Description

The Positive Midwifery Project

Patricia Alexander (she/her) – Student Midwife

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Introduction



Pat Alexander, Student Midwife

Juliet Rayment has been the driving force behind 'The Positive Midwifery Project' – a six-month-long research project focussed on nurturing and supporting student midwives to build relationships with birthing people, families, and colleagues while on practical placements. Taking a secondment from her work with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Juliet gathered two cohorts of student midwives – first and third-year students. Feedback from the students highlighted areas that require improvement to enable students to be able to achieve to their full potential. The project culminated with an in-person workshop for interested individuals to discuss these outcomes and identify ways in which they could be implemented in practice.

Keeping 'the spark' alive!

When Charlotte Appleton and I were given the opportunity to attend the workshop as representatives of the Editorial Advisory Board of All4Maternity's The Student Midwife journal, we both jumped at the chance. As second-year students, we were feeling the increasing pressure that we applied to ourselves to be more knowledgeable and confident than our current level of study. Needing a boost, we hoped that contributing to this workshop could reignite the love we have for midwifery and instigate changes for student midwives of the future. We were not disappointed and, after a fabulous day meeting like-minded students, midwives, and educators, we left feeling respected, understood and most importantly, supported.

In her research with students, Juliet Rayment and The Positive Midwifery Project questioned what is 'the spark' around midwifery that promotes student engagement, what keeps that spark alive, and what they feel makes a midwife. Students stressed the importance of gaining experience in practical placements that would not only embed their academic learning but also build on their current level of confidence and skills. Additionally, results from The Positive Midwifery Project showed that student midwives develop their midwifery identity based on their experiences in practical placements. Students may initially feel connected to one area of midwifery, but after experiencing some time in an alternative field, they can feel differently; this demonstrates the importance of gaining experience in all areas of midwifery.

More feedback from practice placements

Students reported on how the MORA (Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement) is time consuming and can be difficult to navigate for practice supervisors, particularly now that it is primarily online. The lack of continuity with practice supervisors and the ability to gain feedback was highlighted as an issue, with the suggestion that students be able to give feedback on their practice supervisors. It was noted that in some trusts, students can formally praise practice supervisors who have been particularly supportive and empowering.

What now? How can you get involved?



Meeting in London for The Positive Midwifery Project

Giving students this voice was just a starting point for the project, Juliet acknowledged that there was far more to be done to move it forward. Members of the workshop were asked to contribute ideas and experiences from their own

trusts that support the ethos and values of the project. Towards the end of the workshop, participants split into sub-groups and presented ideas for how to expand, strengthen and move the project forward. The room was alive with positivity and the belief that change can happen to make the student midwife journey a positive one.

Following the event, the project has been renamed as ‘The Positive Midwifery Movement’ and a landing page can be found here: Positive Midwifery Movement | Planting Seeds of Hope. Support is needed to spread the word and allow the campaign to grow. We would love to hear from anybody who would like to become involved – Please get in touch at he***@**********nt.com

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