



Module 13: Maternity Care Coalition

Part 3

Yes. So, I'm Katja Pigur. I am here at MCC, the Director of Clinical and Breastfeeding Services. I'm with MCC since 2007.

So, the breastfeeding program of MCC is multi-layered. So, we first have a program component working with local hospitals. So, it's more about systemic change. And then we work with employers to change working environments and to make them breastfeeding-friendly. But then we also have the piece of direct services.

So, MCC has a group of breastfeeding champions. MCC has eight office sites throughout Philadelphia, Delaware County and Montgomery County and every site has a staff person who is a breastfeeding champion. So, those people are specifically trained. They receive a nine-week training on breastfeeding and they basically serve a resource for the clients, the clients of that particular site and also, as a resource for their coworkers.

And then the other piece is—and this is our newest piece we added to our comprehensive program—is the North Philadelphia breastfeeding program. So, this is a program which offers doula services and breastfeeding support services. This program also has other components, which is community building and community capacity collaboration and then also research and evaluation and collaboration with birthing hospitals.

Yeah. So, basically, MCC has done work on breastfeeding since many, many years. So, one thing through our work with our clients, we know that there is a need for breastfeeding supports of our clients that give birth that want to breastfeed but they find many, many barriers. But also then clients that have to go back to work very quickly but then don't have accommodations they need to continue to breastfeed. So, that's one thing. But we also have a breastfeeding committee. We also have like little grants and try to implement some projects. We also did focus groups where we asked what about breastfeeding in Philadelphia because we know Philadelphia has very low breastfeeding rates.

So, based on that, the organization is always looking out for funding. So, what happened in 2010, the Get Healthy Philly initiative started off. The initiative is about obesity prevention and chronic disease prevention. MCC then recognized the good moment of making a case and saying if you want to address childhood obesity, you have to start from the very beginning. And that's how we received a two-year grant where we had our first full-time staff and we're at the



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Philadelphia Breastfeeding initiative was officially implemented, which was they work with hospitals and also they work with employers and the other pieces were then added as we went on.

So, with the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative we are doing in Philadelphia, one key component is working with the individual birthing hospital. So, we are collaborating with all six birthing hospitals in Philadelphia. Every hospital has created a breastfeeding taskforce and we offer technical assistance. We are accompanying those hospitals in that process. We also encourage them to go on the 4-D Pathway, which is an official way to achieve Baby-Friendly designation, which is awarded by the Baby-Friendly USA organization.

The other piece we then added—so, we really wanted to have kind of a city-wide movement going. So, we provided a hospital summit where we brought all leadership together from those hospitals and as a direct result, we were able to create a multi-hospital taskforce that meets on a quarterly basis and basically not only shares their experiences, their strategies, how they implement breastfeeding policies and practices, but they also really address barriers and brainstorm together and also have a voice as a whole group and move forward in Philadelphia to become a breastfeeding-friendly city overall.

And so that was the hospitals. Also, with the hospital—so, three of the six hospitals [inaudible 00:05:38] formula bag. So, that's one of the things when you go for Baby-Friendly designation, you have to actually comply with ten steps to successful breastfeeding. One of the steps is that you have to comply with the international code on marketing of breast milk substitutes.

So, that means that you are not allowed to market breast milk substitutes, which is formula in the hospitals. So, what hospitals do, they bend their formula bags, those are the free samples. We have three hospitals that bend those bags and two hospitals will probably follow very soon. So, that's also one component we are working on. Yeah. And that's about the hospitals.

So, the breastfeeding, the business case for breastfeeding—so, we work individually with employers and offer technical assistance for free. We help them to create their breastfeeding-friendly program for the employees. So, that starts from assessing the space up to creating the lactation room, developing policies around the accommodation then also we have an employer outreach advisory committee. So, we actively involve the business community, pick their brain and just ask for advice, how to really promote the business case for breastfeeding in Philadelphia and how to get more employers on board.



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The other thing too is we do actively outreach. So, we go to networking events, to conferences and reach out and recruit actively employers to join our campaign. That's how we started. We actually did a ceremony event where we honor our breastfeeding-friendly employers and give them their official certificate.

