THE PRACTISING MIDWIFE

Blog

Description



Introduction

My Career spans 10 years as a midwife where I have worked across all areas of maternity. I now work predominantly in antenatal care. Prior to being a midwife, I worked as cabin crew for 12 years, for various airlines. As cabin crew we had preflight briefings before every flight. During the briefings we would be asked questions in relation to potential scenarios

or emergencies that could occur. This was to ensure our safety and emergency knowledge was to the required standard and to prepare us for any eventuality that may occur. I had often thought how this could be adapted as a useful tool to be used within our handovers within maternity. In recent years as midwives, we have had human factor training which is directly from the airline industry which made me consider this further.

The "two minute what if"?

I came up with the "two minute what if"? inspired from my time working in the airline industry. The "two-minute what if"? is a quick refresher/ recap delivered at handover where the team of the day working in that specific area discuss a potential scenario relevant to those being cared for that day. It is carried out following staff handover on each shift. The sessions are always delivered in a way where colleagues should feel comfortable. It is never to catch anyone out and nobody should ever feel put on the spot. The short session starts with a definition; we then talk about risk factors for this happening before discussing how we would manage it. Once completed we then discuss any questions that arose.

We participate in PROMPT (practical obstetric multi professional training) which is an evidence-based, multi-disciplinary training program aimed at improving safety and outcomes in maternity care once a year, but this only enables us to visit a few topics. The "two-minute what if?" enables us to visit different scenarios more frequently. Some scenarios we have discussed are for example maternal collapse, sepsis, hypoglycaemia, missing baby, eclampsia, anaphylaxis and antepartum haemorrhage. The aim being to build confidence and cement learning. It also enhances teamwork in the management of emergency situations due to the team feeling prepared to manage any potential emergency on shift

How did I go about implementing "the two-minute what if?" in maternity?

I started delivering sessions at handover on the antenatal ward and then I recruited "2 minute what if?" champions to ensure the sessions were delivered when I was not working. I had badges made to give them which also raised its profile as they were visibly seen and recognised as champions.

What is the benefit to the NHS?

In a time when the NHS is struggling financially and looking for ways to improve and be more resourceful. The "two-minute what if?" is something that costs nothing to implement and the benefits are huge in relation to improved knowledge safety, skills and potentially health outcomes.

I believe the "two-minute what if?" could be a transferable tool that could be used in many areas of healthcare, such as nursing as-well as other work sectors.

Conclusion

The "two minute what if"? Is a simple innovation geared to boosting confidence, cementing learning and improved team readiness in managing emergency situations within maternity units. PROMPT is only once a year this enables us to visit topics more frequently, refreshing skills and knowledge potentially leading to better outcomes. This matters as with midwives working in different areas rotating in and out of community they can feel a dip in confidence on their return. The innovation aligns perfectly with handover without adding extra pressure to the workload. With health budgets struggling this costs nothing to implement only a couple of minutes of time leading to huge benefits not just for the workforce but also potentially the women and families we look after.

Feedback from "the two-minute what if?"

"For a junior member of the team it is extremely reassuring to have a plan in the morning fresh in your head if emergencies happen, for specific women on the ward"

"The "two-minute what if"? in the mornings is a great grounding exercise and really helps to touch base with the team for the day. Every shift is unpredictable and the two-minute what if can really help you feel prepared to face the day ahead." (Midwife)

“I think the “two-minute what ifs?” done by Michelle are very educational and keep us in touch with topics we would not normally visit on a regular basis amazing”. (Midwife)

“The two-minute what if is such a helpful tool it is a fantastic way to ensure safety in areas of learning and knowledge that may not be a common thing to come across. As a student it has been very helpful to get the shift started with thinking about potential scenarios and after having long periods of time in other areas as-well as university it is a fantastic way to get me thinking and find things to expand my knowledge. The “two-minute what if?” is a brilliant thing to do and it should be done across all maternity settings.”

“The “Two minute what if”? Is a good way to learn new things as a maternity support worker which otherwise would not be explained to me. It gives me the confidence how to behave in an emergency situation and it brings the team together. It is very educational and informative”.

“The “two minute what if”? Is a great way of collaborating as a team to consolidate our knowledge of emergency situations. It provides great learning opportunities for staff and students”. (Midwife)

“Really valuable can be very spontaneous and related to the workload of the day”.(Midwife)

Category

1. All4Maternity Blog

Tags

1. 2025
2. innovation
3. safety
4. training

Date Created
2nd December 2025