

COMMUNITY BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUPS

KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY

- There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach—groups should be tailored to the unique needs of each community.
- Offer flexible meeting times, including after-work hours, to accommodate different family schedules.
- Provide a hybrid format (virtual and in-person) to increase accessibility for families.
- Select welcoming and neutral locations, avoiding hospitals, churches, or government offices, particularly for Indigenous families.
- Ensure the space is accessible via public transportation or offer transportation support.
- Provide childcare options to offer parents the opportunity to participate fully.
- Create scent-free environments to accommodate sensitivities and enhance comfort.



COMMUNITY-CENTERED APPROACH

- Support groups should be rooted in the community and reflective of its needs.
- Groups should be peer-led, allowing trained parents to support one another.
- Cultural representation is essential—facilitators, topics, and locations should be relevant to the community.
- Partner with organizations that align with the group's vision and values to enhance resources and outreach.
- Regularly reassess and adapt the group's structure based on participant feedback to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

"THIS IS HOW TO BUILD A BREASTFEEDING CULTURE! BRINGING THE FAMILIES TOGETHER AND GROW FROM THE EXPERIENCES AND BEAUTY OF EACH FAMILY."



MIBFN

Michigan Breastfeeding Network



PRACTICAL SUPPORT + RESOURCES

- Provide essential breastfeeding supplies such as milk storage bags, diapers, wipes, and scales for pre/post feeding weights.
- Ensure access to lactation consultants and mental health professionals for comprehensive postpartum support.
- Foster a warm and welcoming atmosphere with music, comfortable seating, and snacks.
- Offer specialized support groups for unique breastfeeding journeys, such as NICU families or those experiencing low milk supply.



ENGAGEMENT + RETENTION

- Use icebreaker activities to help families feel at ease and build connections.
- Incorporate interactive elements like topics of the day or educational games.
- Invite parents with lived experience to share their stories, rather than relying solely on external experts.
- Share candid (consensual) photos of group meetings to set realistic expectations and encourage participation.
- Clearly communicate what attendees can expect at meetings to reduce anxiety and increase comfort levels.
- Establish communication channels (e.g., Discord, WhatsApp) for ongoing support between meetings.



STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Have multiple facilitators to provide one-on-one support when needed.
- Create equity-centered spaces with ground rules developed by participants.
- Use surveys to assess group effectiveness and gather input on future improvements.
- Identify and secure funding sources to ensure the sustainability of the group.
- Provide appropriate compensation for facilitators and families who contribute their lived experiences to shaping the group.

IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL, LOCAL BREASTFEEDING SUPPORTERS NEED:



Funding



Transportation Support



Groups for Facilitators

"AS SOMEONE WITH ANXIETY, IT IS SO HELPFUL TO KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE GOING."

