Operational guidelines for quality assurance and ethics in breastfeeding counselling through BPNI’s Stanpan Suraksha Mobile Application and Digital Antenatal Counselling Platform

August 2020

This is BPNI guidance for all the authorised counsellors with the aim to keep high standards of care and ethics while we provide services of skilled counselling using the Stanpan Suraksha Mobile Application and the Digital Antenatal Counselling Platform.

**How to counsel?**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that it is best to give breastfeeding counselling through face-to-face interaction/physical meeting.
- In addition, next best method could be a Video call.
- Telephone or texts can be used for additional message or advice or response to a question but not for skilled counselling.
- Use technology based on mother’s comfort with technology.
- Authorised counsellors should provide counselling in the local language in which mothers are comfortable with.
- Duration of the breastfeeding counselling should be a minimum of 20-30 minutes. BPNI believes this to be appropriate for consultation of this nature.
- Monetary charges: It is up to the authorised counsellor, if they wanted to provide pro bono services. For those who would be charging, BPNI advises that mothers arriving through Stanpan Suraksha App are charged up to a maximum of Rs.500/-
- Authorised counsellors shall complete a monthly survey on information including the numbers of mothers approached, helped, and kind of issues resolved.

**Ethical Guidance:**

- Authorised counsellors should avoid any endorsement of Breast pumps, feeding bottles and teats, and commercial baby foods.
- Authorised counsellors should not promote use of baby foods/formula/follow on formula or infant foods.
- Authorised counsellors should avoid any sponsorship from baby food /bottle and related equipment companies.
- Authorised counsellors should avoid any display of baby foods/bottles/breast pumps/teats on their personal platforms on web or social media or their clinics.

**Behavioural Guidance:**

- Authorised counsellors should remain courteous and patient in all circumstances.
- Appropriate distance must be maintained while counselling.
• Consent of the mother should be taken before giving her practical help for positioning and attachment issues.
• Non-judgemental attitude and acceptance should be followed as a value system while counselling.

In COVID-19 Circumstances:

• Use WHO guidelines on breastfeeding and COVID-19. BPNI’s update on its website can be used for this purpose.
• Assist mothers with positioning and attachment “hands off”, using observations and demonstrations with dolls.
• Use masks while counselling the mother and maintain appropriate distance.
• Wash your hands before touching the mother for providing practical support.