

# **PRACTICAL SESSION 1**

## **OBSERVING AND ASSISTING BREASTFEEDING**

### **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*



# Objectives

**After completing this session, participants will be able to:**

1. Observe a breastfeed using the Breastfeed Observation Checklist.
2. Assist a mother to learn to position and attach her baby for breastfeeding.
3. Use communication skills when assisting a mother.

# Opportunity gained from the practice :

- Practice assessing a breastfeed using the Breastfeed Observation Aid.
- Practice using your communication skills
- Help a mother to position and attach her baby for breastfeeding.

# 1. Build a team

- Work in groups of 4 plus facilitator
- To start with, the whole group works together.
- One person talks to a mother, while the other members of the group observe.
- When everyone knows what to do, you can work in pairs, while the facilitator circulates.

- **The midwife will tell which women are suitable to talk with and who have their breastfeeding babies with them on ward**

## **2. Start a communication (One participant)**

- i. Introduce yourself to the mother, and ask permission to talk to her.
  - If she does not want to be observed, thank her and find another mother.
- i. Introduce your partner/small group.
  - explain that you are interested in infant feeding.
- i. Ask permission to watch her baby feed.
  - Avoid saying that you want to watch how she is 'breastfeeding' as this may make her feel nervous.
  - If the baby is heavily wrapped in blankets ask the mother to unwrap the blankets so that you can see.

- iv. Try to find a chair or stool to sit on. If necessary, and if permissible, sit on the bed so that you are at the mother's level
- v. If the baby is feeding
  - ask the mother to continue as she is doing.
- v. If the baby is not feeding
  - ask the mother to offer a feed in the normal way at any time that her baby seems ready.

vii. If the baby is willing to feed at this time

- ask the mother's permission to watch the feed.

viii. If the baby is not interested in feeding

- thank the mother and go to another mother.





- ix. To start the conversation-before/ after the breastfeed, ask the mother some open questions about:
  - how she and her baby is
  - how her baby's feeding.
- x. Encourage the mother to talk about herself and her baby.
  - Practice as many of the listening and learning skills as possible*
- x. Praise what mothers are doing right.

# 3. Observation

## (Other participants)

- Stand quietly in the background.
- Do not comment, or talk among yourselves.
- Make *general* observations of the mother and baby. Notice for example:
  - Does she look happy?
  - Does she have formula or a feeding bottle with her?

## Cont...

- Make *general* observations of the conversation between the mother and the participant. For example:
  - Who does most of the talking?
  - Does the participant ask open questions?
  - Does the mother talk freely, and seem to enjoy it?
  
- Make *specific* observations of the participant's communication skills. Notice if :
  - she uses helpful non-verbal communication,
  - if she uses judging words/ asks a lot of closed questions to which the mother says `yes' and `no'.

## 4. Observe a breastfeed

- Stay quietly watching the mother and baby as the feed continues.
- While you observe, fill in a Breastfeed Observation Aid.
  - Explain to the mother that you are using an Aid to help you remember the new skills that you are learning.
- Mark a tick beside each sign that you observe.
- Under 'Notes:' at the bottom of the form, write anything else that you observe which seems important for breastfeeding.

## 5. Ending the session

- Thank the mother for her time and cooperation
- Say something to encourage and support her.
- Go with the group into another room / private area to discuss your observations.
- Discuss what you noticed about the breastfeed and communication skills that been used.

## ***If the mother needs help***

- When a pair finds a mother who needs help positioning her baby at the breast
  - tell the facilitator of your small group
  - then practice helping the mother
  - your facilitator shall observe you, and help if necessary
- The participant should comment on her or his own performance first.
- Before you leave the ward or clinic, tell the staff member which mothers you have suggested to change their positioning and attachment so that the staff member can follow-up with these mothers.

# Please notice...

1. if babies **room-in** with their mothers;
2. whether or not babies are **given formula**, or glucose water;
3. whether or not **feeding bottles** are used;
4. the presence or absence of **advertisements for baby milk**;
5. whether **sick mothers and babies** are admitted to hospital together;
6. how **low-birth-weight babies** are fed.

# Remember..

- **Do not comment on your observations, or show any disapproval, while in the health facility.**
- **Reserve comments for class discussion.**





# Thank you