

Mentoring in Midwifery

Program Outline

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The NSW Ministry for Health acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands across NSW. We acknowledge that we live and work on Aboriginal lands. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal people.

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Welcome

'You may not know it yet- but you've stepped into some magic! The magic of being alongside others as they grow, the sparkle in their eyes when there is a space to share who they are, what they know and what they are learning. Part of the magic that I couldn't have predicted was the power that learning and connecting together brings, what is predictable and solid are the MiM principles, tools and resources, that are key to the magic happenin.'

(Excerpt from a letter about the program from facilitators in the pilot program of MiM)

This resource has been developed as an introductory guide to the MiM program and was developed in collaboration with sponsors, working group members, and facilitators and participants of the pilot program.

Introduction to the Mentoring in Midwifery (MiM) Program

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The MiM Program has been developed by The Nursing and Midwifery Office (NaMO), NSW Ministry of Health, and is a collaboration with Professor Belinda Dewar and Dr Edel Roddy (Scotland), underpinned by Appreciative Inquiry, Caring Conversations and the Senses Framework. MiM is a workforce initiative developed to attract and retain our midwifery workforce now and into the future.

Our Vision

Our vision is to develop and implement an innovative, sustainable mentoring program that can be embedded into midwifery practice. This program will be transferable across all midwifery training and clinical facilities to become a normal part of midwifery culture in NSW. This program will support the midwifery profession, develop leadership at all levels and help in the retention of a strong, confident, and skilled midwifery workforce.

Our Aim

The overall aim of this program is to develop a reciprocal learning relationship that expands opportunities for connection, learning and growth for midwives and midwifery students.

The program, and associated workshops and resources, have been developed in response to:

- a. Outcomes of the ESME (Exploring Student Midwives Experiences) Study,
- b. Evidence base (ICM Guidelines and other related evidence),
- c. Previous work by the Scottish team in developing positive learning cultures across health and social care and;
- d. Learning from the Mentoring in Midwifery working group, including input from the NSW Midwifery Leaders and Managers network.

Mentoring in Midwifery Program Model

The program is designed around a number of phases aimed at enhancing learning in midwifery through a relationship centred approach. Processes for continuous reflection, learning and feedback are woven into the program. The intended outcome is that mentors and mentees experience a sense of safety, belonging, achievement, significance, purpose and continuity (Senses Framework).

Our Hopes

Hopes for the program are grouped under 3 themes: the program and the approach, relationships, and learning. Hopes within each theme are interwoven with other themes, as the program and approach prioritise relationships which support dynamic, ongoing learning. The intended outcome of the program is that mentors and mentees experience a sense of security, belonging, continuity, achievement, and significance (Senses Framework).

The Program and the Approach

- Understand the structure of the program, including underpinning frameworks, and feel confident about adaptations considering local contexts.
- Develop confidence in using Appreciative Inquiry resources to develop facilitation skills, and help develop relationships, reflection and learning throughout the program.

