

It Takes A Village

RESOURCE GUIDE

Helpful Links

- [Provider Directory | Postpartum Support International \(PSI\)](#)
- [Doula Support](#)
- [Mother's Postpartum Care](#)
- [Bonding with Your Baby](#)
- [The Importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding](#)
- [When to See an IBCLC](#)
- [Partner Support While Breastfeeding](#)
- [Family Support and Boundaries](#)
- [Finding Your Village](#)
- [Breastfeeding Encouragement](#)
- [Caregiver Support for Breastfeeding](#)



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Class Notes Table of Contents

- Understanding the Concept of “Village”
- Types of Support
- Healthy Community vs. Harmful Friends and Family
- Discomfort vs. Harm
- Do I Need to Increase My Support Village?
- Ways Breastfeeding May Change How You Connect With Your Community
- Learning Your Connection Style
- Learn Together
- Lactation Consultants Can Help In Engaging Your Support System
- References



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Understanding the Concept of “Village”

- Village is a term used to describe the literal shared space of a group of people who share cultural practices and norms.
- Village is also a term used to describe someone’s assigned or chosen support system like family and friends.
- Identify those who have supported you in pregnancy and your decision to breastfeed and know that connection to your community is important.

Types of Support

- **Physical** - someone helps look after you, your baby or your space.
- **Emotional** -someone listens, encourages, or provides emotional comfort.
- **Psychological** - someone offers support with your mental load.
- **Cultural Awareness and Affirmation** - friends and family who share your culture.
- **Visible Support Community** - those you can call on for support.



Healthy Community vs. Harmful Friends and Family

- Your support system may not be perfect, and that's ok.
 - Disagreements exist in a healthy community.
- Sharing about the ways you have or haven't experienced support is one of the best ways to help your support system to better care for you.
 - Some close friends or family may hold views that are misinformed, and some will hold views that are simply different from your own.
 - Be confident in the decisions you make for yourself and your baby regarding breastfeeding and avoid unnecessary disagreements or conflicts wherever possible.
 - **Family Support and Boundaries**

Discomfort vs. Harm

- Not everything our community does may feel supportive, but it's important to emphasize when we're being harmed and when we're experiencing discomfort.
 - Two ways to manage relationships that feel uncomfortable:
 - Reduce the number of interactions.
 - Ask the person to help you with tasks unrelated to breastfeeding.
 - Place firm boundaries in conditions where harm is occurring:
 - Consistent negative feedback about your choice to breastfeed.
 - Deliberate actions to hinder, harm, or complicate your breastfeeding experience.
 - Emotional and psychological assaults about your breastfeeding choice like shaming or negative talk.
 - Peer or social pressure to end a breastfeeding journey.



Do I Need to Increase My Support Village?

- Not every parent enters parenthood with the perfect support system.
- Some villages are intentionally created.
- Define your support system:
 - Who has supported you in pregnancy and postpartum?
 - How do the people you have identified support you?
 - Why is their support meaningful to you?
 - Do I need to increase my support village if my needs are not met?
 - **Finding Your Village**
 - Ask your lactation consultant or support team about additional support programs that may be available to you.
 - **Provider Directory | Postpartum Support International (PSI)**

Ways Breastfeeding May Change How You Connect With Your Community

- Hormonal changes during lactation can impact your feelings, perception, or communication preferences.
- Socially, you may experience strain in some relationships due to varying levels of comfort with and opinions of breastfeeding.
- Physical changes to your body may cause you to avoid particular places, interactions or even conversations with your community.
- **Breastfeeding Encouragement**



Learning Your Connection Style

- Explore how you were raised.
- Be open to growing.
- Be honest with yourself.
- Communicate directly.
 - Be clear about the type of support you'd like to see while you are navigating breastfeeding.

Learn Together

- Learning alongside your support system can help improve relationships between you and those in your support system.
- Be brave in exploring the areas of support that you feel satisfied with and also the areas you'd like to see your village grow in.
- Listen to feedback on how your support system would like to grow also.
- Are there areas of conflict between your views and opinions on breastfeeding and those of your community?
 - Know that these differences are normal and okay because everyone will approach breastfeeding uniquely.
 - It is possible to honor and preserve these important relationships despite disagreements.
 - **Partner Support While Breastfeeding**
 - **Caregiver Support for Breastfeeding**



Lactation Consultants Can Help In Engaging Your Support System

- **A good lactation consultant should practice:**
 - Sharing your breastfeeding wins with family whenever possible.
 - Affirming your supportive community for being present and helpful.
 - Make space for your support system to ask questions or share concerns.
 - Remain positive about the roles your support system fills.
 - **When to see an IBCLC**

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References

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Disclaimer: This class is intended for general education purposes only and should not replace any medical direction from your healthcare provider. Please seek advice from your own healthcare provider and lactation consultant (IBCLC) for individualized recommendations.

