



## GREAT LAKES BREASTFEEDING WEBINARS

### **BSTARS: The Star Power of Peer Support**

Tiana Pyles, MHA, CLC

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- The goals of this presentation are to 1. identify the correlation and give clear examples as to why Peer to Peer support is vital to improving health outcomes and comprehensive community development and 2. discuss from a health care perspective why Peer to Peer support must be included in moving breastfeeding and other health initiatives forward.
- Peer Counselors are effective for numerous reasons. As breastfeeding mothers, they practice what they teach and they meet clients where they are through the shared experience of breastfeeding.
- Peer Counselors are skilled at listening to a mother's story and validating her experience. Most peer counselors can share a similar story with their clients.
- Peer Counselors help parents to feel confident that they can breastfeed and help to "support the spirit" of communities, especially for families of color.
- How a woman births and her experience becoming a mother has a great influence on whether breastfeeding is successful. Normalizing the birth experience, especially for families of color, will help to normalize breastfeeding as well..
- BSTARS (Breastfeeding Sisters That Are Receiving Support) formed in response to the health and income disparities and public health crisis affecting Memphis communities of color.
- Memphis has a greater number of WIC recipients, prematurity, infant mortality, and SIDS rates than the national average and a lower rate of breastfeeding.
- The main goal of BSTARS is to reduce disparities in breastfeeding through peer and professional lactation support. Support from within the community is crucial to address the unique needs of families and provide culturally competent lactation support.
- BSTARS funded through a CHAMPS grant and ROSE Community Transformer Training.
- BSTARS provides support and education from trained breastfeeding professionals (CLCs, IBCLCs, Peer Counselors), support groups, breastfeeding education classes, WIC agencies, and a county-wide breastfeeding coalition.
- BSTARS raises awareness for breastfeeding within the greater Memphis area, hosting the Big Latch On, Community Baby Shower, Breast Cancer and Breastfeeding speaker, Memphis Area Breastfeeding Symposium, and engaging health care provider support.

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