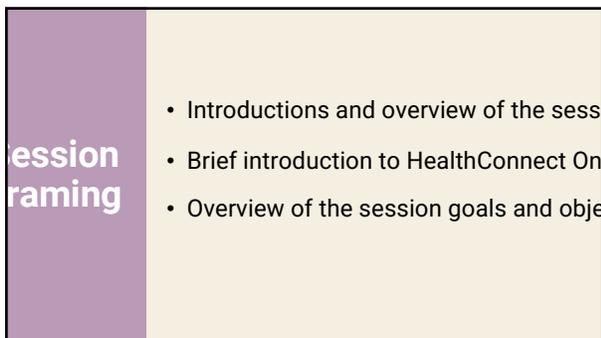


1



2



3

Mission & Vision

HealthConnect One is the national leader in providing equitable, community-based, peer-to-peer support for pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and early parenting.

Our vision is to see every baby, mother, and family in a healthy community. We work to achieve this vision through an equity-focused approach by prioritizing the first 1000 days for birthing people.



4

Key Introduction to HealthConnect One

Training: Develops and delivers training for community-based doulas, peer lactation supporters, and perinatal health workers

Advocacy: Advances policies that expand access to community-rooted breastfeeding and maternal health support

Research: Conducts and shares research to strengthen evidence for community-based models that improve maternal and infant health outcomes

Nearly 40 years, HealthConnect One has been a pioneer in advancing community-based models of care—helping shape the national landscape for peer lactation support, community-based doula programs, and culturally reflective maternal health services.

5

Goals & Learning Objectives

Identify recent changes in WIC, Medicaid, and SNAP that affect breastfeeding support for underserved families.

Analyze how media and pop culture influence parental attitudes and decisions around breastfeeding.

Describe the role of peer lactation supporters and community-based doulas in addressing breastfeeding disparities.

6

Breastfeeding in Today's Cultural Landscape

- Media, celebrity influence, social platforms, and infant feeding narratives
- Pop culture and online discourse
- How these narratives influence parental confidence and decision making

7

Forms and infant feeding narratives



- High-visibility media events create "norms". They spark conversation about breastfeeding and can both normalize the practice and trigger stigma or pressure.
- 2012 TIME cover ("Are You Mom Enough?") a major flashpoint, fueling debate about public/extended breastfeeding and expectations of "good motherhood."
- Recent campaigns (e.g., Cardi B partnership with Bobbie formula) show how brands and celebrities shape infant feeding narratives around "challenging" stigma, and work realities.

8

Hashtag discourse



- Hashtag cultures (e.g., #brelfie) normalize breastfeeding through peer storytelling but can also create comparison pressures.
- "PumpTok" on TikTok spreads practical knowledge and helps normalize pumping.
- Algorithm-driven content may simultaneously increase anxiety about milk supply and lactation "performance."

#brelfie

9

Identity and decision-making

Feeding culture is shaped by advertising and celebrity influence.

WHO/UNICEF research finds formula marketing—through digital targeting, influencers, and health-professional channels—affects parents’ feeding decisions.

History and equity matter. Breastfeeding disparities for Black families are linked to legacies of forced wet nursing and ongoing stereotypes.

Limited representation in breastfeeding imagery can shape perceptions of “who breastfeeds” and who receives support.



10

Identity and decision-making

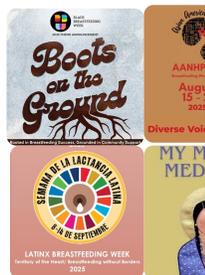
Community-led campaigns use culture-making tools—art, storytelling, events, and media—to support breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding Week reframes breastfeeding as a matter of health equity and is supported by research and social media campaigns (e.g., WomenDoBreastfeed) to community support.

Black Milk Medicine Week centers lactation in Black identity, ceremony, and cultural reclamation.

Latinx Breastfeeding Week (2023) elevates Latina voices through bilingual, culturally grounded storytelling.

Latinx Breastfeeding Week (2021) works to normalize breastfeeding and address inequities within diverse Latinx communities.



11

Policy Shifts Impacting Breastfeeding Support

- WIC, Medicaid, and SNAP & challenges
- Public policy and funding environments shape access to lactation support services
- Implications for underserved families and communities

12

Challenges

breastfeeding peer counseling remains one of the strongest evidence-based community supports for breastfeeding.

2024 WIC food package update strengthens nutrition security and breastfeeding support but depends on sustained funding and staffing.

Medicaid postpartum extensions and doula reimbursement and opportunities for culturally responsive lactation support.

Federal budget debates and proposed cuts to Medicaid and SNAP could reduce participation in WIC and related maternal and child health programs.

Proposed Medicaid work requirement policies could lead to coverage losses and reduced access to postpartum care and lactation support.



13

Equitable access to lactation support services

Safety-net programs (WIC, Medicaid, SNAP) together create maternal nutrition and lactation support infrastructure, but policy instability and administrative barriers can weaken access.

Policies like the PUMP Act and postpartum Medicaid coverage expand structural support for breastfeeding and pumping.

However, policy instability, administrative barriers, and funding reductions can limit access to lactation services.



14

Communities

Coverage loss or benefit reductions disproportionately affect families already facing structural barriers to care.

Strengthening community-rooted lactation infrastructure is critical to advancing maternal and infant health equity.



15

Community-Based Solutions That Work

- The role of peer lactation supporters and community-based doulas in address breastfeeding disparities
 - Examples of community-rooted strengthen support systems for
- Strategies for building trust and imp to culturally reflective care

16

Doulas in Addressing Breastfeeding Disparities

Breastfeeding peer counselors provide d, community-based lactation support and ked to improved breastfeeding outcomes.

Community-based doulas offer culturally reflective tal and postpartum support that can improve feeding outcomes.

Breastfeeding: Heritage and Pride™ (BHP) centers support specifically for families of color with comes.

Adding Medicaid coverage for postpartum care ular services increases access to community- d lactation support.



17

Culturally Reflective Care

Engage in peer counselors, doulas, and community health workers who share lived experiences with the families they serve.

Support and expand paid family leave to give parents the time and stability needed to establish and sustain breastfeeding during the critical postpartum period.

Strengthen policy and workplace supports (e.g., postpartum Medicaid coverage, job protections) that make breastfeeding feasible.

Coordinate braided supports across WIC, SNAP-Ed, and community programs to ensure culturally responsive lactation care.



18

Interactive Discussion and Audience Engagement

- Guided discussion with participants on local experiences and challenges
- Sharing of promising practices and collaborative approaches

19

Key Takeaways and Closing

- Pop culture and social media influence how we perceive infant feeding and parental expectations
- Policies such as WIC support, postpartum coverage, workplace protections, and paid leave shape what support is actually possible
- Community-based models—peer lactation educators, doulas, and culturally rooted programs—can reduce breastfeeding disparities.
- Strengthening braided community and policy is essential to advancing maternal and infant health equity.

culture narratives, public policy, and community-based supports work together to shape whether families have the knowledge, confidence,

20

HealthConnect One®
www.healthconnectone.org



21
