



JAYNÉ SMITH



- 1) **What are your thoughts and perceptions regarding the breastfeeding experience in Bermuda? Have you found that breastfeeding is widely accepted and supported in the community, or have there been challenges related to cultural norms or attitudes toward breastfeeding?**
 - a) I believe that breastfeeding is generally accepted in the community. However, aside from doctors' offices, there are not many signs or special accommodations made for nursing moms while in public.

- 2) **Can you share an instance where you received support or understanding from others in public while breastfeeding? How did this experience influence your comfort and willingness to breastfeed outside of your home, and why do you think it's important for society to foster such supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers?**
 - a) I work part-time at a small retail store. On the odd occasion I would pop into work with my little one. While there, if I had to nurse him and a customer came in I felt the need to apologize. Anytime I did, they would say, "Oh no need to apologize, do what you need to do. Your little one has to eat, right?" The comments came from both men and women. They were generally supportive and would share a story about their own breastfeeding/parenting experience.

- 3) **Did you experience challenges while breastfeeding, if so how did you overcome them? Were there any unexpected hurdles along the way?**
 - a) Despite being an experienced mom, I had trouble getting my son to latch correctly. I was in pain whenever I nursed him. After 3 weeks of painful feedings, I finally gave in and asked around for assistance. It was then that I realized there are not many lactation specialist on the island. After getting the help that I needed I was able to nurse comfortably. I can see how many women



would be discouraged and switch to formula. Every mother's journey is unique, and the support and encouragement available can make a huge difference in their breastfeeding experience.

4) Can you share a memorable accomplishment or milestone in your breastfeeding journey that you're particularly proud of? What supported you in reaching that achievement?

- a) This is my first exclusively breastfed baby. It is cost effective and convenient. Every day is an accomplishment for me. My family is my motivation. My daughter looks up to me and often says how she wants to be able to breastfeed when she becomes a mother. My son is very protective and makes sure I'm covered up while nursing. My partner ensures that I stay hydrated, well-nourished and encourages me whenever I've gotten discouraged. He has been one of my biggest supporters while on this breastfeeding journey. I am very blessed to be able to nurse my son and have the support of my family to keep me going.

5) Anything else you would like to share?

- a) For women who work in small places like me, there is typically nowhere to go to pump. Unfortunately, I have to either go to my car during my break or wait until the store is closed to pump. This could affect a mom's supply or lead to her giving up on pumping or breastfeeding. It would be helpful if there were private nursing/pumping stations available throughout the island, especially in Hamilton.

ANDREA DIAMOND BEAN



1) What are your thoughts and perceptions regarding the breastfeeding experience in Bermuda? Have you found that breastfeeding is widely accepted and supported in the community, or have there been challenges related to cultural norms or attitudes toward breastfeeding?

- a) I unfortunately can only speak off of experience. Breastfeeding is tremendously supported and accepted in our community. The excitement and encouragement that was received from other



mothers were implacable. I do wish that the community would supply a private area for breastfeeding mother's while out in public. You'll be surprised how many of us mom's breast are engorged and there's nowhere to release. Not an awesome feeling at all.

2) Can you share an instance where you received support or understanding from others in public while breastfeeding? How did this experience influence your comfort and willingness to breastfeed outside of your home, and why do you think it's important for society to foster such supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers?

- a) I'll be honest I'm a naturalist. I absolutely adore and enjoy breastfeeding my son Reko everywhere and anywhere we go. This mommy has no shame in her game! It's so uplifting to receive positive feedback from other mothers. Some mothers are very inquisitive asking. "How old is your son?" "How long have you been expressing and breastfeeding?" And so shocked that I've been doing this for a consistent 12 months and capable of expressing a reasonable amount of milk on a daily basis.

3) Did you experience challenges while breastfeeding, if so how did you overcome them? Were there any unexpected hurdles along the way?

- a) Hey MOM'S, I'll just make this short and sweet. If you feel that you and your infant are living in a stressful environment find the strength and courage to leave and do what's best for you and your baby. Always remember moms, a toxic home will surely effect your milk production.

