

# Application of Kotter's Theory of Change to Achieve Baby-Friendly Designation

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) designates facilities that have implemented 10 evidence-based steps enabling women to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their infants or feed formula safely (Baby-Friendly USA, n.d.; see Box 1). Researchers showed that implementation of the 10 steps increases breastfeeding exclusivity and duration (Hawkins, Stern, Baum, & Gillman, 2014; Perrine, Scanlon, Li, Odom, & Grummer-Strawn, 2012). The actual number of steps implemented into practice also positively correlates with exclusivity and duration rates (DiGirolamo, Grummer-Strawn, & Fein, 2008; Nickel, Labbok, Hudgens, & Daniels, 2013). There are health benefits for women and infants the longer an infant exclusively breastfeeds (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP] et al., 2012).

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**Abstract:** Creating an environment that optimally supports exclusive breastfeeding can require a cultural transformation. Our initial attempt at obtaining Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) designation was unsuccessful when surveyors determined insufficient enculturation of BFHI practices. Using Kotter's theory of change, we overcame the barriers, enhanced our practices, and effectively transformed the culture, and our facility ultimately became the first maternity hospital in Pennsylvania to obtain BFHI designation. Nursing leadership was essential to this process. Our experience serves as a template for others seeking to achieve Healthy People 2020 goals related to breastfeeding. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2017.07.007>

**Keywords:** Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative | breastfeeding | change theory | Healthy People 2020 | Kotter







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