

Description

#Tips4StudentMidwives

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As we bid farewell and congratulate our previous Future Midwife team (Ali, Charlene and Ruth) who have recently collaborators @Alithemidwife and to curate this blog and have already begun tore. This month you are in for a treat as ion together into this brilliant blog.



It's September, which means back to school if you're a student midwife! This can be exciting, stressful and daunting for even the most seasoned third-year student. For brand new student midwives, starting the course is often a huge welter of different emotions – excitement, nerves, joy, stress and fear. Just remember you're not alone in this! Recently, Sheena Byrom asked the twitter community for their top tips for new student midwives just starting their course, and naturally, twitter did not disappoint.



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There is no doubt about it, a degree in midwifery can be very challenging. There is a lot to learn in a short space of time and having your time split between university and placement can be tough. It often involves long hours and a need to be very organised to make sure competing demands and deadlines don't get on top of you. A lot of student midwives also have their own families and many have to work in paid jobs to support themselves through university. Organisation is key for any student midwife. Some tips to keep on top of everything include:

Practical tip: buy a small blank A-Z address book, use it add practice points to remember e.g. P – positions for labour off the bed, B – blood bottles colour code or under W – waterbirth temp of pool. – **Hannah (@bloodtobaby)**

Love the scribzee app for keeping handwritten notes in order! – **Naomi (@NaomiODonovan)**

If studying with children, what helped mine was having a monthly planner blackboard with my work hours, who was taking & picking them up from school, what activities they had etc. Keeping them aware of what's going on really helped them, which also makes a difference to me. – **Jennie (@JennieBMorris)**

The amount of work is daunting. For me, it helps to try to do an hour of work every day. That's it! Just an hour (although some days I definitely do more, and other days I do NONE). But an hr/ day feels achievable, and helps me chip away at the to-do list bit by bit. #slowandsteady – **Ali (@AlitheMidwife)**

I'm no longer a student midwife but when I was I had a 3 year old and a 10 month old to care for so "reading days" really were reading days and I spent every Monday evening at my parents doing coursework – it's hard work but it's sooooo worth it. X – **Nicola (@wenlock_nicola)**



ınised don't leave work until the last minute nd most importantly enjoy it ? –

So you're all organised, you're working hard, you've got a routine down and you look around and start to think everyone else is doing so much better than you. Don't listen to that voice! Don't compare yourself to others, everyone learns and develops at a different pace and while you might be struggling with one topic or skill, you can bet you'll be doing better at something else. Taking opportunities to get involved with midwifery beyond your coursework and placements can help you feel connected to what you are learning and will help fuel your passion. Get involved with your university midwifery society, go to a conference or study day, volunteer at a PROMPT course, submit a reflection or an article to a midwifery magazine or journal (or The Future Midwife Blog!), get involved in a tweet chat and say yes to opportunities that come your way. You won't regret it!

Simply "being with woman" … (and baby). This may mean sitting in the corner "doing nothing" or spending hours on end "back rubbing". It is whatever it takes….. Supporting the support persons….. As they are choosen [sic] ones…. Nudge them along the road…. – **Teresa (@tmccreery33)**

Don't compare yourself to others, work hard, try ur best – there's nothing more you can do! take every opportunity when on placement! Also remember make time for you to still be u – u can be an amazing midwife and still have time for yourself <3 enjoy every minute. Stay positive! – **Josey (@josey1986x)**

Everyone has their own journey to follow. Do not compare yourself to any of your fellow cohort – we all learn different things at different times –

Jennifer (@oxytocinmagic)

It's hugely overwhelming & took me a while to adapt, but stick at it! Ask all the questions you can, revise A&P a little every day & remember to be yourself – that's how you got a place on the course & that's why everyone will love you! –



While we just recommended you take opportunities and jump in feet first, we also want to caution you to take some time out, look after yourself and not feel guilty for doing it. The saying goes that you get out what you put in and this is as true of a midwifery degree as it is of anything else. However, if we don't look after ourselves how can we be expected to look after others? Caring for others places a demand on you and you must listen to your body and look after yourself. It's not surprising that a number of the people who tweeted with their tips urged you to be kind and patient with yourself, to take the time you need, to do something just for you, to not be afraid to ask for help and to use the support around you. Remember, self care is not selfish!