4) Can you share a memorable accomplishment or milestone in your breastfeeding journey that you're particularly proud of? What supported you in reaching that achievement?

- a) I was so anal when it came to producing I continuously challenged myself. One day I woke up and said, today I will express 18 ounces of milk. I put all of my energy into my thought and mission accomplished. It was overwhelming and recorded breaking for me as well. It's been quite an experience and a positive change. Someday I'd love to do it again.



VAIRI FURTADO



- 1) **What are your thoughts and perceptions regarding the breastfeeding experience in Bermuda? Have you found that breastfeeding is widely accepted and supported in the community, or have there been challenges related to cultural norms or attitudes toward breastfeeding?**
 - a) My experience breastfeeding in Bermuda has been no different to any of the other countries I have breastfed in (UK, Canada, US). I believe my baby's health is more important than someone's opinions and will feed her wherever I am. Most times I opt for a quieter location but that has more to do with my baby becoming distracted during the feed versus others' perceptions. There tends to be a perception that breastfeeding is not accepted or endorsed because of the introduction of artificial feeding methods and sexualisation of the breasts. However, I have never had a negative experience while feeding in public in terms of people passing judgment. While I do believe these incidents happen, wider public health education, such as this campaign, will begin to stomp out those views. I have found that the older generation in Bermuda is very supportive of breastfeeding as they breastfed their own babies and know the significant benefits.

- 2) **Can you share an instance where you received support or understanding from others in public while breastfeeding? How did this experience influence your comfort and willingness to breastfeed outside of your home, and why do you think it's important for society to foster such supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers?**
 - a) I can't think of a particular situation but I know several older women in the community has been encouraging when they've seen me feeding. There is also strength in numbers so when I have been out with friends who have babies we all end up breastfeeding at some point during the outing and this is supportive to each other. I believe that every person should feel comfortable feeding their baby in the way they have chosen, without being isolated from society and activities. Public education is essential for fostering a supportive breastfeeding environment. All



of society needs to see the different ways of feeding a baby, be that breast or alternatives. We need to encourage an understanding, right from a young age, that breastfeeding is the biological norm, which may look different for different dads. Education should also be given to school age children and teenagers on the benefits and normality of breastfeeding. As we know some health conditions (ie Type 2 Diabetes, obesity, and hypertension) are on the rise in Bermuda and breastfeeding can significantly help in the prevention of these. Breastfeeding enhances the infants micro biome and offers immune protection, plus the major health benefits to the breastfeeding person (i.e. facilitates involution of the uterus postpartum, reduction in postpartum depression and increased bonding with infants, reduced reproductive cancer and cardiovascular risks in the future).

3) Did you experience challenges while breastfeeding, if so how did you overcome them? Were there any unexpected hurdles along the way?

- a) Every stage of breastfeeding comes with different challenges and this is why antenatal education and support during your journey from trained professionals (Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs), Lactation Counselors and Peer Supporters) is so important. With my first breastfeeding journey my daughter had a tongue tie which started to cause issues within the first day of birth, luckily I had a colleague who was a tongue tie practitioner and she did a division the next day which made the world of difference. I then had an issue with oversupply but I was able to manage that with the education I had as a Lactation Consultant. Once four months rolled around she became increasingly distracted when feeding so I ended up only being able to feed her at home in a darkened room, this became difficult when planning activities out of the house! As I progressed through that journey I realized after watching a presentation by Zainab Yate that I was experiencing breastfeeding agitation and aversion. This is when you feel the need to prematurely end a feeding session because you just want the baby away from you but you know that you need to continue because they need the nutrients. This can be accompanied by some very negative feelings but once I learned that this is a phenomenon that can happen it helped me to deal with it and find ways to cope with the agitation.
- b) With my second breastfeeding journey I had an easier time because of what I had learned the first time around. The biggest struggle this time is that my baby has wanted to feed every three hours through the night since she turned four months. It is very much a biological feeding pattern but does get exhausting when you have to work the next day! I would say that pumping at work was also a challenge. In my profession as it is difficult to take time privately to pump, I was fortunate to have access to hands free wearable pumps which helped with being able to pump on the go.

