

*"The Peer Counseling Program helped me reach my breastfeeding goals by giving me accurate information. I feel most moms fail because of lack of knowledge. Breastfeeding my baby makes me feel proud. Proud because all of her nutrition, especially in the beginning came from me. My child and I have been on this breastfeeding journey for almost 3 years!"*

Andrea, WIC Mom (top center)

*"I know I am giving my son the best food when I see him growing healthy and strong, with high self-esteem and confidence to explore his world."*

Laura, WIC Mom (top right)

## Highlights from across the state!



1

**FRESNO EOC** WIC Peer Counseling Program partners with CalViva, a local Medi-Cal health plan, to provide monthly baby showers in English and Spanish. Due to lack of family support or income, many moms have never received a baby shower before. The showers include a breastfeeding presentation, games, cake and gifts. The showers have grown to include the Black Infant Health Program and members of the Southeast Asian community. And, this year they will begin having teen showers!

2

**AMERICAN RED CROSS** WIC embraces social media to communicate and share information with moms. They developed educational videos for moms that are available on their website. Additionally, they created a closed Facebook group for PC moms, which now includes 124 members.

3

**YOLO COUNTY AND COMMUNITY BRIDGES** WIC received USDA *Loving Support Award of Excellence* Gold level awards in Summer of 2018!



4

**MONTEREY COUNTY** WIC Peer Counselors are an important resource in the community. Like many of their participants, the PCs have a background in the agricultural industry and can relate to many of the breastfeeding challenges faced by farmworking moms. Most of the counselors are grandmothers as well, and they provide wisdom, emotional support, and culturally relevant feeding expertise to participants whose families live far from Monterey County.

## What staff say!



*"The road to renormalizing breastfeeding is long. My job is more than employment, it is truly important for the 'greater good.' The education we provide has been lost to generations of parents. We rebuild that knowledge through our support and skill set as a mom and educator. Our work as Peer Counselors is valuable."*

Amy (Peer Counselor), Shasta County WIC



*"When I talk to moms who are struggling, I feel a lot of gratitude I have the knowledge to help them, especially moms who are going back to work in the fields. I am happy to provide them support and information I did not have breastfeeding and working in the fields, so they hopefully will have a better experience than I did. Seeing a happy, relieved mom is so rewarding."*

Maria (IBCLC), Community Bridges WIC



*"One of my most memorable success stories is when I first began working as a Peer Counselor, and a mom on my caseload was smiling while nursing her baby in the waiting room. Our Lactation Consultant discovered the baby was sucking on skin only. Once it was addressed she breastfed, correctly, for one year."*

Markeisha (Peer Counselor), Alameda County WIC



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