



BANADIR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CONSORTIUM

BPHCC

TRAINING REPORT MOTHER TO MOTHER SUPPORT GROUP (MTMSG)

Mother-to-mother support groups overview

Mother-to-mother support groups (MtMSG) are Groups of women, either pregnant or with children under 5 yrs or groups of women, of any age, who come together to learn about and discuss issues of infant and young child Feeding (IYCF). These women also support each other as they care for children ages 0–5 years. One member of each group will be trained on IYCF, as well as on basic group facilitation techniques. This person will be responsible for engaging group members in discussion about IYCF and providing basic health education in an interactive, participatory manner. To maximize the effectiveness and sustainability of such groups, mobilization efforts should focus on identifying and recruiting existing community groups with women members instead of forming entirely new groups. Groups should be recruited based on their interest in IYCF and their regular meeting times, as well as their ability to identify one key member who can undergo training on IYCF.

Understanding mother-to-mother support groups Feeling support usually means that we feel as sense of trust, acceptance, self-worth, value, and respect. When we are supported we can share information better, learn new skills, talk about our thoughts and feelings, and feel connected to others. A support group is formed when people come together with a common interest or life experience. It may be informal or formal, but includes the following:

- ✓ Safe environment
- ✓ Sense of respect
- ✓ Sharing information
- ✓ Availability of practical help
- ✓ Sharing responsibility
- ✓ Acceptance

- ✓ Learning together and from each other
- ✓ Emotional connection
- ✓ A mother-to-mother support group is a meeting where pregnant women and mothers with young children, as well as other people with similar interests, come together in a safe place to exchange ideas, share experiences, give and receive information, and at the same time, offer and receive support in breastfeeding, child rearing, and women's health. Mother-to-mother support group activities can take place within an existing women's support group. Mother-to-mother support groups have the following characteristics:
 - ❖ Groups have up to 15 participants.
 - ❖ Members decide how often they meet
 - ❖ Members decide how long their meetings are
 - ❖ Members support each other through sharing experiences and information.
 - ❖ The group is made up of pregnant and lactating women and other interested people
 - ❖ Facilitation is by a breastfeeding counselor with experience (with a co-facilitator who has less experience). The group is open, allowing for new members
 - ❖ Members decide on the topics to be discussed
 - ❖ Facilitator responsibilities include:
 - Identifying future participants
 - Choosing the date, time, and meeting place.
 - Preparing for the topic.
 - Inviting participants to the meeting
 - Choosing the meeting time and place: Time: It should not interfere with the primary activities of the members (preparation Of meals, washing, market days, work schedules, etc.). Accessibility: If it is a home, it should not be more than 15–25 minutes walking

Encouraging participation:

- Ask other questions to encourage discussion.
- When there is a question, the counselor should direct it to the group to see if another member can answer it
- Facilitators should talk only when there are questions that the group cannot answer or to offer an explanation or correct information to clarify some confusion.
- The best support group meeting is one when the members have spoken more than the facilitator

Support groups for improved infant feeding:

- ❖ Support groups allow us to reach a larger number of mothers (and interested community members) in order to offer them information and support.
- ❖ Information and support are given to help prevent problems and barriers to exclusive Breastfeeding and can lead to the timely introduction of complementary foods.
- ❖ Sharing experiences helps women to overcome these barriers; a supportive environment helps mothers to adopt and continue optimal infant feeding practices.
- ❖ Mother support groups have been shown to be an effective way to improve infant feeding practices all over the world.

Mother-to-mother support group observation checklist

Community: _____ Place: _____ Date: _____
 _____ Time: _____ Theme: _____ Group
 facilitator(s): _____

The facilitator(s) introduce themselves to the group.

- The facilitator(s) clearly explain the day's theme.
- The facilitator(s) ask questions that generate participation.
- The facilitator(s) motivate the quiet women to participate.
- The facilitator(s) apply communication skills.
- The facilitator(s) adequately manage content.
- The facilitator(s) adequately distribute the tasks between themselves.
- Mothers share their own experiences.
- The participants sit in a circle.
- The facilitator(s) fill out the information sheet on their group.
- The facilitator(s) invite women to attend the next mother-to-mother support group (place,1 date, and theme). The facilitator(s) thank the women for participating.

- The facilitator(s) ask women to talk to a pregnant woman or breastfeeding mother in their community before the next meeting, share what they have learned, and report back.

First mother-to-mother support group meeting

Objectives

By the end of this discussion, participants will be able to:

- A. Agree on group norms
- B. Identify topics for future sessions.
- C. Session guide
- D.
 1. Greet and welcome all participants. Ask participants to join you and sit in a circle at the same level. Ask each participant to introduce themselves and talk about what they expect from the group.
 2. Ask: What does the word “support” mean to you?
 3. Encourage several participants to respond and then share the following: Feeling support usually means that we feel a sense of trust, acceptance, self-worth, value, and respect. When we are supported we can share information better, learn new skills, talk about our thoughts and feelings, and feel connected to others.
 4. Ask a few participants to share an experience when they felt truly supported.
 5. Explain that in order for us to support each other, it is important that our group is a safe place for all members. Ask: How can we make sure that our group functions with safety and trust for all members? Encourage participants to discuss.
 6. Review the following suggestions for group norms or rules for support groups: Any personal experience or information shared during the groups should not be discussed outside the group. Each person has the right to express themselves, give suggestions, and propose activities or topics.
Each person defines the type of support she needs in the group—for example, advice , support, information, or just being listened to. Each person has the right to be listened to and the duty to listen to others.
Ask: Are there any other rules or agreements that should be added?

7. Present the following information: Support group meetings can focus on one topic or be open. When the support group is open, I will ask each of you if you wish to participate during that meeting. You will then take turns discussing topics of personal interest, sharing information, or requesting support from each other. You all may decide to have an agreed topic for each meeting and choose the topic. Groups may decide to have a combination, with some meetings open for discussion and some meetings structured, or meetings that have times that are structured and times that are open. Whatever the decisions, we can make them as a group as part of the process to set rules for the meeting

Topics: MtMSG Trainer's Guide & Participant Manual

- ✓ Advantages of BF
- ✓ Initiation BF w/in 30 min of birth
- ✓ Positioning & attachment
- ✓ EBF
- ✓ BF difficulties
- ✓ Expressing breastmilk
- ✓ How to feed a baby by the cup
- ✓ Infant feeding & HIV
- ✓ Feeding 6-24 months
- ✓ Preparing & storing foods safely

Expectations of Facilitators

- ✓ Engage group members in monthly discussion about IYCF in interactive, participatory manner
- ✓ Conduct health talks at HF & other public forums
- ✓ Attend quarterly update meetings
- ✓ Household visits to members
- ✓ Referrals to health facilities

Strengths of the Program

- ✓ Mothers generally eager & open to information
- ✓ Sharing experiences & demonstrations had strong impact on mothers' attitudes
- ✓ Linkages with HF, where done, was highly effective

Areas for Improvement

- a) Better supervision & feedback mechanisms required
- b) More training on facilitation techniques
- c) Continued resistance from cultural myths & misconceptions
- d) Lack of support from men
- e) Competing priorities of mothers
- f) Lack of motivation / incentives

Some pictures of MTMSG In Heliwa sections



