

BREASTFEEDING HOT TOPICS

Gender / Family Life Balance

- Both breastfeeding advocates and breastfeeding detractors talk about breastfeeding as a choice. But this language fails to appreciate that most women do not have a source of unbiased information, or the economic, social, and clinical support and resources needed to freely choose whether or not they will breastfeed beyond the first few weeks of their babies' lives. Today women around the globe are physically separated from their babies after birth and carry out their maternal and occupational roles in social and cultural environments that systematically limit the control they have over their bodies, space, time and lives. The continued rigidity of gender roles results in a society-wide failure to support mothers, particularly when they combine motherhood with paid employment. We fail to support caregivers for their labor, including breastfeeding labor, and devalue their contributions, but at the same time we fail to support the employed mothers' needs for maternity leave, flexible time, childcare, and work-place breastfeeding support. This lack of support results in serious drains on women's time, energy, and resources. We need to promote gender role expectations for women and men, mothers and fathers, and all workers that are realistic and supported by policies; we need workplace supports that reduce the role strain and conflict that working mothers experience; we need affordable, quality childcare that is supportive of breastfeeding or located in places that make it possible for employed women to actually breastfeed; and we need laws that ensure gender equity in wages, benefits, and safe work environments.

Source: Paige Hall Smith

Co-coordinator, WABA Gender Working Group; Associate Professor of Public Health Education UNC Greensboro; Director, Center for Women's Health and Wellness

Environmental Impact

- Breastmilk needs no processing, no packaging, requires no preparation and produces no waste or pollution. It is delivered directly and on demand and in this way has no negative impact on the environment.
- Breastfeeding saves national economies millions of dollars on importing costly breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles and teats. Family budgets benefit as well, saving money on infant feeding products and fewer health/hospital visits due to complications from breastmilk substitutes.
- There has been an increasing interest in the link between breastfeeding and non-communicable diseases such as obesity. A WHO multicentre growth reference study shows that babies exclusively breastfed for six months are subsequently leaner than formula-fed babies. The hypotheses for why this is are currently being explored, but may have something to do with the self-regulation of milk intake, different components of the milks and their effects on infant development (protein, bioactive factors), and feeding behaviour.

Source: Alison Linnecar

Convener, IBFAN's Global Working Group on Contaminants
http://www.ibfan.org/art/Obesity_IF-ENGLISH.pdf

Code Monitoring

- Breastfeeding is a valuable natural resource that is threatened by aggressive marketing tactics of manufacturers of breastmilk substitutes. The Code matters more today than ever before. With the market growing at steady intervals each year (10%), companies continue to compete and market aggressively. An easy "target" for these companies is breastfeeding, because there is no protection unless we apply the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
- Promotion of breastmilk substitutes has become more subtle over time and companies now utilise new media such as Facebook or Twitter to entice even more consumers with health claims such as "fortified with... DHA, probiotics, etc" which translates to "better health". People need to know that there are tools to protect them from misleading claims. The Code is one such tool, and you can help monitor these formula companies! Visit the IBFAN website for more information – www.ibfan.org

Source: Annelies Allain

Director IBFAN-ICDC

"IBFAN Code Violations – How Companies BREAK the Rules – a 4 page overview" – 2010

Ten Steps

- Implementing changes in hospital practices can be difficult. Communications is the key. It is essential that a multi-level, multi-disciplinary team is fully engaged in the planning and implementation of the needed changes, but how do you get such a diverse group to make a decision? And once a decision is made, how do you get the rest of the staff to actually adhere to the proposed changes? Research has shown that creation of a time when folks can chat and can both discuss the way forward and discuss their frustrations speeds the process along. Sometimes this is as easy as gathering at a tea break or sometimes it is better to formalize rounds on the topic of breastfeeding. Another issue is that staff may not as yet be on board with the need for exclusive breastfeeding. One handy communication strategy is to post short messages in the toilet! The placement, of course, should be appropriate to the user, but it should be at eye height. The message should be changed at regular intervals. Another communications approach used at our hospital was a weekly secret question, concealed in a stuffed toy. Whomever found the toy and correctly answered the question won a small prize or recognition at staff meeting, and had the privilege of deciding the next week's Ten-Step-related question, and hiding the toy. Be creative! Communication aids in Ten Step implementation.

Source: Miriam Labbok, MD, MPH

FACPM, IBCLC, FABM, Professor of the Practice of Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill;

Director, Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute



MAKE YOUR OWN ACTION PLAN

It's time to plan your own WBW Event! If you're new to the scene, find a few friends or colleagues and tackle it together. You can also use this opportunity to enhance your annual celebration!

1. What's Your Investment? Take a moment to write down your story and why you want to take action and promote breastfeeding. What or who made you think about breastfeeding in a new way?

2. Create your Network Use this table to list people who will help you in your WBW efforts

Name	How I know them	Contact info	Potential collaboration	Online Presence (Twitter, FB, blog)

3. Brainstorm Space

- What is your timeline? _____
- What are 3 goals you would like to achieve? _____

- Who do you want to reach and engage? _____
- What activities are popular in your community? _____

4. Take Action Planning out your project step-by-step will make the process more manageable and replicable for future celebrations. Remember to focus on the activities and results and keep your team informed by getting their feedback and tackling challenges together.

Goal	Action needed to achieve goal	How will I do this?	What help will I need?	How will I know I'm successful?

5. Publicise Contact both traditional and alternative media outlets who can do a story on your event.

- Local newspaper, radio, TV _____

- Online blog, Youtube _____

- High-profile spokesperson _____