Relationships

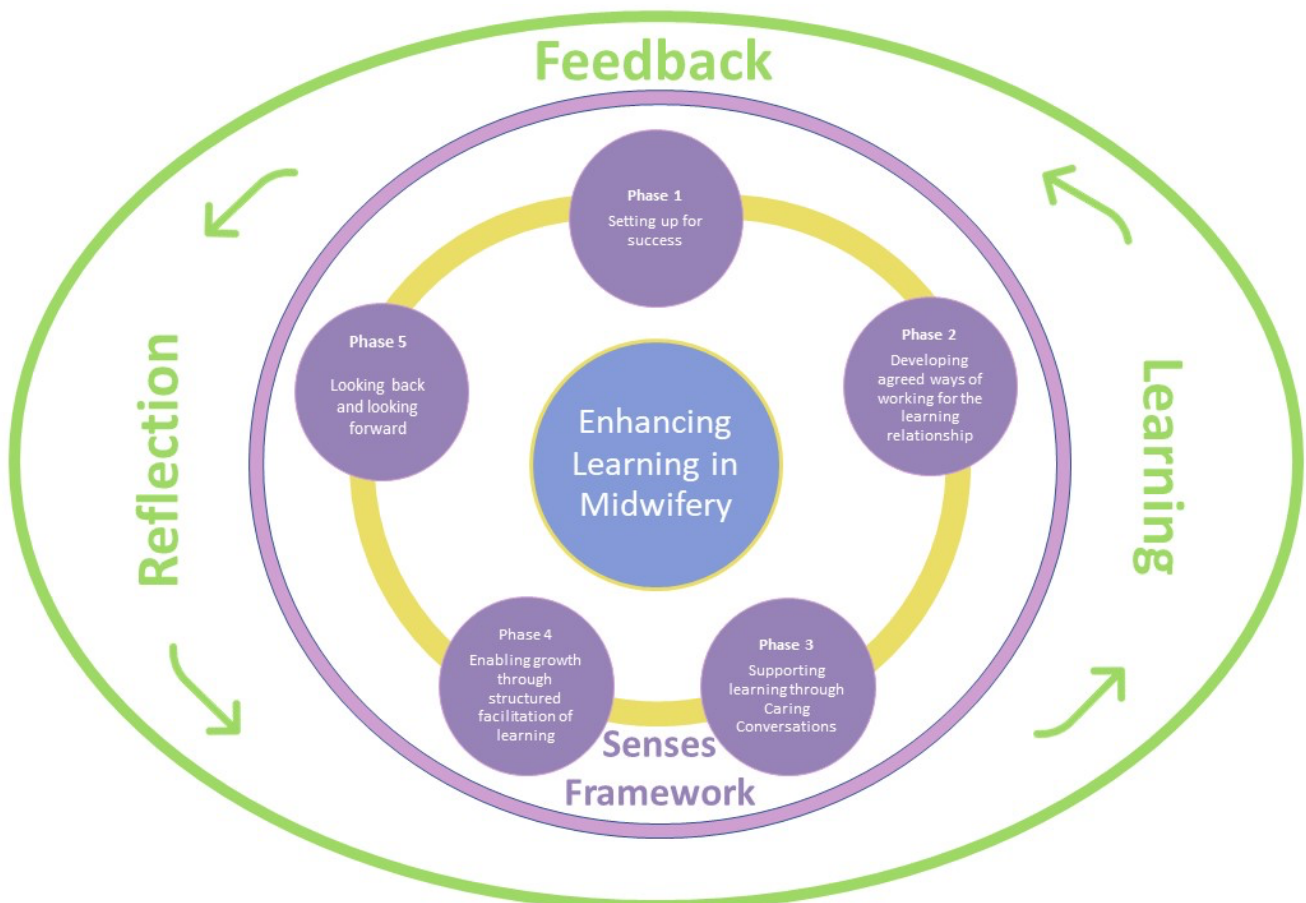
- Work together in ways that help to explore, challenge, and celebrate practices in the midwifery setting through valuing the diverse strengths of all those involved.
- Find out more about what helps to create the Senses (senses of security, belonging, purpose, continuity, achievement, and significance) for those we are working with specific to each local setting.

Learning

- Recognise the value of ongoing dialogue with others to promote learning in action using a framework called Caring Conversations that will support the Senses being enhanced.
- Develop reflective skills, to consider their own experiences of facilitation and learning, ideas about what works, their current skills and their areas of development.
- Deepen understandings about learning in the workplace through being courageous and imaginative in the ways we work, being open to continually learn, develop, and adapt.
- Help ourselves and others to take risks and harness learning from disappointments alongside delights.
- Explore different and creative ways of enabling a blending of different types of knowledge (people's experience, skills, research, policy etc).
- Create conditions where all those involved feel supported and part of a community of practice where learning and development are a key focus.

Program Model

The program is designed around a number of phases aimed at enhancing learning in midwifery through a relationship centred approach. Processes for continuous reflection, learning and feedback are woven into the program.



Underpinning Frameworks

Three frameworks underpin the MiM program; Appreciative Inquiry, Caring Conversations and Senses Framework. Each of these frameworks are inextricably linked within the program design and content. The frameworks all share similar understandings of what it is to be human, what helps relationships to flourish and how continual learning from day-to-day experiences can be realised.

