Beyond NICU Graduation:

The Impact of Prematurity on Early Infant Development

Holly Schifsky, OTR/L, CNT, NTMTC, CBIS, CLT

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Faculty

Holly Schifsky, OTR/L, CNT, NTMTC, CBIS, CLT has worked in pediatrics for the past 30 years with the past 19 years in a level IV NICU. She is a Certified Neonatal Therapist, Certified Neonatal Touch and Massage Therapist, Certified Brain Injury therapist, a member of National Association of Neonatal Therapists, and has completed 6-month mentorship in infant/child NDT.

She has worked within the NICU and NICU follow-up clinic to maximize patient and family outcomes for the most complex premature and medically-fragile term infants. Holly received her BS in OT from the University of North Dakota. She is a faculty member for the Neonatal Touch and Massage certification; and Manuel Edema Mobilization training. She is the recipient of the National Association of Neonatal Therapists Clinical Excellence award in 2018, due to her clinical expertise and dedication to advancing the therapeutic interventions for NICU infants with cardiopulmonary conditions.

Financial Disclosure: Holly Schifsky receives an honorarium from ERI.
Non-Financial Disclosure: Holly Schifsky has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

About this Live Webinar

Advances in neonatal care have increased survival of premature and medically complex infants. The unique sequala of their prematurity impacts their motor, sensory, and feeding development. Ongoing support, assessment, and treatment interventions reduce the risk of severe developmental delays but require an understanding of NICU care practices and careful assessment of the infant's skill performance to mitigate atypical movement patterns. During this course participants will learn about the co-morbidities of prematurity including bronchopulmonary dysplasia, necrotizing enterocolitis, interventricular hemorrhage, metabolic bone disease, and retinopathy of prematurity. Information will be provided on term infants admitted to the NICU with the diagnosis of hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy (HIE), neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), and neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS). Participants will review medical pathology of these conditions and be provided with education on assessment/treatment interventions to reduce atypical sensory/motor skills that impact long-term developmental skill attainment. This course will be focused on skill development for infants term corrected (37 weeks) to 3 months (corrected or chronological age). **IMPORTANT! Participants are asked to bring a soft body doll, ideally 12-15" long, but any size would be appropriate.**

Learning Objectives

- Identify three co-morbidities of prematurity and their impact on feeding/motor/sensory development for the infant
- Assess infant alignment and musculoskeletal maturation to promote typical motor control for functional tasks
- Apply two treatment strategies with positioning and handling using the provided case study

Audience

OTs, PTs and SLPs working with infants as they transition out of the NICU to home or have prolonged hospitalization beyond term equivalent.

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Schedule – Day 1 9:40 am to 6:00 pm EST (US)

8:40-9:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens

9:00-9:45 **LECTURE: Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Practices**

- Classifications of prematurity
- Medical practices
- Neurodevelopmental care
- Co-morbidities of prematurity including musculoskeletal vulnerability and low tone progression
- Outcomes
- Term infant admissions and outcomes

9:45-10:15 **Transition to Home**

- Sensory Considerations for the infant
- Trauma Informed Care
- Attachment and bonding
- Infant driven movement with progression to play

10:15-11:00 **LECTURE: Bronchopulmonary dysplasia**

Pathophysiology

- Impact on musculoskeletal alignment
- Chest wall development
- Airway stabilization
- Weaning off O2, medications, fluid management
- Breathing Assessment

11:00-11:15 **BREAK**

11:15-12:10 **LAB: Bronchopulmonary dysplasia**

LAB:

- Segmental spinal control
- Abdominal facilitation
- Pectoralis facilitation
- Diaphragm facilitation

LAB: Oral motor and oral feeding

- Facilitation of latch and seal
- Oral Feeding assessment:
  - Positioning during feeding
  - Equipment selection
  - Gastric decompression

12:10-12:25 **LECTURE: Necrotizing Enterocolitis**

- Pathophysiology
- Impact on development
- Assessment
  - Perforation
  - Stricture risk
  - Abdominal contractures, poor GI motility, weaning of stool agents
  - Advancement medical considerations for Intestinal Failure

12:25-12:45 **LAB: NEC**

- Scar assessment (global application) and treatment (silicone, pressure)
- Stool facilitation
- Pelvic alignment

12:45-1:15 **LAB: NEC and Oral feeding**

- Oral Motor interventions
- Oral Feeding Assessment:
  - Positioning
  - Feeding equipment
  - Techniques

1:15-1:45 **LUNCH BREAK**

1:45-2:15 **Updates in Evidence**

2:15-2:30 **Musculoskeletal Impact of Prematurity**

- Muscle maturation
- Metabolic Bone Disease

2:30-3:00 **LECTURE: Sensory Maturation**

- Visual Developmental: impact of ROP and treatment considerations
- Vestibular maturation beyond term
- Tactile maturation
- Olfactory/Auditory
- Multi-modal sensory impact on development

3:00-3:45 LECTURE: Neurological System

- IVH, PVL, post-hemorrhagic encephalopathy
- HIE

3:45-4:00 **BREAK**

4:00-4:25 **LAB**

- Upper extremity weight bearing
- Rolling facilitation
- Lower extremity weight shifting
- Head righting facilitation (cervical segmental control)

4:25-4:55 **LAB: Oral Feeding**

- Oral Motor Interventions
- Oral Feeding assessment and treatment
  - Positioning
  - Equipment selection
  - Techniques

4:55-6:00 **NAS and NOWS: Lecture and Lab**

- Pathophysiology
- Assessment: sensory, motor, tone, state regulation, state transitions
- **LAB**:
  - Posterior pelvic tilt with head to heal rocking
  - Paired vestibular and tactile input
  - Frontalis lift, hard palate input, traction during NNS for increased lip seal strength
- **LAB: Oral Feeding Assessment**
  - Oral motor
  - Positioning
  - Feeding equipment

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Live Webinar

October 25 and 27, 2027
8:40 am EST • 7:40 am CST • 6:40 am MST • 5:40 am PST (US)
Registration is for both sessions. Log-in instructions and course materials will be emailed/added to your ERI account 5-7 days prior to the first date of the course.

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WEBINAR: Beyond NICU Graduation: The Impact of Prematurity on Early Infant Development-Holly Schifsky

❑ October 25 and 27, 2027

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