That brings me to our last piece we implemented. It was actually our breastfeeding-friendly employers certificate program, which we have online on our website. Employers can go on our website and apply officially for the certificate. So, they can apply there, complete the application and then we go out and assess if that's what they are saying and doing. If that's true, then they get their official certificate, which is signed by the health commissioner of Philadelphia. And then we award them their official certificate. As a result, they will be added on a list of breastfeeding-friendly employers, which is also online accessible.

The other key component is collaboration. So, we have a strategic partnership with the Society of Human Resource Management, which is the professional association of human resources professional. So, we collaborated with them and they actually facilitated a breastfeeding workshop for employers to train them on the federal law of breastfeeding support and also use it as a recruiting tool. So, those are the components of the business case for breastfeeding.

And then we have the North Philadelphia Breastfeeding Program. So, as I already mentioned, one component is the direct service component. So, our doula accompany our clients throughout pregnancy, birth and postpartum. So, they prepare them for giving birth. They attend the birth of the client if so wished. And then they support the client until the baby is six months old. The overall goal is basically increasing breastfeeding rates.

The other component is that we also provide access to international board certified lactation consultants. So, we collaborate with the Breastfeeding Resource Center that provides those services if needed. Our staff are certified lactation counselors, however sometimes there are more complicated cases. So, then we refer to the lactation consultant who then makes a home visit and provides services to our client.

And then the other big piece is community building collaboration. So, one piece of that is a 20-session community doula training. That's where we actually recruit interested women of all ages from the community to become a doula and then we help them to get connected with moms. We match them up.



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We also have a North Philadelphia Breastfeeding Advisory Committee. That committee consists of stakeholders of the North Philadelphia community. And then we also provide presentations all over the city wherever interest falls and also give breastfeeding workshops at Temple Hospital but also at other places where workshops are requested. And then we have a close collaboration with Temple University Hospital, where most births are occurring of that community.

And then the last piece I forgot is research and evaluation. So, basically this is a way to track our initiation duration rates, but also then evaluate those services and track outcomes.

So, of course when you, for example, look at the hospital initiatives—so, the positive impact is that we have all hospitals on the pathway to become Baby-Friendly. So, that means they already have and still are implementing breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices. So, our clients and not only our clients, all women that give birth in Philadelphia hospitals, they really notice changes.

It is more about family-centered care. Hospitals are more focusing on family-centered care and use that also as a marketing tool. So, there is a true culture shift happening in the city. Also, directly for our clients, they have more positive experiences and are more successful with breastfeeding initiation and also duration because they just receive more support that they didn't have before.

With the employer piece, we now have more employers that are breastfeeding-friendly and that support not only working mothers but also their families. Children are less sick. It also increases satisfaction. So, in general, that definitely improves. It actually also brings resources to Philadelphia. So, for example, with the hospital piece, there is also collaboration with WIC. On the WIC state level, they had additional funding. So, as they knew about our initiative and knew that hospitals are becoming more breastfeeding-friendly, they actually decided to fund those hospitals to support this process and to even accelerate those processes.

What else? The North Philadelphia Breastfeeding Program—so, in those terms, we of course have a lot of success stories in terms that births that our clients have more positive birth experiences. We also already get—and it's not anecdotal because that program just started in 2012—but even hospital staff is talking about a different atmosphere that you have in the birthing room when there is a doula present and supports the client. So definitely, there is also a culture shift happening. And of course, improved breastfeeding rates, which we are all looking for.



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I mean, in general, as you can see, every component has basically their own committee where we involve stakeholders from that community to get their feedback but also their ideas. There is also a direct collaboration going on. I think that is a very important piece. Also, when you look at the North Philadelphia Breastfeeding Program, it's really also capacity building, what we do.

So, not only collaboration, but also capacity building so that we recruit those women from the community that don't have work and have skills but don't know how to use them. So, we offer them for free this training and help them to develop themselves professionally but then also build out the capacity because, of course, the funding only allows us currently only having two and a half doulas. That's, of course, not enough. There's a much higher need out there in the community.