4) Can you share a memorable accomplishment or milestone in your breastfeeding journey that you're particularly proud of? What supported you in reaching that achievement?

- a) I think the biggest accomplishment is being able to breastfeed for as long as my babies have chosen to. This has been possible because of my exposure to breastfeeding dyads as a nurse-midwife and then my education gained as a Lactation Consultant and the support from my family and friends.

5) Anything else you would like to share?

- a) Breastfeeding can be rewarding and challenging, no journey is the same. I wish to remind anyone who is breastfeeding to be kind to themselves and seek helpful support. Make sure to take breastfeeding classes antenatally and arrange for follow ups with a breastfeeding specialist postpartum. Baby wearing can be especially helpful in the early weeks/ months and I would



encourage the use of wraps or skin-to-skin shirts to facilitate ease of access to the breast, transition from the womb, and bonding.

JAHKERA TUCKER



Before I became a mother, I always wanted to breastfeed my child. I've always heard the saying "breast is best" and I believe breast milk to be the safest option.

When I arrived home from the hospital, I spoke with my daughter's doctor about breastfeeding because I was nervous about not producing enough milk for her. We discussed it, and she made me feel very comfortable with breastfeeding. Along with understanding that it is normal for your milk supply to increase and decrease due to factors in your life. Throughout my breastfeeding journey, I faced challenges with my milk supply. Pumping milk was a very tiring process, and I preferred to breastfeed my daughter directly. It caused me extra stress, which is never good while breastfeeding. My milk supply dropped, and I had to add more pumping times into my schedule, while drinking copious amounts of water, drinking milk teas, and eating lactation cookies. I had to pump every 3 hours to keep my milk supply up.

Additionally, her doctor and I also discussed having to breastfeed in public, stating that it can seem uncomfortable and weird but it is very normal and needs to be accepted more in public spaces. Being a mother is challenging enough, and not having community support can make it difficult. Breastfeeding is a process that most mothers go through, and we should be able to feel comfortable feeding our child/children in public. I have received strange looks from people while breastfeeding my daughter. It made me feel like I was wrong for feeding her, and the stares were uncomfortable. I believe that breastfeeding is an amazing experience that every mother should experience. Some people or places may not accept it, and everyone has the right to their opinions and beliefs.



Furthermore, the best part of my pumping journey is that my daughter is now ten months old, and I am producing more than enough milk for her. I plan to breastfeed for at least a year and a half or until she is ready to be done. It has been a wonderful experience, and I do not think I could have been able to make it this far without having a supportive partner. His presence, encouragement, and support along this journey have helped me to keep pushing forward.

Lastly, a few words of encouragement are for you to do what you know is right for you and your child/children. Not everyone will have the same experience, and not everyone's advice will work for you. We all face adversity when becoming a mother and there is no manual for it. We are all doing our best and should not get criticized for not knowing it all. Always remember you are doing great in the eyes of your child/children, which is all that matters.

MICHELLE FURBERT



1) What are your thoughts and perceptions regarding the breastfeeding experience in Bermuda?

Have you found that breastfeeding is widely accepted and supported in the community, or have there been challenges related to cultural norms or attitudes toward breastfeeding?

- a) Bermuda is unique in that we have so many different cultures in such a small space and depending on where you are the feeling is different. I feel like if I'm in a space around men I try to cover up more, out of respect for my significant other or not do it at all and of course even though men are sexual beings they are uncomfortable in that situation. However, if I'm around a lot of moms or women of a more European upbringing they are more accepting of the "mother's duties" I can just whip it out and not care. But more than not I'm quite reserved as westerners and lots of Bermudians tend to be more uncomfortable with it. Though in saying that it seems more and more people are becoming accepting of the public display. I haven't



personally been approached by anyone to tell me not to do it, but again I'm very mindful of who is in the space.

2) Can you share an instance where you received support or understanding from others in public while breastfeeding? How did this experience influence your comfort and willingness to breastfeed outside of your home, and why do you think it's important for society to foster such supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers?

a) I cannot recall any specific incidents.

