

Trainer's Guide

Complementary Feeding Counselling **a training course**



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CHECKLIST OF TRAINING SKILLS

Practise using these skills when you are conducting sessions, and comment on these points when you give each other feedback.

Movements

- Take centre stage - do not get stuck in a corner or behind a desk
- Face the audience – do not face the board or screen when speaking
- Make eye contact with people in all sections of the audience
- Use natural gestures and facial expression – (but try to avoid mannerisms)
- Move around the room – approach people to get their attention and response
- Avoid blocking the audience's view – watch for craning necks

Speech

- Slow and clear, and loud enough for everyone to hear
- Natural and lively – varied
- Write difficult new words on the board, pronounce and explain them

Interaction

- Try to interact with all participants – use names as appropriate
- Ask the questions suggested in the text – ask different participants
- Allow time for the participant to answer – don't give the answer too quickly – drop hints
- Respond encouragingly and positively to all answers – correct errors gently
- Involve all participants – include quiet ones – control talkative ones
- Avoid discussions that are off the point or distracting – postpone them if necessary
- Try to give satisfactory answers to questions from participants

Visual aids

- Have the required aids and equipment ready – check and arrange them before the session
- Make sure that everyone can see clearly – arrange the room so that they can see
- Point to what you are talking about on the projector, or on the screen
- Cover, turn off, or remove aids that are not in use any more
- Let people handle aids that you use for demonstrations
- Write large and clear on the board – arrange words carefully so that there is enough room
- Put slides and overheads away tidily ready for next time, at end of session

Use of materials

- Prepare thoroughly – read the text, and obtain any aids that you need before
- Prepare your helpers (eg for role-play) before the session – practise if possible
- Do not learn the session by heart – follow the Guide but talk in your own way
- Follow the session plan accurately and completely – use your Trainer's Guide
- Emphasize important points – do not leave important points out
- Do not introduce too much extra material – but give a few local examples
- Try to avoid repetition unless really useful
- If you find it necessary to read from the guide, look at the audience sometimes

Time management

- Keep to time – not too fast or too slow; don't take too long with the early part of a session
- Don't lose time between sessions (e.g. going to Field Trip) – explain clearly what to do.

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INTRODUCTION

Why this course is needed

Appropriate feeding practices are of fundamental importance for the survival, growth, development, health and nutrition of infants and children everywhere. Great efforts have been made in recent years to promote breastfeeding by all mothers and exclusive breastfeeding is the ideal start to a child's life. However, after six months, when other foods are added to complement breastfeeding (thus complementary feeding), many young children do not receive adequate feeding.

This can result in malnutrition of young children, which is an increasing problem in many countries. More than one-third of under-five children are malnourished – whether stunted, wasted, or deficient in vitamin A, iron or other micronutrients – and malnutrition contributes to more than half of the 10.5 million deaths each year among young children in developing countries.

Malnutrition increases the severity of and the risk of dying from common childhood diseases. Malnutrition causes delayed motor development, impairs cognitive functions and lowers school performance. Overweight is a problem in many regions and can contribute to ill-health.

Information on how to feed young children comes from family beliefs, community practices and information from health workers. Advertising and commercial promotion by food manufacturers is sometimes the source of information for many people, both families and health workers. It often has been difficult for health workers to discuss with families how best to feed their young children due to the confusing and often conflicting information available. Inadequate knowledge about how to continue breastfeeding, the appropriate complementary foods to give and good feeding practices are often a greater determinant of malnutrition than the availability of food.

Hence, there is a need to train health workers who are in contact with caregivers¹ of young children, in all countries, in the skills to support adequate feeding. This course sets out to improve feeding practices of children from six to 24 months old by ensuring sound and culture-specific nutrition counselling is available to health workers. These health workers are then able to provide caregivers of young children with accurate information and counselling to enable the caregivers to decide what is best in their own situation.

Complementary feeding should be timely, adequate, safe and responsively fed. The information provided in this course focuses on when to introduce foods in addition to breast milk, how to enhance home-prepared foods, the use of low-cost processed complementary foods and education to enhance feeding behaviours.

¹ Caregiver is a term used to include mothers, fathers, other family members, institutional care workers and others with responsibility for the feeding and care of the young child.

Nutrition is a key universally recognized component of the child's right to health as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN Commission for Human Rights, 1989, Art. 24). This course is a step in the process based on the conclusions and recommendations of an expert consultation (The Optimal Duration of Exclusive Breastfeeding, Geneva 28 to 30 March 2001) that completed the systematic review of the optimum duration of exclusive breastfeeding.

This resulted in the global public health recommendation to protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and to provide safe and appropriate complementary foods with continued breastfeeding for up to two years of age or beyond.

The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Children² aims to improve through optimal feeding, the nutritional status, growth, psycho-social development, and health and thus the survival of infants and young children on a world-wide basis.

This course can build on local/national efforts and reinforce existing programmes for nutrition, child health and poverty reduction. The term "complementary feeding" is used to emphasize these foods complement breast milk rather than replace it. Effective complementary feeding programmes include continued breastfeeding, not just the addition of foods.

The aims of this course are:

To provide the knowledge and skills for health workers who work with caregivers of young children from six to 24 months of age to enable those health workers to:

- have up-to-date knowledge on the nutrition of young children and suitable feeding techniques for this age group;
- counsel caregivers of young children about appropriate and effective complementary feeding practices;
- contribute to the consistency of young child feeding messages and sustainability of activities in their health facility.

The concept of 'counselling' can be difficult to translate. Some languages use the same word as advising. However counselling means more than simple advising. Often when

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