Key Program Elements

1. MiM Facilitator Development and Support-workshops, reflective sessions and shared online discussion platform including 'Nitty-Gritty' and Community of Practice to support the MiM Facilitators in the facilitation and project management aspects of the role.
2. Workshops with Midwife Mentors- 7 workshops over a 12 month period, which align with the 5 phases of the Mentoring in Midwifery Program.
3. Mentoring conversations with midwife mentors and mentees- structured conversations which focus on relationship-building and reciprocal learning- these conversations also align with the 5 phases of the program.

Table 1.0 describes the 5 phases of the program in more detail. These form the basis for the mentor-mentee conversations.

Phases 1-3 are designed to take place in the first 3 meetings between the mentor and mentee, Phase 4 is ongoing with mentor and mentee collaboratively deciding on focus of the conversations, and Phase 5 takes place when the MiM mentoring relationship comes to an end.

Appreciative Inquiry and Caring Conversations are woven throughout all phases of the program. Creative tools and resources, such as Emotional Touchpoints, Visual Inquiry, In the Know, Reflections and Ripples are used to support conversations that encourage and sustain genuine curiosity for selves and others, deeper inquiry, explore values, articulate that which is rarely said, and acknowledge and express emotion.

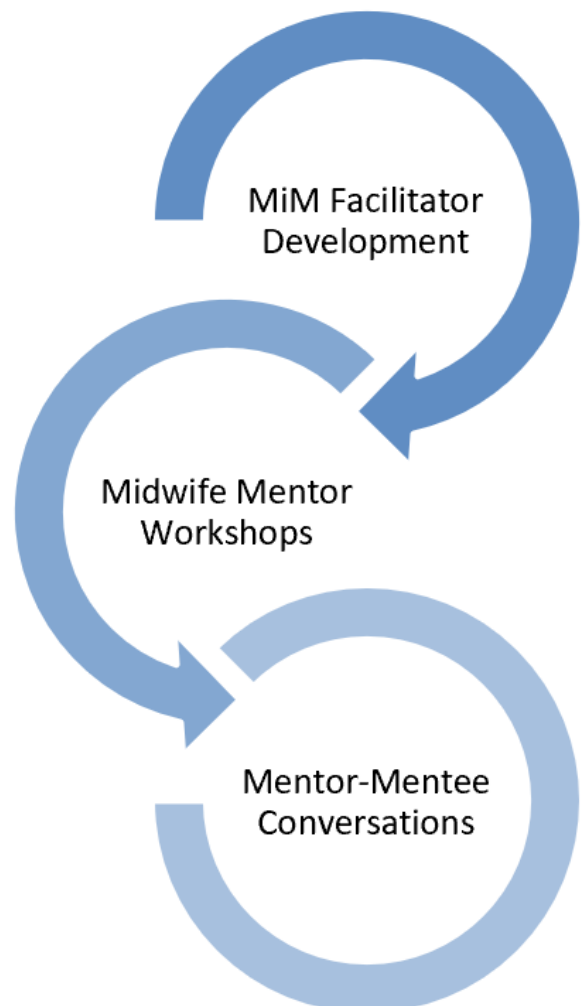
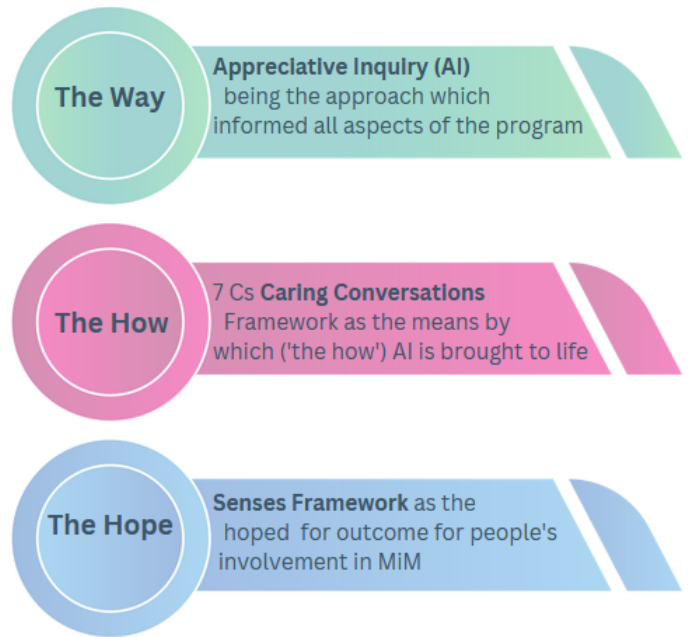