3) Did you experience challenges while breastfeeding, if so how did you overcome them? Were there any unexpected hurdles along the way?

a) I'm still experiencing challenges! As a mom of twins and a 5 year old who requires a lot of attention and a significant other who also feels left out a lot I find it super hard to produce the required milk for one baby, let alone two. Every day I am working on increasing my supply while doing my best not to stress about it. But I keep pressing on. There are so many communities out there, local & foreign that help you feel at ease and remind you that you are doing a great job. There is a multiple moms WhatsApp group with some of the most amazing women and then I am also part of 2 twin mom groups on Facebook. They give tips, experiences and remind you that you are doing a great job. I did not expect my girls would have issues with formula. The both do, but one is more tolerant of Soy but the other is solely breast milk. Since I don't produce enough for a full days feed I get donor milk from a very generous woman I met along this journey.

4) Can you share a memorable accomplishment or milestone in your breastfeeding journey that you're particularly proud of? What supported you in reaching that achievement?

a) Being able to breastfeed both girls at the same time. When I first started out it was THE most difficult thing I could do. Both girls have a tremendously strong suction that seemed unbearable. But I stuck to it, had the assistance of a lactation consultant I'm able to do it with ease.

5) Anything else you would like to share?

a) The amount of communities out there that are willing to help and support a multiple mom or other parents in general is amazing. They understand better than anyone and are quick to lend a helping hand (for all ages).



KERINA CANN



- 1) **What are your thoughts and perceptions regarding the breastfeeding experience in Bermuda? Have you found that breastfeeding is widely accepted and supported in the community, or have there been challenges related to cultural norms or attitudes toward breastfeeding?**
 - a) I find that breastfeeding is pretty accepted in Bermuda, I cannot think of an instance where I have outright felt uncomfortable. I have no issue nursing my child outside of our home, he eats when he wants and it is spontaneous! Especially with breastfed babies who eat often since it is not as “filling” and digests faster than formula does. You have to be ready at all times, no matter where you are. I just make sure that I have my little cover if I do not have a nursing shirt on and feel no way about it, my baby needs to be nourished 😊

- 2) **Can you share an instance where you received support or understanding from others in public while breastfeeding? How did this experience influence your comfort and willingness to breastfeed outside of your home, and why do you think it's important for society to foster such supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers?**
 - a) I remember this year Mother’s Day, it was shortly after I had given birth to my youngest son and this was our first outing. I just remember trying to nurse my newborn at the table while my 14 month old at the time, was having a complete meltdown in his high chair. Everyone was eating



and I remember everyone at the table – my mom, grandmothers and aunty all offering to stop their lunch to take my son out of his high chair and entertain him for a bit, walk with him to burn some energy. It is the little things like this, even though it was support from family, which make such a huge difference. Especially since stress levels can influence milk production, it was really important and still is important to me, to keep my stress levels down. For myself and for my sons.

3) Did you experience challenges while breastfeeding, if so how did you overcome them? Were there any unexpected hurdles along the way?

- a) I have experienced so many challenges, where do I even start?! From accidentally melting pump parts while sterilizing, to latch issues (had this issue with both babies), nipple pain in the beginning, milk supply drops, having to pump often at work – you name it! I think the most discouraging thing was my milk taking long to come in. I didn't know if it would come at all and I just remember that being really hard on me as I didn't get to nurse my 1.5 year old as long as I would have liked so this time around was very important to me. I am just glad that I stuck it out, I love the bonding side of it and also very helpful for me getting him to sleep quickly (which I absolutely need being a mother of 2 babies under 2 years old – it has been such a crazy journey).

4) Can you share a memorable accomplishment or milestone in your breastfeeding journey that you're particularly proud of? What supported you in reaching that achievement?

