

Description

Meet Mymidwives UK

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Summary

This four-part series explores the joys and challenges of the independent midwifery career pathway. Independent Midwives (IMs) are private midwives who provide gold-standard midwifery care to women/birthing people. In our inaugural article, Georgia Allan and Sheridan Thomas of MyMidwives UK discuss their journey, their roles as professional midwifery advocates (PMAs) and their ambition to reduce racial disparities within maternity care with their innovative My Midwives Initiative.

The birth of MyMidwives UK

We started our midwifery careers working in an NHS continuity of care (CoC) model where we saw first hand the trusting midwife-family bond caseloading midwifery can promote.[1] After the service closed in 2019, we felt called to continue providing a caseloading model of care and launched MyMidwives UK. As IMs we passionately advocate for informed choice and provide evidence-based, individualised care in each family's home. These unhurried, undisturbed appointments allow us to provide holistic care tailored to the needs of each family. However, access to an IM is not an option for all families, and as part of our commitment to empowering individuals to have autonomy and agency over their care, we create educational content, shared via our social media platforms.

The professional midwifery advocate

> Midwifery is emotionally demanding work with ever increasing pressures.

PMAs promote working cultures that prioritise staff mental health and improve midwifery care by providing support and encouraging reflective practice.[2,3] PMA-facilitated restorative supervision provides opportunities to improve the quality of care while safeguarding psychological wellbeing during discussions.

The MyMidwives Initiative

As student midwives, we witnessed care that was, at times, culturally insensitive and influenced by racial stereotypes. It became clear that midwives need access to reflective processes exploring cultural sensitivity and the lived experiences

of Black and brown women accessing maternity care. So as part of the dissertation for our master's degree, we explored health inequalities and developed the MyMidwives Initiative (MMI): workshops structured around restorative circles, which promote culturally safe practice by encouraging midwives to reflect upon any potential conscious or unconscious biases that may affect their practice. Discussing race can be a triggering process – as PMAs, we are uniquely placed to promote psychological safety during the workshops.[3]

We facilitate these workshops in our own time alongside our role as IMs. To support sustainability and widen our offering of subsidised workshops, we partnered with a local business to create our myNOIR candles, the sales of which fund our workshops. We aim to bring the workshops to as many UK universities and hospitals as possible. If you would like to host a workshop at your university, please contact us at: *in**@**********co.uk*. **TSM**



References

1. My Midwives UK. MyMidwives. https://www.mymidwives.co.uk/. Published 2020. Accessed August 17, 2020.
2. NHS England. A-EQUIP: A model of clinical midwifery supervision. London: NHS England; 2017.
3. Hunter B. Mapping the emotional terrain of midwifery: what can we see and what lies ahead? International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion. 2010;3(3):253-269.

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