

Role of Cultural Frameworks in Breastfeeding Initiation and Persistence in Ohio's Appalachian Region

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140th APHA ANNUAL MEETING: ROLE OF CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS IN BREASTFEEDING INITIATION AND PERSISTENCE IN OHIO'S APPALACHIAN REGION

Disclosure Statement

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The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No personal financial relationships to disclose.

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Our Context

- Lowest breastfeeding rates in Ohio are found in the Appalachian Counties.
- The Ohio WIC Program needed to understand the individual attitudes and beliefs, social norms, cultural practices, and other socio-ecological barriers.

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Participants

- 19 Focus Groups
- 176 Women
- Ohio's Appalachian Counties
 - Adams, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Clermont, Gallia, Guernsey, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Morgan, Vinton, Monroe, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, and Washington
- WIC staff members recruited participants

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Demographics

Characteristic	Percent
Born in an Appalachian County	60.6
Currently Breastfeeding	32.0
Breastfed longer than one week, but not currently breastfeeding	41.3
Breastfed less than one week	4.1
Never breastfed	22.7

Other Characteristics:

Median age: 27.0 years; Average age: 27.8 years
 If breastfed for at least one week, median duration of breastfeeding: 14.0 weeks
 If breastfed for at least one week, average duration of breastfeeding: 26.7 weeks

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Data Collection

- Standardized open-ended interview protocol (Patton, 2002)
- Social-ecological model (McLeroy et al., 1988) guided our questioning:
 - How do **mothers** in Appalachia perceive infant feeding?
 - How do **others** (i.e., providers, family, friends, co-workers, etc.) influence decisions regarding infant feeding?
 - How does the **community** influence decisions regarding infant feeding?
 - How do **organizations** (i.e., health systems, social services, etc.) influence decisions regarding infant feeding?
 - How does **policy** influence decisions regarding infant feeding.

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Trustworthiness

- Creswell (1998)
 - Prolonged engagement in the field (saturation)
 - Triangulation (or crystallization)
 - Peer review and debriefing
 - Clarification of researcher bias
 - Rich, thick description

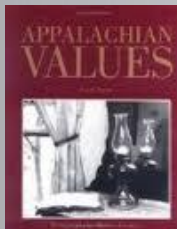
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Data Analysis

- All interviews were transcribed and verified.
- Data analyzed in MAX-QDA.
- Wolcott (1994): *description, analysis, interpretation*
- Gibbs (2007): *coding, categorizing, theme-searching*

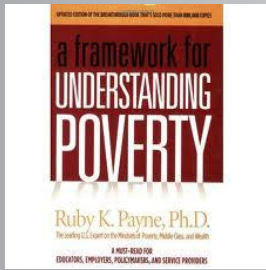
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Appalachian Values



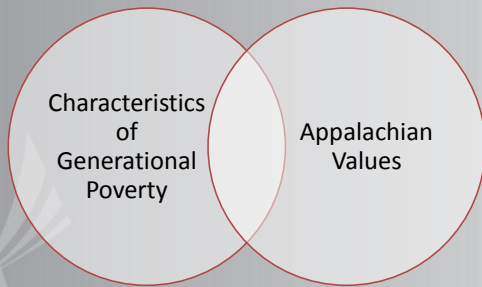
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Characteristics of Generational Poverty



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Poverty & Appalachian Values



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“Unpacking” the Concepts

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Storytelling is a means of communication.

- First and foremost, we heard from women through their *stories*...
- Appalachian Value of Personalism
- Characteristic of Generational Poverty - Oral Language Tradition

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You have to have a sense of humor.

I had a cousin, one time, and she was in public feeding the baby, sitting on a bench, completely covered up, and this lady comes up and she goes, ... "Why, are you, you know, why are you doin' that out here? ... Why don't you do that in the bathroom?" And, [my cousin] said, "Would you go eat your lunch on the toilet?"
-Jessica

Sense of Humor

- Both an Appalachian Value and Characteristic of Generational Poverty
- Humor can be perceived as appropriate or inappropriate *depending on your lens*.
- Self-deprecating humor is perceived as appropriate.

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Belief in Fate.

Since we never think we are perfect, we don't become cynical when we fail. When we do not fail, we are pleasantly surprised.
-Loyal Jones

I kind of went in with the attitude of, you know, "I'll try breastfeeding and if it works – it works, and if it doesn't – it doesn't."
-Grace

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Appalachian Values of Independence, Self-Reliance, and Pride

Pride is mostly a feeling of not wanting to be beholding to other people. We are inclined to try to do things for ourselves, find our way without asking directions when we are lost on the road, or suffer through when we are in need. We don't like to ask others for help.

-Loyal Jones, p. 68

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Communicating and Connecting

Example A

Yeah, they [lactation consultant] don't show you enough. They show you one time and get aggravated it seems like ... the lady showed me one time how to do it, and I guess I did it wrong and she kind of got aggravated. I don't think that [she] was patient.

-Tiffany

Example B

But I have to tell you that the lactation specialist that I had at the hospital was wonderful. And, she was there for me. She tried everything she could. I went back to see her later to try and do more things ... I'll tell you what I would refer anyone to that woman.

-Lora

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The Power of Voice

Parent Voice

- Authoritative
- Directive
- Judgmental
- Evaluative
- Win-Lose Mentality
- Demanding
- Punitive
- Sometimes Threatening

Adult Voice

- Non-judgmental
- Free of negative non-verbal
- Factual
- Often in question format
- Attitude of win-win

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Living in the Moment.

- Characteristics of Generational Poverty
 - Lack of Planning and Procedural Foresight
 - Does Not Consider Future Ramifications

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Building a relationship.

- Appalachian Value - Mistrust of Outsiders and Their Intentions, Familism
- Characteristic of Generational Poverty – Importance of Relationships

...the pediatrician told me to supplement with formula ... and [the nurses] constantly would, each shift, argue with me about what I was doing. I was like, "Well, the pediatrician was the one that told you guys to have me supplement." The next shift would come in, "Why are you givin' her formula? Why are you givin' her breastmilk?" I'm like, "I'm doing what you guys told me to do to begin with." That was one of the most difficult things with me ...
-Bella

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"Repacking" the Concepts

- Peer Helpers / Community Health Workers / "Breastfeeding Peer Counselors"
- Regional Lactation Center (webcams)
- Being able to recognize the cultural factors and influences
- Adjusting Communication Techniques
- Future Focus: culturally specific materials

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For the full report:
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/ns/wicn/breastfeeding.aspx>
Click on: **WIC Appalachian Breastfeeding Focus Group Report**

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