- a) Reaching 6 months of breastfeeding felt like a special accomplishment for me because of all of the obstacles in the beginning. I have set out to achieve at least one year of nursing/pumping and it is a great feeling being half way there. Things have been a lot smoother for me now and I can actually see myself making it to a year and that is so encouraging. My family has been a big support as well as some Facebook mom groups that I am a part of. It's actually amazing how supportive other moms are, even when you may not know them personally. It helps to talk to people going through the same things that you are – we talk challenges, tips, just general encouragement and uplifting and that is the type of energy that I aim to surround myself with. Not even just for nursing reasons but everything mom related.

5) Anything else you would like to share?

- a) It would be a beautiful thing, especially with the “new way” of being able to work after COVID and many companies still doing remote work, for employers to be more lenient with new mothers. I found 3 months of maternity leave to be very hard both times around, both physically and emotionally. My son was still nursing very often when I first went back to work and I found it very difficult and inconvenient to keep on top of his eating habits with pumping. Working remotely would have been huge for my sanity. Both times after returning to work in office my milk supply has suffered. This was the main reason that I did not continue breastfeeding my older child and chose to do strictly formula – the toll that pumping around the clock, trying to wash and sterilize pump parts at work with limited resources and everything that comes with pumping was hard on me. There are still many times where I find it hard to be the parent that I want to be while maintaining office life and it is just starting to get easier now that my son is 6 months. 3 months leave is very hard on a new mom and I think that if people felt like they had the option and support to exclusively breastfeed especially in the beginning when baby is feeding very often, I think that it would be a much smoother journey for moms.



SARAH (DONLEY) NASH



1) What are your thoughts and perceptions regarding the breastfeeding experience in Bermuda? Have you found that breastfeeding is widely accepted and supported in the community, or have there been challenges related to cultural norms or attitudes toward breastfeeding?

- a) With my first child, and as a first-time mother, I wasn't sure what to expect regarding breastfeeding. I was lucky enough to attend a birthing class and hire a doula as well as attend a breastfeeding class prior to giving birth to my first. So I got a good bit of information there. I was so happy to have had these resources to start and to help support me and form an opinion of my breastfeeding journey before my first arrived. I was also lucky enough to form friendships with other first-time moms to help share our experiences around breastfeeding with and feel comfortable breastfeeding around groups of people. Before I knew it my 6 month goal of breastfeeding turned into a year, and then two and then almost three years with my first, only stopped by the arrival of my second child. In the beginning the general consensus of breastfeeding a baby up until a year was positive and lots of "good for you!'s". After that and especially continuing to breastfeed my toddler throughout my pregnancy with my second child, I found people began to question why a parent would choose to breastfeed an older baby and beyond. I would get "but doesn't he eat solids" or "You shouldn't be nursing him to sleep anymore". Well-meaning family members said I should wean to give myself a break and just generally not understand why I would continue to nurse an older baby/toddler. I feel like some people from older generations maybe aren't as comfortable with or exposed to breastfeeding. I know my own mother and mother in law both were encouraged NOT to breastfeed and were



given advice on how to stop their milk supply, the hospital giving the baby formula without a second thought about how the parents thought it should be fed. It was just the norm and was actually taboo to breastfeed. I even once had a physician (thankfully not my OB or pediatrician) tell me that I should stop nursing my then 18month old and that breastfeeding a child over a year had no nutritional value! I politely told him that breastmilk doesn't magically lose nutritional value when a baby turns one and that the WHO recommends breastfeeding for two years or beyond. I'm so happy to see that society has come a long way through research and exposure that this doesn't happen anymore. And the research about breastmilk is absolutely amazing, it makes me feel like a superhuman!

- b) Even though it does feel like breastfeeding is becoming more and more widely accepted, understood and accommodated for, I feel like nursing an older baby toddler still isn't. I also chose to nurse my children to sleep and throughout the night instead of night weaning or sleep training which doesn't seem to be the norm either. I would love to change that narrative so everyone is more educated that this is completely normal as well! My second child is now nearly two and we are still nursing on demand, nursing through the night and I have met more moms who are breastfeeding longer and have the same night time situation as we do and I love it. It shows that hopefully there is a better awareness that extended breastfeeding is normal and that these parents are seeing more acceptance and support in their community as well. I've been very lucky to have such a positive breastfeeding journey and I don't want to rush to stop before either my child or myself are ready.

