Social Media & Texting for WIC Peer Counselors: How to Get Started

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WEBINAR
OBJECTIVES

✓ List the steps to set up and maintain a mobile texting program for WIC peer counselors

✓ Describe the steps to set up and maintain a Facebook page that WIC peer counselors can use to communicate with participants, as well as a private group for peer counselor information sharing

✓ Discuss how these programs can enhance peer counselor services

✓ Identify implementation challenges and potential solutions at the state and local levels
Put that Phone to Work!

Utilizing texting to enhance PC effectiveness

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Santa Barbara County Public Health Department Nutrition Services/WIC, California
No conflicts of interest to declare

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mahatma Ghandi
Santa Barbara Co WIC - California

- 90 minutes North of LA
- Caseload of 19,000
- 4 Permanent & 5 Satellite Sites
- 5 IBCLCs
- Two FTE PCs
- 21 Lactation Educators
- State WIC BF Award 2003 & 2009
- Exclusive BF Rate 34.9% (1-12 mos)
Meet Santa Barbara Co WIC PCs Arely & Lilia
Who is Gen Y?

Born ~1977-2001
Also called Echo Boomers or Millennials
Nearly 80 million in population (baby boomer was 72 million)
Now represent ~75% of all births, 85% of first births
Ethnically diverse (almost half are Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American)

One in four lived in single–parent households

75% had working mothers

Higher education than previous generations

Gen Y
Gen Y

The text messaging, multi-tasking, advertising-wary, trendsetting, sarcastic, blog-reading, information-addicted, social media-savvy, tech-embracing, fast-moving, highly ambitious, quick-talking, well-educated, iPod, iWhatever-listening crowd
Connection: The Key to Millennials

Personalized interactions
Place high importance on connecting with other women
Millennial... Rely heavily on mobile communication
### Gen Y’s Modus operandi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Communication</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Gen Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phones</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving approach</td>
<td>Think about what worked in the past, how to replicate it, then call a meeting to discuss</td>
<td>Think up a list of solutions on their own, then call a meeting to discuss</td>
<td>Use web and social networking for research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reaching *Gen Y* where they’re at: Targeted Social Marketing

- Listen to the needs and desires of our participants, and building our programs from there—“participant centered”
- Current trend of health education
- Computer is out & the cell phone (mobile device) is in
- Mobile devices - #1 consumer product in the world

http://www.social-marketing.com/Whatis.html
90% PC participants have cell phones
100% OK with texting
More likely to answer text than the phone
Bfed Texting Program Goals

- Meet the communication needs of Gen Y
- Targeted Social Marketing of BF messages
- Increase BF rates above baseline
How we started

In Spring 2011, partnered with Educational Message Services (EMS)

Developed a text message platform

Developed prenatal & postpartum texts in English & Spanish

Went live on Friday July 22, 2011
Bfed Texting Program – What it Does

- Coined the name “Bfed”
- **Short code 8398**
- Spam texting against the law
- Participants must give permission to receive texts by “opting in”
- HIPAA compliant
- **Only for our PC participants**
- Evaluated Quarterly
Bfed Texting Program – What it Does

Sends weekly automated text messages from computer to cell phone

PC participants can text back any question or concern and engage in two-way dialogue with their assigned Peer Support Counselor

Photo by Yang Li, MIT  http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2011/deep-shot-0616.html
First in the US and possibly the world

Participants want to know there is a person at the other end of the text

PCs respond to text questions via the computer and engage in IM style two-way dialogue until their questions are answered

A highlight of our texting program
Participants in Bfed Program

512 current subscribers
- 380 English
- 132 Spanish

- Only 4 have opted out of program by sending “stop”
- 498 have used system for two-way communication
- Contact/follow-up with PC moms ↑ 100% since 1/12
Are we reaching them? Survey says...

- I learned something new in almost all the messages
- There is no need to go to the clinic, all I do is send a text
- I feel very good and more confident about breastfeeding
- When I had my baby and they congratulated me for becoming a mom
- I feel supported because I knew nothing of breastfeeding
- I like receiving the messages. They have great information.
- I feel confident and that I am important. Thank you.
- I like receiving them, it’s a reminder of why breastfeeding is so important and teaches me things I didn’t know about.
- I enjoy receiving message with information since I am a first time mom, it’s nice to know.
Summary of our Bfed program

- Web-based texting interface
- Participant opts-in
- Language flexibility
- Automated BF message service
- Two-way communications: Also used for caseload management e.g. touching base, answering questions, scheduling appointments
Educational Message Services (EMS)

- Provides Public Health Education text messages
- Is a social marketing & health IT agency
- Runs the Texting Platform
- Meets all Regulations for Confidentiality
- Costs $4,950 a year

For more info contact:
(805) 653-6000 or text “more” to 898211
www.educationalmessageservices.com
Why not a cheaper service?

The Verizon computer to text program shortfalls:

- NOT an opt in based strategy (opt in based texting is the only method of texting recommended by HHS, HRSA, CDC, because it protects the end user’s privacy) [http://www.hhs.gov/open/initiatives/mhealth/recommendations.html]
- Limited to one-way communication – can’t text back. Participant find ability to text with their peer counselor in a one-on-one conversation very valuable
- Cannot preprogram the messages. We have messages sent automatically biweekly to weekly.
- Cannot collect data – number of participants, number of texts, dialogue strings, percent of participants who complete the text education, number of English/Spanish participants etc.
- Cannot have multiple responders (2 or more PCs on at the same time).

Challenges / Lessons Learned

- PCs texting too much & not talking to ppts on phone
- PCs were texting via cell phone, not the texting computer system – we lost data
- Prepaid cell cards sometimes do not allow texts
- Funding
Questions for Thought

Could a breastfeeding texting program work for your agency or state because mobile devices are here to stay?

What barriers might you need to overcome?
- No cell phones
- Not allowed to text
WIC’s Future is Now

- Leading edge in ppt centered counseling
- WIC is a leading source of BF education & support
- Count as an education contact?
- Increase caseload
- Personalized attention
- Expand case mgmt.
- Increase credibility
- Research opportunity
- Provide general nutrition education not just BF
Let’s take a test drive...

Take out your cell phone!

1) Type **898211** where you would put a phone # to text

2) Text **DEMOEN** for English or **DEMOSP** for Spanish

3) Press send
### Online View

#### SMS Interface

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caller ID</th>
<th>Responder</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Time of Text</th>
<th>Last Incoming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9166002698</td>
<td>LisaM</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>demoen</td>
<td>05-01-12 15:42:27</td>
<td>Bfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>7074802826</td>
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<tr>
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<td>05-01-12 15:42:32</td>
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<tr>
<td>7073919216</td>
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<td>In a meeting</td>
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<td>5302712229</td>
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<td>05-01-12 15:42:19</td>
<td>Early helm</td>
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<td>Close</td>
<td>demoen</td>
<td>05-01-12 15:42:18</td>
<td>Bfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SMS Message

```plaintext
Hi, just following up to make sure your pregnancy is going okay.
```

**Name:**
phone: 9166002698  
email: 
created: 2012-05-01 14:11:06 -0700  
keyword: demoen  
assigned: LisaM

**Notes**

```plaintext
```

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**http://sms.astracorp.com/**
What Questions Do You Have?
Contact Information

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Educational Message Services, Inc. (EMS)
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Questions?

Thank You for Participating!