



# PRE-COURSE PREPARATION

## Debriefing About Breastfeeding

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## OVERVIEW

Prior to The **Infant Feeding Coach** Program starting, I would like you to examine your thoughts and feelings around breastfeeding.

Throughout the course you will learn about the amazing properties of human milk and breastfeeding and this may bring up strong feelings for some of you. You will have an opportunity to discuss these within the group, but it is important you feel happy and safe to do so.

Birth and Infant feeding is a very emotive subject, particularly for those that would have liked to have breastfed but didn't for any reason, including not having had the opportunity to have children. Or, for those that did breastfeed but didn't meet their own feeding goals. In addition to this on occasion parents' stories can be triggering of our own similar experiences, hopes, wishes, and regrets.

For those who have not had children, either by choice or circumstance, there may be sorrow around not experiencing birth or breastfeeding. For those who will not have children, or have not had children yet, it is easy to have a preconceived idea about what we would do if we were in their situation, perhaps presuming things to be easier or harder than they are.

As an **Infant Feeding Coach** your role is to support parents on their infant feeding journey, enabling them to achieve a more rewarding experience without judgement, or coercion and *'without superimposing our own experiences on the parent's and not truly hearing their experience'*.

### Article:

*You may find this article by The Association of Breastfeeding Mothers useful to read.*

*Please [click here](#) to view an article explaining how bringing our own experience of feeding into our feeding support can be unhelpful for the client.*



## BELIEFS & ATTITUDES

Whether or not we are able to provide effective support for breastfeeding parents depends partly on our knowledge and skills, and partly on our attitudes.

If we have a negative attitude towards nursing, it can be difficult to support a new parent to do it. Similarly, if our attitude is very positive it can be difficult to understand a mother who does not feel the same way.

We tend to **behave** according to our **attitudes**. Our **attitudes** are the way we feel about things; they come from our **beliefs**. What we believe depends on the **facts** as we see them, which we have worked out from our **experiences**.

For Example:

*A health professional breastfed for a few days before she stopped and switched to formula, due to nipple pain and baby weight loss.*

*She had learnt all about the benefits of breastfeeding but believes that breastfeeding is difficult for new mothers and bottle feeding is better 'because you know what they are getting'.*

**Experience:** *Sore cracked nipples after just a few days of breastfeeding, baby lost weight due to ineffective feeding*

**Perceived fact:** *That it is difficult to breastfeed safely and comfortably*

**Belief:** *Breastfeeding is painful and doesn't work*

**Attitude:** *Formula feeding is safer than breastfeeding*

**Behaviour:** *Offers mothers who are struggling to establish breastfeeding a bottle of formula so that they feel supported.*

# BREASTFEEDING ATTITUDES TIMELINE

Sometimes we don't know where a particular attitude has come from. It can be very helpful to trace it back and re-examine it – especially if we now have access to some new 'facts'. Filling in the timeline below may help you to identify the source of your own attitudes.

Were you breastfed? Did you see other children in your family breastfed? Try and think right back to the first time you saw a baby or dolly fed? What did you see? And what did you think about each incident?

## EXAMPLE

### POSITIVE:

- I was BF as a baby
- I'm an only child but all my cousins were BF and my aunties would confidently feed in front of the family
- As I've become older, my friends who had babies before me all BF
- They were very open about their struggles - painful latching, mastitis, use of shields but for me, this was positive that they 1 felt comfortable discussing it with me and 2 that it still didn't put them off their BF journey
- All on my NCT group BF and that was an amazing support and we each had little issues as first-time mums
- I have loved BF my little ones each very different
- The bond with baby with BF is beautiful but also knowing with my youngest that although we didn't manage to BF for long he became content and happy with a bottle and got him back to a healthy weight
- Weight loss
- Not having to sterilise everything
- Being free!!

### NEGATIVE:

- The stigma around BF in public
- A family member making comments about "flopping your boob out "purely because she'd chosen to give up after 2 days of BF
- The demand of feeding little one
- Being conscious all the time and eating and drinking enough
- The stress of not knowing how much baby is having especially when my 2nd had silent reflux and wasn't gaining weight as well as she needed too- being encouraged to introduce formula instead of trying to increase milk supply
- The cracked and sore nipples when I wasn't positioning baby correctly
- Mastitis!!
- Forgetting pads and leaking everywhere
- Baby only wanting to settle with me- more pressure to do everything

# BREASTFEEDING ATTITUDES TIMELINE

Use the two columns below to fill in your own timeline, to see where your breastfeeding beliefs came from. Place all the positive breastfeeding experiences on the left and all the negative ones on the right.

Were you breastfed? Did you see other children in your family breastfed? Try and think right back to the first time you saw a baby or dolly fed? What did you see? And what did you think about each incident?

POSITIVE:

NEGATIVE:

# REFLECTION ON BREASTFEEDING

Please note: You do not need to have breastfed to reflect upon your feelings about breastfeeding!

Reflect on your own breastfeeding 'story', is it a positive or negative one? If you do not have children; how do you feel about breastfeeding and why?

REFLECTION ON BREASTFEEDING

# INFANT FEEDING COACH PROGRAM

What is my intention for this program? (We are going to go in to more detail about your goals for your business later on in the course. So, for now, we are just talking about your intention for this program).

How can I be more focused for the duration of the course?

What will I need to let go of to fully commit to the course?

Where can I ask for more support?

# INFANT FEEDING COACH 12 -MONTH PROGRAM

What are the new habits I need to develop in order to get more done in less time?

What do I need to do for me to make my time in this program really impact my practice?

Why is this program important to me?

**NAME:**

**DATE:**