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Background

•Staff training is an essential element for organisations wishing to achieve and retain the prestigious UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) award, which demonstrates that a health facility has adopted internationally recognised best practice standards in breastfeeding support .

•A breastfeeding training programme (workbook and DVD) developed by Health Behaviour Research Ltd is being delivered to up to 900 healthcare staff in three Primary Care Trusts (PCT), Children's Centres and their Maternity units in the West Midlands.

•As part of this project knowledge is objectively measured before and after the training using the CUBA (Coventry University Breastfeeding Assessment), and the implementation of the programme is being evaluated.

Aims and objectives

Aim:

•To evaluate the views of staff and their managers who participate in a training programme related to breastfeeding support skills provided by Health Behaviour Research Ltd.

Objectives: Baseline phase

•To report the levels of breastfeeding knowledge (CUBA) of staff before training

•To elicit the views of service managers on the early implementation of a new training programme.

•To elicit the views of breastfeeding practitioners on their experiences of the initial baseline period of the training programme

•To elicit views of staff on the positive and negative aspects of the processes associated with the early stages of the training programme and the barriers and good practice in breastfeeding in their workplace

Methods

•Knowledge measures before the training was undertaken were collected via a web based assessment (CUBA) with known reliability and validity.

•Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 members of staff across the three pilot sites in the West Midlands

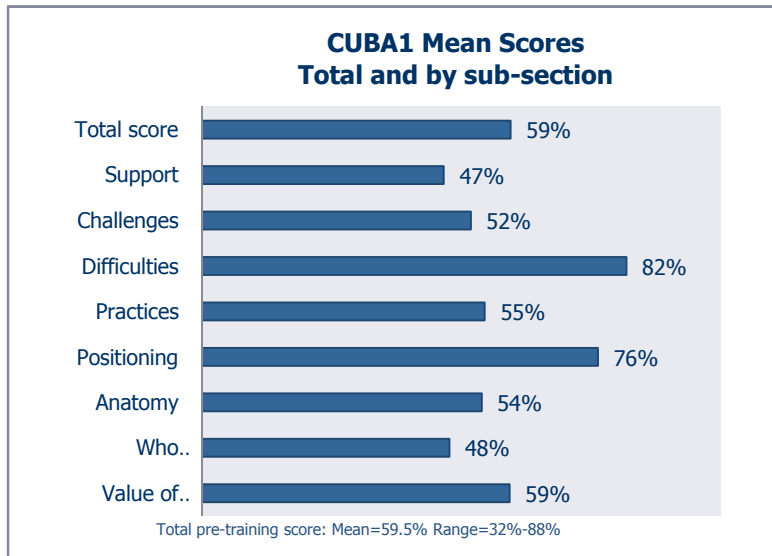
•Interviews were conducted with 10 service managers, infant feeding co-ordinators and 16practitioners.

•Interviews were recorded, transcribed and the data analysed thematically.

Baseline Evaluation

Baseline CUBA results – Staff baseline scores on breastfeeding knowledge

The first 240 participants to go through the online assessment scored an average 59% a fifth, 21%, scored less than 50% and only 5% scored over 75%.



The following differences in mean scores were tested using independent t tests:

- health visitors and midwives
- those who have recently qualified compared to those who have been qualified for a long time
- those who had undertaken training in the last year compared to those who had not undertaken training in the last year

•Significant results were found only in comparisons between participants according to length of time since last training. Scores were significantly higher for those who had received training in the last year in the following:

- Total scores: $t(222)=2.36$ $p=0.019$
- Positioning and attachment: $t(222)=2.27$ $p=0.024$
- Breastfeeding difficulties: $t(222)=2.38$ $p=0.018$
- Breastfeeding challenges: $t(222)=1.97$ $p=0.05$
- Supporting breastfeeding: $t(222)=2.28$ $p=0.023$

Conclusions

Data from the baseline test show a need for the training which will be delivered in a pre-post design using the workbook and DVD. The evaluation interviews show high levels of engagement with the programme. Participants share similar expectations that the programme will review or increase knowledge, leading to less conflicting advice being given to mothers. All also share an understanding that time and workload pressure are the key barriers to the training and its implementation. These data are from the first phase of the evaluation. The second phase of the study, whereby individual's knowledge is re-tested following the completion of the workbook using the online assessment tool and staff are re-interviewed, will show whether knowledge has increased and also whether expectations of the programme have been met.

Practitioners and managers were positive about the training, hoping for improved consistency of advice and increased confidence in staff which would ultimately be reflected in the advice given to the women in their care. All of which would hopefully be reflected in increased initiation and duration rates. The main barrier identified by all was protected time to undertake the training when staff are under pressure from many conflicting priorities

'Well, it is so in-depth that I can honestly say it is teaching me things I don't know....I have done so much breastfeeding work'
Practitioner (Health Visitor)

'I think it will unite them, is the word I suppose to a level of understanding, underpinning support...so that everyone will unite on a front' Manager

'I think it is great for personal development'
Service Manager