BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT:
CLOSE TO MOTHERS

OBJECTIVES OF WBW 2013

1. To draw attention to the importance of Peer Support in helping mothers to establish and sustain breastfeeding.

2. To inform people of the highly effective benefits of Peer Counselling, and unite efforts to expand peer counselling programmes.

3. To encourage breastfeeding supporters, regardless of their educational background, to step forward and be trained to support mothers and babies.

4. To identify local community support contacts for breastfeeding mothers, that women can go to for help and support after giving birth.

5. To call on governments and maternity facilities globally to actively implement the Ten Steps, in particular Step 10, to improve duration and rates of exclusive breastfeeding.
World Breastfeeding Week 2013

BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT: Close to Mothers

Circles of Support for Mothers And Children

**The Five Circles of Support**

for breastfeeding illustrate the potential influences on a mother’s decision to breastfeed and to have a positive breastfeeding experience. Previously featured during World Breastfeeding Week 2008, the Circles of Support continue to be a vital foundation for mothers to breastfeed their babies, and more. The CIRCLES OF SUPPORT are: Family and Social Network, Healthcare, Workplace and Employment, Government/ Legislation and Response to Crisis or Emergency, all surrounding women in the center circle.

**Women in the Center Circle:**
Women are in the center because the presence or absence of support impacts them directly. Women also have an important role in securing support and in providing it to others. Within the Global Initiative for Mother Support (GIMS) for Breastfeeding Statement (2007) we noted, ‘Mothers are considered active participants in the support dynamic, being both providers and recipients of information and support’. See: http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/gims/gims-5.htm

**Family and Social Network:**
Husbands/partners/fathers, family and friends compose the mother’s immediate and continuous support network. Social support includes community support—at the market place, within a religious context, at a neighbourhood park, etc. Support during pregnancy reduces stress. Support during labour and birth empowers the mother. Societal support increases the mother’s confidence in her ability to breastfeed beyond the early weeks and months.

**Health Care Systems:**
This includes a multitude of opportunities to support breastfeeding. These opportunities range from mother friendly prenatal care and supportive labor and delivery services to postpartum and postnatal care that facilitates bonding and optimal infant feeding. Health workers trained in counseling skills support mothers before and after birth.

**Workplace and Employment:**
Employed women face challenges and need support to succeed at working and breastfeeding. The opportunities for mother support are as varied as the work women do, but usually involve facilitating mother-baby contact or expression and storage of breast milk.

**Government/Legislation:**
Women who plan to breastfeed or who are already breastfeeding benefit from the support of international documents, protections for optimal infant feeding, plus active and well-funded national commissions. Legislation that combats aggressive marketing of breastmilk substitutes and enacts paid maternity leave also benefits breastfeeding women.

**Response to Crisis or Emergency:**
This CIRCLE OF SUPPORT represents the need for support IF a woman finds herself in an unexpected and / or serious situation, with little control. Situations that require special planning and support are: natural disasters, refugee camps, divorce proceedings, critical illness of mother or baby, or living in an area of high HIV/AIDS prevalence with no support for breastfeeding.

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SPONSORSHIP: WABA does not accept sponsorship of any kind from companies producing breastmilk substitutes, related equipment and complementary foods. WABA encourages all participants of World Breastfeeding Week to respect and follow this ethical stance.

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