Breastfeeding Empowering Language in Medical Settings
by Amy Barron Smolinski, MA, ALC, CLC

Goal:
Informed decision-making and consent through productive dialogue ending in a treatment plan that is best for patient, based on patient (or parent) defined needs.

Helpful phrases:
● We’re on the same team here. We both want what’s best for me/my child. I need to understand exactly what you are recommending so I can be comfortable with the decision we make together.
● I’m not sure I understand. Can you explain this part again?
● I’d like to see the policy.
● I’m a parent trying to do what’s best for my child. Please have patience with me as I try to figure this out.
● I am feeling overwhelmed and I need a few minutes to think about this.
● I would like a second opinion.

Questions:
● What exactly is your recommendation/concern? Why are you recommending this course of action? How long will this course of action take? What kind of commitment will it take from me?
● What is the desired outcome of this course of action? Follow up: How will that benefit my child?
● What are the risks or possible undesired outcomes of this course of action?
● What are alternatives to this course of action?
● How can we work together to find a course of action that will address the concern and meet my needs and my child’s needs?
● What if we wait on taking this course of action?
● How familiar are you with this issue? How many cases like this have you treated?
● What is the scientific basis for this recommendation?

Resources:
Mom2Mom Global Breastfeeding Resources https://www.mom2momglobal.org/breastfeeding-links
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine https://www.bfmed.org
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee https://www.usbreastfeeding.org
Evidence-based resources for medications and breastfeeding http://infantrisk.com (Apps MommyMeds and InfantRisk for iPhone and Android)
https://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/newtoxnet/lactmed.htm (App for iPhone and Android)