Table 1.0 Phases of Mentoring in Midwifery Program

Phase	Focus	Key Focus
1	Setting up for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know each other • Exploring the mentorship relationship • Exploring our strengths and qualities • Reflection on how we feel about our work so far together
2	Developing Agreed Ways of Working for the learning relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Senses Framework to explore how we feel about each of the senses and what would enhance these for our working relationship together • Developing a shared understanding of what would help the senses to be achieved for us both in the learning relationship • Exploring what we know and getting to know about giving and receiving feedback
3	Supporting learning through Caring Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on developing our curiosity, celebrating and connecting emotionally to support learning in action • Developing further Caring Conversations skills and use of inquiry tools to explore particular topics/issues/ celebrations and curiosities
4	Enabling growth through structured facilitation of learning	<p>Introducing the options for focused learning discussions and experimenting with these focused approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: Reflections and Ripples– primarily individual mentee reflection and learning about a particular curiosity from their practice. • Option 2: LIFE sessions/stories with legs – collaborative learning about a particular practice, story for exploration could be brought by either mentee or mentor. • Option 3: Conversation Cues (Sense-Making) Discussion Cards (from ESME) – collaborative learning about a broader topic.
5	Looking back and looking forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the experience of working together • Exploring what we value in supporting learning in the workplace • Discussing what might support us to continue to develop and grow

Background and Philosophy

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Background to program

The evidence base for the Mentoring in Midwifery Program centres around relationship-centred practice as the underpinning ingredient to promoting learning in the workplace. The program has been developed following the successful Exploring the Student Midwife Experience (ESME) project which was commissioned by NSW Health (Nursing and Midwifery Office), collaborating with University of the West of Scotland, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Research, along with Nepean, St George, Blacktown and John Hunter Hospitals. It aimed to explore how we could improve the experience of student midwives and the staff that support them. A summary of the findings can be found at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/culture/Pages/default.aspx>

The frameworks underpinning the MiM program are relationship centred and are briefly described and illustrated below.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Reed (2007) describes the basic premise of AI as follows:

“it is a simple but radical approach to understanding the social world. Put simply, AI concentrates on exploring ideas that people have about what is valuable in what they do and then tries to work out ways in which this can be built on”.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach that values what is working well and what gives life (rather than on deficits) within an organisation or an experience (for example learning in the workplace) which in turn can open new possibilities and generate new learning. Within AI there is a particular emphasis on the inquiry aspect where inquiry is rooted in hope and being comfortable with not being sure what the end point will be; inquiry that is keen to explore ideas for the future that have not been previously considered. This type of inquiry involves becoming aware of assumptions we make and being open to re-frame or change how we think about ourselves, and the people and world around us.

What is appreciative inquiry? – It’s more than warm fuzzy group hugs...

- Exploring **what works well, what we care about and what matters** to us all using skilled caring conversations and using this as the impetus for development
- A set of core principles that claim to change existing **patterns of everyday conversation and ways of relating**, and give voice to new and diverse perspectives to expand what can be possible



- A focus on language- the principle being that the words we choose to use in our day-to-day interactions have a role in how we shape and experience the world around us.
- A focus on how we imagine the future could be - the principle being that what we focus on, grows, and expands, by daring to imagine and describe what a positive future would look like, and this can help that positive image to be realised.

