

## **PHILOSOPHY OF MIDWIFERY CARE**

Fundamental to midwifery care is respect for the normal, healthy process of pregnancy and childbirth, and for women's power and ability to give birth. Midwifery care promotes, protects and facilitates normal physiologic birth.

Midwives regard pregnancy and childbirth as profound, transformative life events and value the diverse personal and cultural meanings that these events carry for women, families and communities.

The primary focus of midwifery care is on promoting the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies. Midwives give preventative, timely attention to potential problems and use medical technologies judiciously and appropriately.

Midwives centre their care on the strengths and needs of the individual woman and her family. Midwifery care combines an understanding of the emotional and psychosocial as well as physical and clinical aspects of pregnancy, childbirth, infant care and parenting.

Midwifery care provides continuity throughout pregnancy, birth and the first weeks postpartum, enabling clients and midwives to build a relationship of mutual understanding and trust. Midwives honour women's wishes to be cared for and attended in labour by known care providers.

Midwives share information and advice in an empowering manner that supports parents' sense of competence and self-confidence. Midwifery visits provide opportunities for open, interactive discussion and education.

Midwives work in partnership with women, so that women can make informed choices and take charge of their health and that of their babies. The woman is regarded as the primary decision-maker in her own care.

Midwives respect the woman's right to choose where and with whom she wishes to give birth and are prepared to provide intrapartum care in hospital and out-of-hospital settings, in accordance with professional standards and the woman's choice.

Midwifery care integrates scientific, research-based knowledge with skill and wisdom derived from clinical experience. Midwives also respect the knowledge women have about their own bodies and lives.

Midwives regard the interests of woman and fetus as compatible and believe that supporting and caring for the woman leads to the best outcomes for both mother and newborn infant.

Midwives believe that all women, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, have a right to the care and support they need to give birth safely, with dignity and joy.

**Adopted by the MRC on July 2, 2009**