



A Qualitative Description of WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Support

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Background

- Breastfeeding peer counselor programs have been successful in increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration rates
- Women's, Infants', and Children's Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) counselors educate mothers about breastfeeding benefits and assist mothers learning to breastfeed
- Factors contributing to a counselor's success, particularly in WIC setting, have not been widely explored
- Dallas WIC implemented the Power of Influence (POI) training program for breastfeeding peer counselors in 2011
- Women who received support from WIC breastfeeding peer counselors after the implementation of POI training were 1.5 times more likely to initiate breastfeeding

Purpose

- To describe WIC breastfeeding peer counselors' experiences in providing breastfeeding support to women and infants
- To explore the breastfeeding peer counselors' perceptions of the usefulness of POI principles

What is POI?

- Power of Influence (POI) is a training program based upon six identified "principles that influence ingrained responses and a person's tendency to move toward a desired behavior" (Hildebrand et al., 2014, p.459)



Methods

- Four breastfeeding counselors were interviewed about how they provide support to mothers
- A semi-structured questionnaire included questions regarding POI principles, including if and how they use the POI principles
- Interviews were transcribed and content analysis was used to analyze the transcripts
- Themes were identified through the analysis of the four interviews

Results

- Analysis revealed that breastfeeding peer counselors are successful because they **passionately empower** women through **shared experience** by **acknowledging the whole woman, helping, and uplifting**

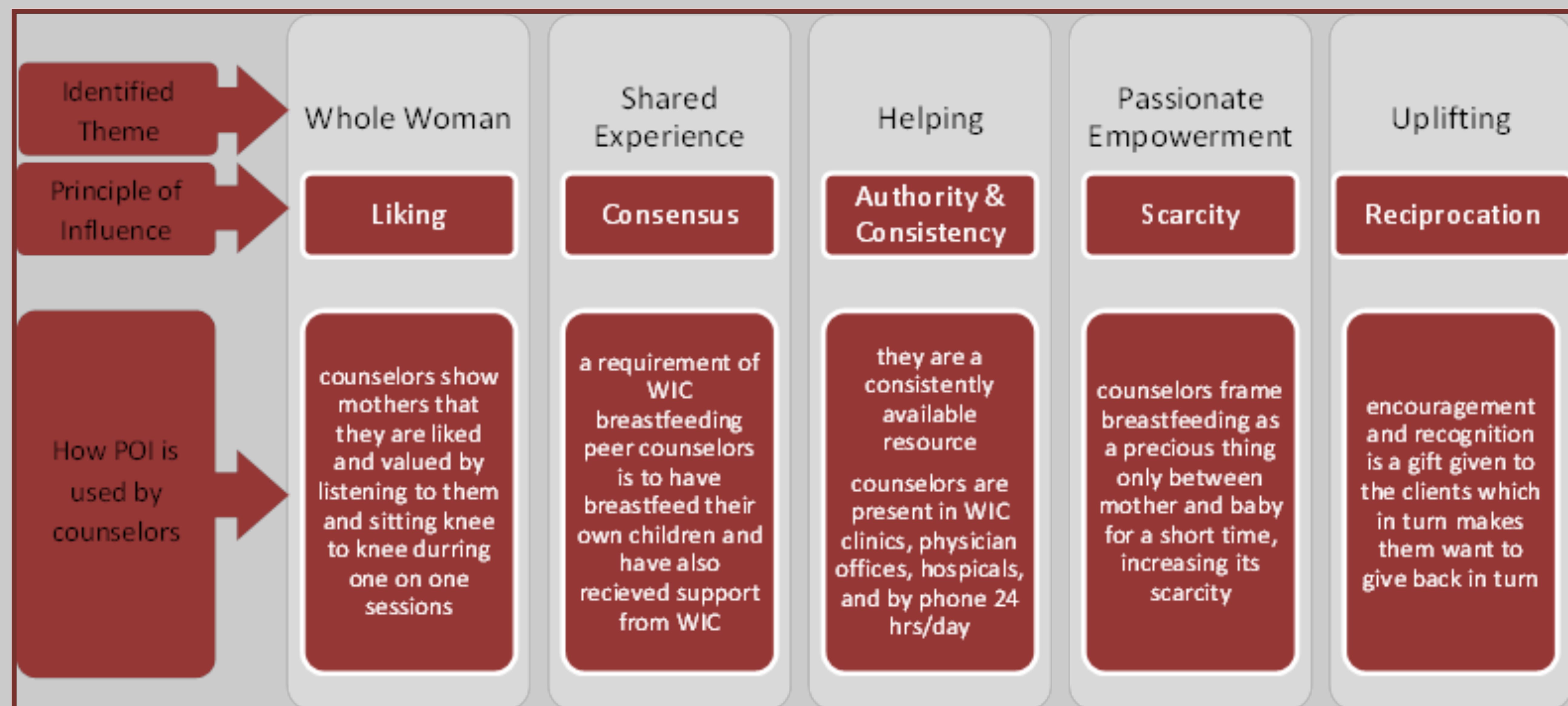
Discussion

- The breastfeeding peer counselors measured their success by women's success
- They celebrated the little accomplishments and achievements
- They all cherished their own breastfeeding experiences and were grateful for the support they received through WIC
- The breastfeeding peer counselors more than shared their knowledge and experience; they made mothers feel valued and capable.

Implications for Practice

- The findings of this study provide support for the implementation and expansion of POI principles and strategies
- The positive impact of POI training can broadly be expanded through the adoption in the hospital setting for nurses and other health professionals
- POI principles and strategies can be enhanced by adding the concepts of building hope, trust and confidence

Relationship of Themes and POI



References

Hildebrand, D. A., McCarthy, P., Tipton, D., Merriman, C., Schrank, M., & Newport, M. Innovative use of influential prenatal counseling may improve breastfeeding initiation rates among WIC participants. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 46(6), 458-466. doi:10.1016/j.jneb.2014.05.005