At the heart of Appreciative Inquiry is:

- A focus on valuing the strengths, expertise and experience that already exists- the principle being that focusing on these aspects helps us to find out more about what is currently working well and what we care about, which then helps this to flourish and grow.
- A focus on being in this together – the principle being adopting a partnership approach where we are in this together rather than ‘working on’ people where we view others as the subjects of our efforts, where people are not involved in planning what the future will hold.

- A focus on the stories we tell- the principle being that the stories we tell about our lives, our relationships, our organisations etc. can inspire and move us. They are not set in stone; we can re-tell these stories in ways which bring about new hope and possibilities.
- A focus on starting with ourselves with the belief that we cannot change others, only ourselves, and through considering this, others may respond differently.
- A focus on the power of asking questions- the principle being that asking curious questions is an action that can potentially bring about new thinking, learning and development.
- A focus on the power of the relationships with ourselves and others with an emphasis on working with rather than on people.

These foci are represented in the 7 Grounding Statements of Appreciative Inquiry illustrated on next page.

Appreciative Inquiry Grounding Statements

What we focus on grows and expands

We are the experts of our own experience,
and one expert among many

Curious questions are an action in themselves

We can't change other people, and by changing ourselves others may
respond differently

Stories are the heart & soul of an organisation and help us to learn
what we care about

Words create worlds

We work with people rather than on people

Caring Conversations

The Caring Conversations framework developed by Dewar (2017) is the HOW of Appreciative Inquiry and Relationship Centred Practice where we work together to encourage and sustain genuine curiosity for ourselves and others, deepen inquiry, explore values, articulate tacit (hidden/not yet conscious) knowledge, and acknowledge and express emotion without dispute or judgement. It also supports a different attitude to risk-taking, devising new approaches to problems and

expanding curiosity about what is possible. Ultimately, it enables people to acknowledge achievements, encourage better listening and so make room for more contributions to enhance quality of learning and development for all.

The '7 Cs' of the Caring Conversations framework is described in the illustration on the next page.

CARING CONVERSATIONS FRAMEWORK

CELEBRATING

Noticing when someone says or does something that moves you, and taking the time to let them know what exactly it was that made an impact, however small.

BECOMING COURAGEOUS

Reminding ourselves of what we do know (or feels solid) to support us in situations that feel uneasy or unknown.

CONNECTING EMOTIONALLY

Giving due credit to our own and others' emotions, and holding back from moving on too quickly from what is being felt.

BECOMING CURIOUS

Being committed to wondering & exploring with others, that goes beyond collecting information or a quick quest for the facts.

CONSIDERING OTHER PERSPECTIVES

Stretching our ideas about the people we could involve, and the methods we might use, to gather different perspectives and opinions.

COLLABORATING

Creating a sense of being in it together, through believing the best of others, and bringing the best of ourselves

COMPROMISING

Being willing to make some adjustments, that might go beyond the obvious options, to open up room to find a way forward together.

Having a Caring Conversation is:

- coming away feeling connected, with a genuine and natural togetherness that goes beyond showing a “slice of niceness”
- coming away with a sense that “they really got what I was saying, they understood the meaning behind my words”
- coming away feeling supported, even when there were hard things spoken about
- ... coming away seeing the possibilities peaking up from behind the problems,
- ... coming away with more questions, and things to explore beyond neat solutions that never quite gel
- coming away feeling surprised rather than stuck, because the conversation has moved things in a new direction
- coming away feeling proud that you took a risk; tried something new to see if it could make a difference

This is what it is like to be part of a Caring Conversation.

What might we be doing during a Caring Conversation?

During a Caring Conversation we are:

- Pausing to give the other person space to speak, and also to let your own thoughts settle
- Tuning in to pick up clues, and find out more about, what it is the other person values and hopes for
- Noticing the moments that feel like ‘we’re in it together’, so that we can help these to happen more of the time
- Sharing in ways which let the person know you’re human too
- Making room for the sharing of emotion, and holding onto the idea that we don’t need to rush to ‘fix’ or brush away emotions that may be uncomfortable
- Checking out with others, during everyday conversation, about what is working well and what we could do together to enhance their experience
- Daring to try to bring our values to life, which might lead us to surprising or stretching ourselves in new directions

Caring conversations are moving conversations: they are conversations that move us, and that help us to move forward, in new and unexpected ways, together.

