

Student Midwives' Involvement in Midwifery Care

Genesis Midwives is committed to the growth of midwifery in Ontario. To this end, we believe it is crucial that we participate in the Midwifery Education Programme (MEP). Every midwife at Genesis Midwives was, at one time, a student midwife and therefore we understand the importance of learning in a clinical setting. While you are a client of the practice, you may have the opportunity to meet students working with our practice.

It is important for you to understand how the MEP works and how you can be a valuable part of the students' learning. The MEP is a four year Health Sciences baccalaureate degree offered by Laurentian, McMaster, and Ryerson Universities. In the MEP, students spend approximately 50% of the program "in class" studying subjects such as Women's Studies, Pharmacology, Reproductive Physiology, Research Methods, Critical Appraisal of Research, Social and Cultural Dimensions of Health, Health Promotion.

The other half of the programme is dedicated to one-on-one learning with a midwife preceptor in a clinical setting. This is where you will meet the student midwives. In the clinical placements, students observe midwives at work and assist their preceptor in order to gain the core competencies necessary to become a Registered Midwife.

In order to graduate, students must complete several placements in various health care settings, including working with registered midwives, obstetricians, nurses, and possibly lactation consultants and other health care professionals. These placements give the students the opportunity to demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge they have learned in the classroom.

The MEP is a hands-on learning program - all under the supervision of registered midwives. *No student midwife is ever responsible for your care.* Although the student may appear to be making decisions surrounding your care, it is your primary midwife who is ultimately responsible for your care. Preceptors ask students for their advice as a method of testing their knowledge and ability to directly apply classroom knowledge to real life situations.

The MEP recognizes that one cannot become a midwife simply from reading a book. Learning includes talking with pregnant women, asking for their perspective, constantly checking and rechecking the effectiveness of care. By the time a student midwife graduates from the MEP, she has gained valuable experience and is able to: provide prenatal care; assess labour; offer labour support; give you the most up-to-date information to assist you in making informed decisions; catch babies; monitor postpartum recovery of mom and baby; assess and repair perineal and vaginal tears; assist mothers with breastfeeding; assess the physical well-being of mothers and babies; and much more.

No student learns the above skills all at once. Gradually and gently, she is taken on a journey that starts with observation and learning all that is normal in pregnancy, and

slowly more complex layers are added so that the student can recognize and predict potential problems.

We know that our clients are committed to increasing the number of midwives in Ontario. The Midwifery Education Program helps us to meet this goal. Please consider the importance of including a student midwife in your care. Your midwife is always open to discussing this exciting opportunity. Please talk with her if you have any questions or concerns.