

## Guidance for Determining Caseload Count

There isn't a universal formula for determining the caseload count for peer counselors (PCs), as it can vary based on the specific needs and resources of the program, geographic region, and other factors. However, some general considerations can help determine an appropriate caseload count:

**Program Goals and Objectives:** The specific objectives of the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) program, such as reach and intensity of support, can influence the size of caseloads. Programs aiming for intensive support, such as home or hospital visits, might require smaller caseloads per PC.

**Breastfeeding Needs and Demographics:** The number of breastfeeding mothers needing support, the demographic and geographic distribution of the participants, and the prevalence of external community support can affect caseload size.

**PC Availability and Capacity:** The number of hours PCs are available to work, their level of experience, and alignment of language with population served can determine how many participants they can effectively support. Experience enhances efficiency. New peer counselors might manage about 75% of the average caseload, while more seasoned counselors could handle up to 125%.

**Scope of Work:** The types of services provided (e.g., educational sessions, one-on-one counseling, group support) and the level of follow-up required can influence caseload count. More intensive services typically require a smaller caseload.

**Administrative Support and Resources:** The amount of administrative and logistical support available to PCs can impact how many participants they can handle. More support can allow for larger caseloads.

**Feedback and Adjustments:** Regular feedback from PCs and participants about the effectiveness of the support provided can help adjust caseloads to optimal sizes.

**Caseload Fluctuations:** The actual number of required contacts may vary based on the needs of each participant. It is crucial for program managers (PCPMs) to monitor caseloads closely in collaboration with peer counselors.

## Contact Capacity Formula

Please note that due to the variability of factors influencing the caseload count of PCs, no single formula can comprehensively account for all considerations. The following formula provided serves as a starting point for estimating feasible contacts and should be adjusted based on specific program needs and counselor experiences.

- 1. PC Working Hours:** Estimate the total available working hours of the peer counselor per week or month. For dual-role peer counselors, only include hours dedicated to BFPC program activities.
- 2. Average Contact Duration:** Calculate the average duration of each type of contact, including time for preparation, travel (when necessary) and charting. Adjust this duration based on the service location or communication method:
  - **Telephone Calls:** 3 calls per hour (0.33 hours)
  - **Home Visits:** 1 visit per 2 hours
  - **Clinic Visits:** 2 visits per hour (0.5 hours)
  - **Hospital Visits:** 1 visit per hour
  - **Videoconferences:** 2 sessions per hour (0.5 hours)
  - **Written Correspondence (Email, Text, Social Media):** 3 contacts per hour (0.33 hours)
- 3. Administrative Time:** Dedicate time for tasks such as scheduling, record keeping, and training. Align this time with the calculation period (weekly or monthly).
- 4. Buffer Time:** Include buffer time for unexpected delays or extended conversations (5 minutes per interaction).

$$\text{Interactions} = \left( \frac{\text{PC Working Hours} - \text{Administrative Time}}{\text{Average Contact Duration} + \text{Buffer Time}} \right)$$

Unit of measurement=hours.

### Example Calculation:

Suzie B. Excited is a part-time peer counselor working 20 hours per week, primarily from home, using telephone and written correspondence.

- **PC Working Hours per Month:** 80 hours
- **Administrative Time per Month:** 16 hours (8 hours training + 8 hours other responsibilities)
- **Average Interaction Duration:** 0.33 hours
- **Buffer Time per Interaction:** 0.08 hours

### Example:

$$\text{Monthly Interactions} = \left( \frac{80 - 16}{0.33 + .08} \right) \approx 156 \text{ contacts}$$