

Description

Uplifting Midwives

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Nurturing wellbeing amidst contemporary challenges

There have been numerous reports and recent media coverage about the number of midwives leaving the midwifery profession due to the emotional impact of their work.[1] Internationally, the midwifery workforce is facing a crisis due to the number midwives leaving the profession.[2] However, it is also noted that supporting the health and wellbeing of midwives, especially within the workplace, can have a positive impact on the quality of care they then provide for people in their care.[3]

Sustaining safe staffing: The imperative of midwifery retention

An appropriately staffed midwifery workforce is essential for the provision of safe and high-quality maternity care,[4] and evidence has demonstrated that positive work environments can affect the wellbeing of midwives. Recent reports have given recommendations that organisations must now focus on how to retain midwives through addressing the factors that cause stress in the workplace rather than risk more midwives leaving the profession.[2] It is increasingly recognised that there is a critical need to attend to retention in midwifery in order to develop and maintain safe staffing levels and high-quality care for families.[4]

Caring environments

Aspects of the work environment may impact on emotional wellbeing of midwives.[1] The development of cohesive wellbeing programmes specific to midwifery is recommended to address retention in midwifery. Utilising evidence of successful wellbeing interventions within midwifery is a positive foundation to minimise early attrition from the midwifery profession.[5] Evidence has demonstrated that peer support is particularly important when working in highly stressful and emotionally demanding environments[6] and peer-support programmes can help support midwives and staff when facing challenges in the workplace. It has been established through evidence that peer support has a critical role to play in supporting the wellbeing of healthcare professionals.[6]

Examples of these interventions include workforce wellbeing support, such as use of complementary therapies,[1] and utilising peer support from colleagues within an organisation. Sharing tips for self-care, health and wellbeing and allowing peers to have the space to express their emotions could have a positive effect on the health and wellbeing of midwives, which in turn could positively impact the global issue of midwifery retention and positively impact on the health and wellbeing of the families that midwives care for. **TPM**

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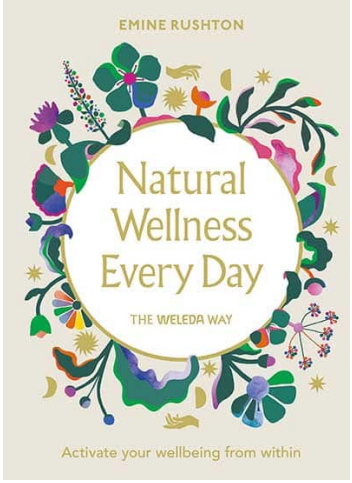

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