SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS
Version number 1

Level: H
Credit value: 20 (ECTS 10)
Effective from September 2012

AIMS

The promotion, protection and support of breast feeding is an international public health priority (World Health Organisation 2003), and yet in the UK, breastfeeding continuation rates are persistently low (Bolling et al. 2007). However, much of the literature suggests that breastfeeding support offered by health professionals can make a considerable difference to a woman’s experience of breastfeeding (Britton et al. 2007; Renfrew et al. 2005; Swanson and Power 2005).

The aim of this unit is to enable midwives, health visitors and other allied professionals to critically assess, evaluate and challenge current practices that influence the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding. Students will evaluate the evidence relating to support for breastfeeding women through women’s video narratives of the lived experience of breastfeeding and through published research in order to develop an enhanced understanding of how best to support breastfeeding women in the first few weeks following birth.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Having completed this unit the student is expected to:

1. Critically examine the professional’s role and responsibilities in relation to support for breastfeeding women.
2. Critically evaluate practices that influence the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.
3. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate evidence that supports the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative in order to implement best practice standards in the workplace.
4. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate provision of support for breastfeeding women considering women’s individual physical, sociocultural and psychological needs.
5. Demonstrate the ability to explore ideas from various angles in order to construct an argument for changing professional practice that will enhance support for breastfeeding women.
6. Demonstrate the ability to apply an understanding of research methodologies exploring women’s experiences of breastfeeding to their own exploration and analysis of the literature.
LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS
In this unit the student will use a distance learning approach with no attendance at the university necessary. A web based package will be pivotal in guiding student learning and subsequent assessment and will include:
- Watching video clips of real women’s experiences of breastfeeding
- Critically analysing and reflecting on practice-based issues
- Social bookmarking using Scholar
- Reading and critiquing related literature
- Online discussion and debate with peers
- Individual tutorial support using current available technologies such as Skype, email, instant messenger

ASSESSMENT

**Summative Assessment**
1. Outcomes 2, 3, 4 will be assessed by course work equivalent to 2,000 words. 40%
2. Outcome 1, 5, 6 will be assessed by course work equivalent to 3,000 words. 60%

**Indicative Assessment Information:**
1. Course work 1 will be assessed by completion and submission of the guided study material in the form of a workbook (equivalent to 2000 words). 40%
2. Course work 2 will be assessed by a written assignment (equivalent to 3000 words). 60%

INDICATIVE CONTENT
Models for breast feeding promotion.
Breastfeeding as a public health issue
Anatomy of the breast and physiology of lactation
Positioning and attachment
Biological nurturing
Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative Best Practice Standards
The impact of the environment of birth
Skin to skin contact
Support for the first feeds
The meaning of support from women’s perspectives
Becoming a parent – rooming in, bedsharing, use of a dummy,
Common breastfeeding problems – static or slow weight gain, painful breastfeeding.
Sociocultural influences on breastfeeding.
The history and politics of breastfeeding practices
WHO Code on Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes and relevant current UK legislation
Weaning
Returning to work
INDICATIVE KEY LEARNING RESOURCES

Key texts:


Books:


