

At Healthy Start for Mom & Me we think carefully about:

Things that isolate...

- calling sessions "classes" (obligation, formal)
- rows
- sign-in sheets
- lab coats, professional dress
- lectures, overheads, pamphlets
- giving people information; assuming that people don't have knowledge or skills
- diagnosing people's needs for them
- noticing differences in your life experiences
- expecting people to reach your predetermined goals for them according to your timeline
- making sure that each minute is "programmed"
- 30 minutes of information on one topic
- communicating with every person in the same style (your style)
- referring to people as "clients"
- questions that box into a corner: "Do you plan to breastfeed?"
- focussing on people's deficits
- expecting people to fit the program
- judgement and 'zero tolerance' toward drinking, smoking, drugs
- seeing yourself as a "professional" and different from people
- single-discipline approach
- hunger

Things that connect...

- calling sessions "drop-ins" (choice, informal)
- circles
- name tags
- jeans, dressing for comfort
- interactive games, quizzes, activities
- providing opportunity for people to share and build on their existing knowledge, skills and experience
- responding to what people say they need
- noticing similarities in your life experiences
- respecting each person's individual goals for themselves and their own timeline
- building in time for people to make connections with each other
- 10-15 minutes of attention on one topic
- mirroring the communication style of each individual
- referring to people as "participants"
- questions that open a discussion: "How have you decided to feed your baby?"
- focussing on people's strengths; celebrating their accomplishments
- making the program fit the people
- understanding and "harm reduction" approach toward drinking, smoking, drugs
- seeing yourself as a woman and identifying with people
- multidisciplinary teams
- food

