Supporting All Families During Lactation

Stephanie Carroll, MBA, BS, IBCLC, CLC, CLS
She/Her/Hers
Parents who receive greater familial support

• More likely to exclusively breastfeed/chestfeed
• Or predominantly breastfeed/chestfeed
• Also parents with a positive perception of familial support did so
• Community health care workers should support breastfeeding
• Family support should be encouraged by health care workers
  – Zhu 2017
BUT.... OUR COMMUNITY LACKS SAFE SPACES OR KNOWLEDGEABLE, RESPECTFUL LACTATION CARE WORKERS...
The Key?

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BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND CONTINUOUSLY LEARN!!!
AND...
BE RESPECTFUL WHEN ASKING QUESTIONS.
LGBTQIA2S+

- L - Lesbian
- G - Gay
- B - Bisexual
- T - Transgender
- Q – Questioning/Queer
- I - Intersex
- A – Asexual/Ally
- 2S – Two-Spirited (Indigenous)
• There are over 200 identities being defined on sex, gender, sexuality, romantic attraction, or lack thereof – THEREFORE – the term will be continually changing.
• Queer is an overall (generally) acceptable term.
Language Matters!

THE LIMITS OF MY LANGUAGE ARE THE LIMITS OF MY WORLD

Ludwig Wittgenstein
Language

• Maternal Child Health field is very gendered.
• Focus on “mother” during lactation.
• Most support in the breastfeeding world is heteronormative
• Bottom line – not all lactating parents identify as mothers, therefore only using the word mother is exclusionary.
Research in MCH

• Restricted health care access
• Leads to the exclusion of those who do not identify as a someone who is heterosexual
• OutCare support lists lactation professionals
• Language is important! Both in person and on intake forms.

Farrow, 2014
Pronouns Matter!

- She/Her/Hers
- He/Him/His
- They/Them
- Ze/E/Ey (Gender neutral)
- Hir/Xe/Hen (Swedish preference opposite for Han or Hon)
- Ve/Ne/Per (Person)
- Thon (That+One)
- Mx (Instead of Using Mr. Ms., etc.)
Chestfeeding

“Chestfeeding is a term used by many transmasculine and non-binary parents to describe how they feed and nurture their children from their bodies.”

• Not all transmasculine or non-binary parents prefer this term. Nursing and breastfeeding are still used and preferred terms for some.

LLL Canada, 2018
So where does that leave you?

How do I know I am being inclusive?

- Look at your intake forms!
- Introduce yourself with your pronouns.
- Don’t assume! (Use terms like parent and partner)
- Use respect.
What if I make a mistake?

- It’s ok! Apologize and move on.
- Don’t dwell.
- If corrected, take note, apologize, and correct.
- Being asked is better than just assuming.
Teaching the next generation…
Change can be uncomfortable, but….

Great things never came from comfort zones.
Thank You!

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References