Take every opportunity and learning experience. Equally, know when you need to take some time for yourself and don't feel bad for doing so, it's a very challenging yet rewarding degree – **Cara (@studentmidwifeC)**

Be ridiculously kind to yourself, I mean it. The degree is so hard at times, and you're stretched in ways you never thought you would be. I highly recommend doing some sort of physical activity as 'me time. –
Claire (@Sunnydownlane)

Oh, also, don't underestimate the power of having a nice lunch to look forward to on shift. I once spent a whole shift telling everyone about my Mum in laws Chicken basque. That was such a great shift ?. – **Claire (@Sunnydownlane)**

Taking your first year slowly and being kind to yourself and give yourself time – you won't have seen most of what you experience in your first year before, it's scary stuff and you'll shake and be all fingers and thumbs, but you're a novice, and you're awesome ? Don't hold back. – **Charlene (@CharleneSTMW)**

Don't leave things until last minute, put time aside for self care, ask for help if you need it, no question is stupid if you don't know the answer, get involved with your Midwifery Society but most importantly enjoy it as it goes soooo quickly x –
Hayley (@Haylessav)

Remember you are just starting out and you're not expected to know everything! Listen to your mentors, lecturers and most importantly, the women, they all have great knowledge to share

? *Be kind to your peers and support each other* – **Simone (@simoneSTMW)**

Get good support around you and don't worry that it's all a bit daunting and brand new to start off with. Talk to your family, your friends, your colleagues and your mentors. Don't underestimate the power of discussing a situation or experience out loud! – **Kate (@midwifekate1)**

Be strong willed, work your socks off, ask for help when you need it, and never undervalue the love for your colleagues and a cup of tea. – **Eleanor (@ElleKate_Allen)**

I was told that before the course you needed to explain to your friends, family and loved ones that you wouldn't be there for the next three years. You might be there in person but you would always mentally be elsewhere. But that at the end of it you'd be back, and better. So true! – **Sarah (@sarahjoyowen)**

Talk to your cohort, I can guarantee that doubt, fear, isolation, confusion etc. that you're feeling will be being experienced by them too. Make friends with other students in different years – they will help guide you in the best way. And remember it's all learning x – **Sarah (@sarahjoyowen)**

Find your tribe. I ended up in a FB messenger group with members of my cohort when we had seminar prep to do but *a vital space to celebrate, commiserate*



The midwifery degree is going to challenge you, it is meant to. As the art of reflective practice becomes easier, you may find you use these skills to help you learn more about yourself in all areas of your life – sometimes this can involve reconciling difficult feelings and behaviours. But it will be enlightening in the long run.

We hope that you have taken some useful tips from this post. The ones we would like to leave you with are the ones that

urge you to stay positive, to find the joy in what you are doing, to remember why you want to be a midwife and most importantly the ones that remind you to enjoy yourself!

Try to stay positive, there are going to be tough times but the wonderful, brilliant bits should outshine those and if not then find your tribe and tell them how you feel. We don't need to do everything by ourselves, use the support you have around you. #inittogether – **Mhairi (@MhairiMcLellan)**

Enjoy the highs, take care of yourself on the low days and learn from the challenges. Whatever happens always remember the reason you chose midwifery <3 #bestjobintheworld #beproud – **Clare (@WorganC)**

Hold on to the reason why you wanted to be a MW in the first place. Write it down, make a pin-board or collage, draw a picture and come back to it again and again. That's your spark! Cup your hands around it, guard it, feed it, don't let anyone blow it out! – **Ali (@AlitheMidwife)**

When I reflect on my time as a student I feel I have let my nerves hold me back, preventing me from enjoying myself. It's only now with 6 weeks left that I am truly enjoying it. My top tip, turn nerves into excitement. Use year one to experience as much as possible and ENJOY IT! – **Hollie (@HollieJo_Ann)**

We also recommend that if you are not already on Twitter you should join! Social media is a fantastic way to connect with others, share information and to find your tribe. When using Twitter, hashtags are important to help people find your tweets. Follow others and see what they are tweeting about and don't be scared to jump in and start chatting. Remember to keep it professional and always follow the Nursing and Midwifery Council's guidance for using social media responsibly (NMC 2017). A good tip is to keep personal and professional accounts separate and to keep your personal account private/locked. Make your professional accounts public and that way people will find you easily.

As a new student, you also might consider subscribing to a midwifery journal, or joining a professional organisation, such as The Royal College of Midwives. Many journals have student rates– The Practising Midwife included –and journals are a great way to keep abreast of current midwifery research and news, as well as finding inspiration and greater insight on relevant topics. We are naturally a bit biased, but we think TPM is a great resource for Future Midwives!

Finally we would also like to link to a fantastic blog called Welcome to Midwifery by Kate Ashforth. She very eloquently discusses why you should treat your midwifery degree like a three year job interview and offers a wealth of insights and advice for new (and not so new) student midwives.

We would love to hear from other student midwives and student midwives-to-be, what are your tips, your hopes, your fears for your degree or your career?

Leave us a comment below and find us on Twitter @AlitheMidwife and @MhairiMcLellan.

Ali and Mhairi x

References

Nursing and Midwifery Council, (2017). *Guidance on using social media responsibly.* London: NMC.

Category

1. All4Maternity Blog
2. Student Midwife Blog

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1. student midwives

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