

"BREASTFEEDING SUPPORTED BY THE RIGHT PERSON AT THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME"

PATICIPANT FEEDBACK DECEMBER 2013

SOUTH SHORE COLLABORATIVE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK SNAPSHOT

February 2014

OVERWHELMING FEEDBACK THAT *THE NETWORK* "WORKS"!

The South Shore Collaborative Breastfeeding Network (otherwise known as *The Network*) began in March 2013 based on input from over 100 community partners and health care providers.

It offers mothers "one door" access to appropriate support for breastfeeding challenges in a timely manner.

In the summer of 2013, mothers and community partners who have used *The Network* had the

opportunity to participate in an online survey. In December 2013, mothers and community partners were invited to attend a focus group to provide feedback. The overwhelming response has been that "*The Network Works!*".

Partnerships within the health care system and the community have been enhanced and communication has been greatly improved as they work closer together to increase supports for families to be able to breastfeed their children.

Mothers and health care providers note that there is good communication between partners and that it flows smoothly. Mothers are very appreciative of the relationship between their health care providers and the International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) as they collaborate with the mother to **develop a plan that works best for her.**

The project has been funded by the Department of Health and Wellness through Thrive!: A plan for a healthier Nova Scotia.

What makes it work?

The Network is:

- Empowering
- Encouraging
- Reducing barriers
- Supportive
- Respectful
- Non judgmental
- Flexible
- Timely
- Easily accessed
- Collaborative
- Consistent in messaging

WHO IS PART OF *THE NETWORK*?

The Network partners include anyone who plays a role in supporting women who are breastfeeding their children: South Shore Health (IBCLCs, OBS clinic physicians and nurses, OBS nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives, Public Health staff),

family resource project staff and volunteers, parent groups, La Leche League, osteopaths, pharmacy staff, Freedom Feeders (peer support) and the community pump loan program.

Access to a community IBCLC has been a key

component in the development and implementation of *The Network*. The IBCLC has advanced knowledge and skill in regards to breastfeeding support. Both mothers and care providers express that this role is a key in the success of *The Network*.

"Patients have a lot of confidence and positive impressions about their capacity to breastfeed after working with (IBCLC)".

Dr. Parker, Family Physician

MOTHERS' TESTIMONIALS:

*"The first time, I had been in complete agony (the LC described it as a 'body curl' as opposed to a toe curl and left me in tears more often than not) every time my newborn nursed. The latch was pretty good and everything else seemed to be ok (supply, letdown etc) so it was a bit of a mystery as to why I was in so much pain. I was nearly at the point of giving up, although I desperately didn't want to. I contacted the LC who came round that very day and although she wasn't 100% certain what was going on, she suggested I take *Vitamin B6. I did and within 24 hours the pain was easing and within a couple of weeks, breastfeeding my baby had become a pleasure rather than something I completely dreaded. I exclusively breastfed my baby for 6 months and am still nursing him at 9 months. I intend to carry on until he is at least a year, maybe longer and there is no question that I would not have been able to do that without the help and support of the Breastfeeding Network."*

Anna Brewster, Network Feedback via Email 2013

*Editorial note: Vitamin B6 is used to address a specific breastfeeding issue. It is not routinely used to treat sore nipples.



ANNA & HARRISON

"I was just about to give up on breastfeeding, as it was so painful when I contacted [IBCLC] who suggested a solution which worked within 48 hours and now my baby is 4.5 months old and is still exclusively breast fed. I am very grateful to [IBCLC] and have been recommending The Network to other mums with breastfeeding problems."

Mothers' Online Survey Feedback Fall 2013

"...I feel confident in saying that without it (community pump loan program) there is a strong possibility that I may not have continued to exclusively breastfeed my baby..."

Mothers' Online Survey Feedback Fall 2013

"The Network enabled me to continue breastfeeding. I was ready to give up at 4 months because of the issue. I was frustrated and tired, by having someone willing to listen, work with me and my doctor and provide suggestions and alternatives I was able to overcome my issue. The knowledge of the support staff and their willingness to assist in troubleshooting is the only reason I am still breastfeeding 😊. Thank you! ..."

Mothers' Online Survey Feedback Fall 2013







100% of mothers who responded to an online survey felt the information and support they received through *The Network* helped them reach their personal goal for breastfeeding their children.

Mothers report that seeing visuals such as breastfeeding posters in healthcare providers' offices help make them feel supported; initiatives such as these make moms feel like there are a lot of people around them that care and support breastfeeding. One mom noted: "it reminds me how important what I'm doing (breastfeeding) is."

"Thank you so much, thanks to [IBCLC] I'm still breastfeeding my baby and will be able to do so for a long time 😊."

***Mothers' Online Survey Feedback
Fall 2013***

What Health Care Providers Have to Say:

-  **Referral process is easy**
-  **Communication is excellent and timely**
-  **Feedback from *The Network* to those who are referring is significant and valued greatly!**
-  **Feeding plans and summaries are helpful in providing continuity of care and consistent messages**
-  **Collaborative approach between care providers and other community resources is valued**
-  **Referrals provide an opportunity to learn**

HOW DOES THE NETWORK WORK?



Mother develops a breastfeeding challenge

Mother, health care provider or community partner contacts the South Shore Collaborative Breastfeeding Network (*The Network*) through phone, fax/fax-to-email

The *Network member* receiving the referral will assess the situation and determines who is the most appropriate resource to address the mother's concern

The most appropriate *Network member*, who is ready and able to help in a **timely** manner, contacts the mother.

The *Network member* sees mom at home or in health care setting to assess problem and develop a plan of care, collaborating with the mother's primary care provider as needed using breastfeeding best practices/evidence

If needed, The *Network member* will refer the mother and/or baby to a health care provider who is knowledgeable about the clinical aspects of breastfeeding best practices for further assessment and treatment.

Mother connects with local community resources for ongoing peer support such as parent groups, La Leche League, Family Resource Programs

South Shore Collaborative Breastfeeding Network Spring 2013



South Shore Collaborative Breastfeeding Network

543-0856
Mon to Fri
8am - 4pm

527-5214
After Hours,
Weekends &
Holidays

Fax: 634-9687

FAST FACTS:

In 2012 there were 363 live births to mothers living in Lunenburg and Queens Counties*.

267 (74%) babies received breastmilk before discharge*.

198 (55%) exclusively breastfed while in hospital*.

**Data above from RCP Atlee Database.*

The *Network* has received over 120 referrals over the past **12 months** for mothers of infants less than 12 months of age. Although data for 2013 is not yet available, we estimate about 45% of women who have given birth over the past year and are breastfeeding their children have contacted *The Network* for support with feeding challenges.

There have been 23 prenatal referrals to *The Network* since Summer 2013.

- According to the 2011-2012 Canadian Community Health Survey, two of the main reasons mothers stopped breastfeeding before 6 months did so because **they felt they did not have enough milk** (44%) and **they had difficulty with feeding technique** (18%).
- Those who did breastfeed exclusively for six months tended to be 30 years plus, and have post secondary qualifications.
- Only 23% of women living in the Atlantic provinces are meeting Health Canada's recommendation of **exclusive** breastfeeding for at least 6 months.

What's coming up for The Network?

Through feedback and program evaluation, changes have been made to expand support for mothers who may face breastfeeding challenges.:

- Welcoming prenatal consultations
- Consulting on OBS Unit prior to discharge
- Reducing barriers to access support when needed (e.g. transportation)
- Increasing collaboration with other district and community partners