

A novel peer-support intervention using motivational interviewing for breastfeeding maintenance: a UK feasibility study

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Plain English summary

A UK feasibility study of motivational interviewing for breastfeeding

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Although most UK mothers start breastfeeding, fewer than half breastfeed exclusively for more than 1 week and only one in 100 breastfeed for > 6 months. Most stop breastfeeding before they had planned to.

We wanted to see if it was possible to help women breastfeed for longer by using buddies trained in motivational interviewing. This is a form of counselling that motivates people to change their behaviour by exploring their thoughts and worries and helping them to set their own goals.

The intervention we studied was called Mam-Kind. Mam-Kind buddies met mothers before their babies were born and provided support for 2 weeks afterwards. Before we embark on an expensive randomised trial of Mam-Kind, we wanted to see if it was acceptable to women and feasible to deliver.

Eight buddies delivered Mam-Kind to 70 women from three areas with high levels of social deprivation and teenage pregnancy and low rates of breastfeeding. We interviewed mothers, buddies and health-care professionals to get their views.

We found that Mam-Kind was acceptable and feasible to deliver. Mothers reported that buddies provided reassurance, were non-judgemental and were easily contactable. The buddies reported that it was sometimes difficult to use their motivational skills while providing breastfeeding support. It is feasible to design and collect appropriate health economic information. We used this information to refine the training and content of the intervention. The refined Mam-Kind intervention should now be tested in a controlled study to see if it really works to help women continue breastfeeding for longer.

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