Real life stories

When Kerry White found herself crying in the doorway of Hastings Baby Café, a welcoming volunteer and counsellors Trudi and Gemma made all the difference.

“I was quite young, only 18, when I had my first baby. I wanted to breastfeed but I didn’t get a lot of support from the hospital and I remember panicking thinking I wasn’t producing enough milk and my baby was starving. I put her on formula, and did the same when I had my second. I felt that I had failed, that I wasn’t a proper woman.

“10 years later I was expecting Gabriel. I researched and realised it’s not as easy as you think. When my baby was born he latched straight away but he wasn’t latched as effectively as he could be. I persevered for 14 days but it felt like a lifetime because I was sore and crying in pain during feeds.

“I went along to the Baby Café and stood in the porch. I nearly walked out I was so nervous and crying because I felt so lost. One of the volunteers coaxed me in where I met Trudi and Gemma. They were brilliant. My boy had tongue-tie, which was cut at 3 days but Trudi noticed that it may need to be cut further.

“The support they gave me was brilliant. They were so kind, trying to help me with a solution rather than just a pat on the back. They suggested that I do skin-to-skin, which was like magic. He went on – latched well. I was so happy because he started feeding really well.

‘I’m now one of the volunteers. If a volunteer hadn’t been so welcoming, I would have gone away. If another lady is in that position I will be there.’

Baby Café helped me!

Baby Café offers friendship, a listening ear plus encouragement and support. This can be important for mums struggling with confidence and worries. In this issue we hear from Kerry White and Tatjhana Jones who share their stories.

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“Tatjhana Jones says thank you to Beckenham Baby Café for their support with feeding daughter Skylar.

“I had a difficult start with feeding my baby Skylar. She was diagnosed with tongue-tie at the 10-day check-up and was losing weight. I was having to bottle feed her with expressed milk and I was really hoping that one day she would get back onto the breast.

“Immediately after the tongue-tie was cut I put Skylar onto the breast with the nipple shield, and I could notice a difference in how she was feeding. It was incredible knowing that we had finally got somewhere. We have now stopped using the nipple shield and Skylar is successfully breastfeeding and we go to the Café every week. I’m planning to start helping out. They did so much for us and I feel I need to give something back.”

“I was told that she would need to be feeding at the breast, or through a tube at the breast, in order to have the tongue-tie procedure. I spoke to Kate at the Beckenham Baby Café who helped me with trying to get Skylar more used to the breast by using a nipple shield. But she wouldn’t take milk through a tube at the breast. So instead Kate suggested that when Skylar was hungry, to have the milk through a tube attached to my finger, which she could suck on. And that worked!

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