2) Can you share an instance where you received support or understanding from others in public while breastfeeding? How did this experience influence your comfort and willingness to breastfeed outside of your home, and why do you think it's important for society to foster such supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers?

- a) I remember not long after I had my first child I was sitting in the busy pediatrician's office for one of his checkups. There was another mother there with her tiny baby, probably only a week old. She was holding the baby to her breast with one arm and was casually replying to emails with her free hand. She looked so at ease, confident and casual nursing this brand new baby. Breastfeeding anywhere, let alone public, still seemed like a complicated and clumsy process to me. I said to her, "You make it look so easy!". She chuckled and replied that this was her third baby and that it will get easier and I will find the nursing cover just makes it harder. I thought to myself "I can only hope I feel that comfortable doing this someday". And she was right, I did. Soon I no longer felt like I needed to go to the car to feed my baby when out and about, and instead just sat down wherever I found a seat. And if you nurse a baby more than a few months you will know that a cover becomes pointless at some point because they are nosy and just rip it back to see the world happening around them. And at that point I felt fine to openly nurse whenever my baby needed. Friends who entered motherhood before me as well as local mom groups both provided space to ask questions and seek advice. I've also found a lot of support in online groups for breastfeeding and through social media. These can be empowering resources if you have limited knowledge or support in your closer network.
- b) I feel like a supportive environment is so important because there are so many factors into what can make breastfeeding a positive or negative experience for a mother. Family dynamic, time to feed/pump, finances, help from lactation specialists, caring for other children; so many things



can affect this journey. Breastfeeding can be very rewarding but can be hard work. On average breastfeeding a baby for a year is almost as many hours put in as working a full time job. And with more and more growing evidence of how beneficial breastfeeding is to both parent and baby, families need all the support that they can get on both a social and governmental level to help achieve each family's breastfeeding goals. I understand that I am lucky enough to have hired someone privately and I know a lot of families would not be able to do so. In many countries even less fortunate than Bermuda a lactation consultant is a standard free service to all new parents. It would be amazing to see Bermuda offer this as well so all parents could feel supported enough to make their breastfeeding journey last as long as they want to.

3) Did you experience challenges while breastfeeding, if so how did you overcome them? Were there any unexpected hurdles along the way?

- a) After taking the breastfeeding course while I was pregnant with my first child, I naively thought breastfeeding would be this simple thing that would come so naturally to both my baby and I...and I was wrong! I'm sure it is easy for some but I definitely needed help. My doula helped some but I ended up hiring a local IBCLC to come to my home and help troubleshoot our breastfeeding problems over a few sessions. Breastfeeding became easier and easier for both baby and I and I ended up nursing him for nearly 3 years, including throughout my second pregnancy despite, oversupply issues, many clogged ducts and nursing aversions along the way. I had figured that since I was a seasoned pro at breastfeeding at this point that breastfeeding my second baby would be a breeze...and again I was wrong! Different baby and different problems. I again got help from the same IBCLC but eventually needed a little more help from a feeding therapist (this was overseas). And now my second is nearly 2 years old and still nursing!
- b) I'm so thankful for the professionals that helped us. Breastfeeding or pumping is hard work. Without that help I'm not sure I would have made it. It was so beneficial to have an outside view to help guide me in those early months. There are more lactation consultants now these days, but when I had my first just 5 years ago there didn't seem to be as many options, so I'm happy to see more help on the island.

4) Can you share a memorable accomplishment or milestone in your breastfeeding journey that you're particularly proud of? What supported you in reaching that achievement?