Having a Caring Conversation (Roddy, Dewar, Cook) MKUH is licenced under CC BY4.0
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Relationship Centred Practice and the Senses Framework

The evidence base for the MiM Program centres around relationship-centred practice as the underpinning ingredient to promoting learning in the workplace and how this can be enhanced through Caring Conversations.

However, if relationships are at the heart of learning and growth, how can we create the conditions by which relationships can flourish? After all, they do not simply happen, they need to be nurtured and developed.

There are techniques that can enable us to create positive relationships with each other and to convey a positive ethos of listening, valuing, support, curiosities, and new insights. The Senses Framework provides clarity about what the outcomes of relationships might be. The Caring Conversations Framework is a helpful framework in supporting us to notch up our communication skills which help create these positive relationships.

The Senses Framework first developed by Nolan et. al (2006) and applied to the context of developing enriched learning experiences among midwifery students and midwives in the ESME program (Dewar et al 2019). The original work by Nolan et. al (2006) proposed that an enriched care environment is achieved through all involved in the care experience (patients, staff, relatives) having a sense of: Security, Belonging, Purpose, Continuity, Achievement and Significance. Through research carried out with midwifery students and midwives, new understanding was generated as to how it looks and feels when each of the Senses are being achieved for individuals and within teams. The Senses Framework as it applies to learning in the midwifery context is illustrated on the next page.

THE SENSES FRAMEWORK

Achieving an enriched caring and learning environment for midwifery students and midwives through the Senses

SENSE OF SECURITY

- a) To feel safe to raise difficulties and sensitive issues in an environment that supports and values these open conversations
- b) To be able to say what you know and what you don't know, knowing that there are people around you to help you develop your knowledge and skills

SENSE OF BELONGING

- a) To have opportunities to develop/ sustain/ enhance your relationships in the team through you & people in the team valuing and showing an interest in one another
- b) To feel you are not alone through being able to confide in people you trust
- c) To feel part of a valued group who share similar values and beliefs which connect you
- d) To feel part of a team where your contribution is recognised and celebrated

SENSE OF PURPOSE

- a) To genuinely understand what you care about, and what matters to you and motivates you in your work
- b) To feel others are actively invested in supporting you in your role now and in your continued development in the future.
- c) To work with others in developing a shared understanding of your purpose, aspirations and a clear sense of what is valued.

SENSE OF CONTINUITY

- a) To experience people being interested in making connections and links to your previous experiences that you can draw on to enhance your skills and strengths
- b) To be part of a team where there is eagerness to build on and further develop existing knowledge and practice
- c) To be supported to hone in on specific skills that you would like to continue to refine and develop

SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

- a) To feel positive about your contribution your ability to make the best use of your skills and experience
- b) To hear feedback from others in real-time that is meaningful to you and that helps you to grow and develop in line with your personal goals
- c) To feel safe and engaged to give feedback to others about what you have noticed and what you value
- d) To be in tune with what is practical and possible for you and others to achieve in any given situation

SENSE OF SIGNIFICANCE

- a) To experience your everyday efforts being noticed and appreciated, knowing that what you do matters
- b) To feel a consistent value being placed on learning and development; everyone being able to share their learning and having opportunities to access new learning
- c) To feel heard by others and to hear others use language that helps you to feel valued and respected
- d) To feel that you have a voice, and that your questions, thoughts and feelings are welcomed

Part of the ESME: Resources for Sense-Able Conversations Pack

Supported by the



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More Information

03

The Mentoring in Midwifery Program and the underpinning frameworks are brought to life through a series of workshops and a range of inquiry tools. The workshops and inquiry tools/resources help to:

- Develop relationships
- Stretch our curiosity muscles
- Develop our learning
- Engage in discussions about what matters and what is possible

For details about program content, please refer to the Mentoring in Midwifery Program Facilitators Guide. For more information about the resources and how to use the tools, please refer to the Mentoring in Midwifery Resource Book..

References

04

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