

Treasure Chest Breastfeeding Group York Media policy

Introduction

This policy covers the use of mobile phones/cameras by peer supporters attending support groups and the use of social media.

Procedures

Mobile phones and cameras

All peer supporters must:

- Ensure that they follow the policies of the venue they are attending in relation to mobile phone use
- Ask permission before taking any photographs

Social media

Peer supporters should be aware of both the limitations and opportunities presented by social media. It is a place where many mothers feel comfortable sharing their breastfeeding experiences and difficulties. It is a place where peer supporters may be able to offer support in a range of different ways.

When online, peer supporters should continue to be conscious of the need for:

1. **Effective online signposting:** giving reliable links from evidence-based sources to support the information they are giving mothers.
2. **An awareness of the limitation of their role.** There will be times when a mother and baby should be directed to a healthcare professional or a more qualified individual. Even if other members of an online community are attempting to provide suggestions or solutions, a peer supporter will emphasise the need for real life care in addition to online discussion. A peer supporter may also support a mother to find a face-to-face breastfeeding group or provide helpline numbers.
3. **Gathering background information.** A peer supporter giving support online should ask questions and gather background about a mother's situation as much as possible before directing a mother to information or offering support.
4. **A mother's privacy.** A peer supporter should not discuss directly any mother she has supported in real life on a public forum whether or not she is giving any personal information or there are identifying features. There are times when a mother may receive better support through private messaging features.
5. **An awareness of the commercial nature of some social media.** It is expected a peer supporter is conscious of the WHO code on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. Even when the WHO code is not in question, she should avoid promoting products (as that could be seen as an endorsement from Treasure Chest), but can provide information about them.
6. **Protecting themselves and their families.** When a peer supporter takes on a more public role, they may attract interest from others which may not always be comfortable or easy. She should practice good internet safety practice with regards to posting personal information.

7. **A reminder that the internet is a public domain and contributions posted should be considered permanent.** Even private groups can have a screen shot taken.
8. **A realisation that breastfeeding can inspire passionate opinion.** It is a subject which might attract trolls or involve debate that can be quite heated. Peer supporters are able to give information about the risks of formula where appropriate but do so in a way that is sensitive and respectful. We appreciate women make feeding choices for a variety of reasons and our role is to support mothers to reach their personal breastfeeding goals. When we are 'advocating' breastfeeding, we do so carefully and kindly.
9. **An awareness that they represent Treasure Chest as an organisation.** Once a peer supporter has made her status public on a site, she is then representing all Treasure Chest peer supporters and the organisation itself. This has a responsibility.

Responsibilities

The Treasure Chest Secretary will liaise with trainers and the wider Committee to ensure that this policy is circulated to all peer supporters on completion of their training.

It is the responsibility of individual peer supporters to familiarise themselves with this policy and to provide confirmation to the Secretary that they have read and understand its content.

Date of last review: June 2019

Reviewed by: Helen Wyrill

Date of next review: June 2022