- a) First off, I think ANY amount of breastfeeding or pumping is an accomplishment. There is no one right way to feed a baby but as I said before, it's all hard work no matter how you go about it. Whether you breastfeed for 1 day, 1 month, 1 year or longer, that is an accomplishment in itself. I'm so proud and feel really fortunate to have the journey I have had so far. My first initial goal was to breastfeed exclusively for 6 months, then that turned into making it for a year nursing demand. From there I just kept extending further and further because it just worked for my toddler and I. I became pregnant with my second and had never imagined nursing a toddler while pregnant, yet here I was and we kept on. I thought we would be tandem nursing, which I wasn't sure how I would feel about but was welcome to try. My toddler nursed exactly one time tandem with the baby on the day we came home from the hospital and never asked to nurse since. I'm happy to have nursed "to term" and my toddler weaned himself naturally. That was all a huge accomplishment for me. I'm still nursing my now almost two year old second born. So in total I have been breastfeeding for almost 5 years straight! People often ask me things like



“don’t you just want your body back” and of course I do. It’s not easy sharing your space and body like this for so long, to be needed for so long for a job that nobody can do but you. But I also know it’s just a short amount of time in their childhood, and my motherhood. I will miss these moments when they have stopped. Some of my favorite moments looking back on my breastfeeding journey are when I’ve been nursing my babies to sleep, feeling their little bodies relax in my arms, while I quietly admire them. Those moments I hope will live with me forever.

5) Anything else you would like to share?

- a) My first year of motherhood was tough for me. My first baby was born with a disability which required us to go overseas for treatment nearly every 6 weeks for the first year. My mother passed away from her battle with breast cancer when my baby was only five months old, and not long after the COVID pandemic hit. That first year was far from what I thought motherhood would be like, and unsurprisingly I had some postpartum depression and anxiety. But I truly feel like breastfeeding had a huge role in getting me through all those hard times. Mother Nature made no mistake with the release of oxytocin when a mother nurses her baby. I felt a sense of calm, happiness and relief when I nursed my baby. It helped me push through, and believe everything would be ok. And I knew that the longer I breastfed the more it would decrease my chances of getting breast cancer myself. It provided a purpose and my family and I were the better for it.

LASHUNTAE DILL-ASSING



1) What are your thoughts and perceptions regarding the breastfeeding experience in Bermuda? Have you found that breastfeeding is widely accepted and supported in the community, or have there been challenges related to cultural norms or attitudes toward breastfeeding?

- a) As a new mother to a very young child I haven't had many experiences regarding public breastfeeding feeding. However I perceive that breastfeeding in the public eye would be welcomed by most however the few that wouldn't see it as "ok" has definitely made me think



twice on the few occasions that I have needed to feed my baby in public via breast. I find myself expressing milk and preparing bottles for feeds just to avoid glares that 'may' come.

2) Can you share an instance where you received support or understanding from others in public while breastfeeding? How did this experience influence your comfort and willingness to breastfeed outside of your home, and why do you think it's important for society to foster such supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers?

a) Recently while trying to feed in public I was encouraged by those around me as I shared with them my lack of confidence in breastfeeding in public. They made me feel comfortable in my surroundings. They boosted my confidence by affirming me, giving me tips and tricks to be more effective during my feeds and creating a space of safety and comfort. These simple acts and words really anchored me in my public breastfeeding journey, those words spoken to me on that day play in my head now every time I go to feed my infant in public. I've come to the conclusion that most will embrace it and those who don't won't be brave enough to say a thing. It's up to me the mother to be confident enough to do what is needed for my baby in any circumstance.

3) Did you experience challenges while breastfeeding, if so how did you overcome them? Were there any unexpected hurdles along the way?

a) In my very first weeks of breastfeeding the biggest challenge to me was overproduction. Although this is a blessing it's quite a challenge to keep up with. I was pumping way too often and when I wasn't I was soaking shirts, sheets, and everything in between. I was coached by my health visitor (Nurse Becky) on how to slow down my flow. A week later after I had managed to slow things down, I would call my breastfeeding journey a perfect fit.

4) Can you share a memorable accomplishment or milestone in your breastfeeding journey that you're particularly proud of? What supported you in reaching that achievement?

a) I'm particularly proud of my baby's ability to latch. This is no thanks to me or anything I done, she was just a natural at it. I'm grateful for no major hiccups because I know for many it's not as easy for mom to produce or and baby to latch. I was /am extremely blessed for a seamless experience.