

SO YOU WANT LOCAL MIDWIFERY CARE?

This toolkit is targeted at midwives, administrators, and rural communities that have expressed an interest in rural midwifery practice. Underpinning this toolkit is the belief that our responsibility as health care providers is to meet the needs and desires of birthing women. If women desire midwifery services, we must make rural practice sustainable.

1 PHASE

Planting the seed

The first step is to look at the feasibility of midwifery care in your community. This involves considering whether or not there are enough births to sustain a local midwife, whether or not there is another midwife practicing close by (within one hour of travel time) and how far away the nearest c-section facility is. You need to determine if your community is ready for midwifery care; this often depends on the history of midwives or lay practitioners who may have been practicing.

2 PHASE

What model of care?

In this phase you work with other providers and the community to see how midwives may integrate into local services, for example as a solo practice or working interprofessionally with physicians. Once a model is chosen, an inventory of resources needed to support and sustain the new service needs to be developed and recruitment can start!

3 PHASE

Preparing for midwifery

Once the midwife is hired, begin the process of engagement. If the midwife does not immediately relocate, begin frequent visits to build relationships with other care providers, the extended community (through Elder's Centres in Aboriginal communities, for example) and the referral community. This includes community education geared to meet the unique needs of the local setting.

4 PHASE

Integration

Create a process for acknowledging the new midwife, both ceremonially and practically. Establish a community of midwifery practice to link the midwife to other midwives in the region to create a network of professional support. Establish connections with colleagues in regional and tertiary centers; establish local or regional interdisciplinary Departments of midwifery care and create a plan for quality assurance.

5 PHASE

Sustainability

Build in mechanisms that support a long-term practice: regular time off, Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Professional Development. If experience needs to be sought outside of the community to maintain competence and a base income, where will these communities be? What coverage will be provided when she is away? Build a mechanism for monitor the new service: what are the outcomes for mom's and babe's?

Midwifery Pathways

A FRAMEWORK FOR
SUSTAINABLE RURAL MIDWIFERY

Working Version 1.0