

## Scope of Practice Handout

A peer counselor provides basic breastfeeding information, encouragement and support to WIC participants and performs within the peer counselor scope of practice.

### **Perform in a professional manner in all aspects of the peer counselor role.**

- Respect the participant's privacy, dignity and confidentiality.
- Respect and respond sensitively to cultural attitudes and practices of participants and the community.
- Work within the policies and procedures of the WIC program.
- Maintain records according to legal requirements and ethical practices.
- Recognize when assistance is needed and consult with the supervisor, Breastfeeding Coordinator and/or Peer Counselor Coordinator and WIC Designated Breastfeeding Expert (WIC DBE).
- Identify situations outside the Scope of Practice and refer as appropriate in a timely manner.
- Yield to the WIC DBE for situations out of breastfeeding peer counselor Scope of Practice.
- Acquire ongoing breastfeeding education to maintain and build knowledge and skills within Scope of Practice.

### **Encourage and support participants to breastfeed.**

- Use participant-focused communication techniques to best meet participant needs.
- Help participants identify the support available to them and educate family members.
- Help women identify their breastfeeding concerns, barriers, and solutions.
- Teach the reasons to breastfeed and the risks of not breastfeeding.
- Teach the importance of exclusive breastfeeding in the early weeks.
- Teach participants about the WIC food packages for breastfeeding mothers.
- Assist in infant feeding classes and peer support groups.
- Be available to WIC participants outside of usual clinic hours and outside of the clinic environment.
- Refer mothers to resources for support.
- Promote breastfeeding in the community, workplace, and health care system.
- Support breastfeeding participants from pregnancy through growth spurts, introducing solid foods, and weaning.

### **Teach basic breastfeeding to participants and help them when difficulties occur.**

- Teach basic, evidence-based techniques that help ensure a successful start in breastfeeding, including milk production, skin-to-skin care, positioning and latch, and milk expression and storage.
- Identify signs of the normal course of breastfeeding, including breastfeeding frequency and duration, infant feeding cues, and normal infant weight gain and stooling patterns.
- Provide anticipatory guidance to help prevent the occurrence of problems.
- Provide guidance to mothers regarding non-evidence-based breastfeeding information they receive.
- Help mothers plan for a return to work/school that supports the continuation of breastfeeding.
- Provide basic and timely problem-solving and support.
- Yield mothers experiencing difficulties to the WIC designated breastfeeding expert.

*Adapted from Scope of Practice for Peer Counselors materials from Michigan, California and Virginia WIC.*