So, it's also really to help for the community to become more self-sufficient. So, that, I think, is a really great example. Also, the work with the hospitals—normally, hospitals work kind of on their own. They're in their own bottle. But with this multi-hospital taskforce, hospitals are actually working together. They are brainstorming together. They are supporting each other. They're not debating each other when there's a hump they have to get over to. So, it really kind of is a very different atmosphere right now happening. It's really seen as the common goal and the common journey to help the city to become healthier.

Yeah. I mean, so, if you want to start an initiative like that, I think what is important really see if it's relevant right now. There are a lot of things you can do, but if it doesn't meet the needs of the community, then that might be very difficult. So, you really need to have a good sense of what the needs are—if that specific initiative you have in mind, if that is really meeting the need of your target audience.

You also have to know your audience. Who is your audience and what do they need? For example, the employers, what is their culture? Does it fit in with our goals? What would they get out of it? At the end, you want to collaborate. So, it's not that you come there and want to have your thing done. You really need to kind of initiate a partnership together. That, normally, I would think would catch the interest of the counterpart and also what is helpful to find champions.

Sometimes, it's the like the employer piece. You know when you approach a big corporate company and you want to talk about breastfeeding, that's not so easy to do. So, you should do a lot of research and find out, even if you happen to know, "Oh, the HR manager is a woman and she happens to be pregnant." Well, that's a good lead. So, perhaps you should have a conversation with her because perhaps she's planning to breastfeed or is thinking about it and she's also thinking about if she's going to continue to breastfeed.



So, it's kind of good to make this research and kind of find your champions and make them work for you because sometimes it's not so easy to get your foot in the door. Also, be prepared and have a plan. So, think about it. Come up with a strategy. Think about it because if you don't do that and you're just approached and it doesn't work out, then perhaps that chance is lost because getting an appointment with something higher up the ladder is not that easy. If it doesn't work out the first time, then it's difficult to get your foot in the second time.

Get them involved and make them part of the solution. So, make them see, "Here is something I can help you with. So, how can we work together and make it easy for them?" So, don't come and ask, "Well, you need this, and that," no, come up with ideas and say, "I can help you with this. I can do this and I can do that," so that it's for them not a lot of work because of course you are competing with many other requests and their priorities. If yours does not happen to be their priority, then it's very difficult to even get on their agenda.

I mean, what I'm always saying to our students is that when they go out there and look for their first job, try to go where your heart and passion is because if you really do something you're passionate about, I believe that you are more successful. You are more likely to excel. You are more likely to open doors. Keep an open mind. Be curious and challenge yourself. These days, there are so many things going on. So, often you will have to go out of your comfort zone. That's good. That's how you learn. So, go out of your comfort zone, challenge yourself and try to do where you really are passionate about because then you are willing to go that extra mile.

Well, there are many success stories. For example, our first employer in our business case for breastfeeding work was actually Congreso de Latinos Unidos. I approached them and they were right away interested because they are very family-oriented. What they did and what was really impressive—space is always scarce, right?—they went ahead and took one of their conference rooms and converted it to a lactation room for moms.

That was incredible. They renovated the whole room. Employees came and did those curtains and everyone kind of came together and just created this really nice room. Now this room, since the room was implemented, a lot of employees are using it and are really thankful for that. I think that's great, to kind of really make things happen and even go the extra mile. It's so easy to say, "Well, we don't have space. We can't do it."

Another success story, actually what we did where we really got a great response is we actually did a Facebook photo contest, which was also a really interesting thing for us to do because we never have done something like that. We



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created video clips on our business case for breastfeeding work. We interviewed our employers, but we wanted to include photos as a b-roll from the community, from breastfeeding families.

So, we did this Facebook contest. There was a call to action, asked breastfeeding families to post photos. We had a really wonderful response. We got all those photos. At the same time, we got discussions going on because posting breastfeeding photos on Facebook is always a topic that comes up. We integrated those photos, actually, in our videos we're using those photos of real moms out there, real families out there, our clients in our video clips that are posted on our website.

So, yeah. So, that was really, for us, kind of an eye-opener on how you use social media to actively promote your initiative, but really also create kind of more a buzz and interest in the work you are doing.