



The Competencies for Entry to the Register of Midwives

Competency One

“The midwife works in partnership with the woman/wāhine throughout the maternity experience.”

Explanation

The word midwife has an inherent meaning of being “with woman”. The midwife acts as a professional companion to promote each woman’s right to empowerment to make informed choices about her pregnancy, birth experience and early parenthood. The midwifery relationship enhances the health and well-being of the woman/wāhine, the baby/tamaiti and their family/whānau. The onus is on the midwife to create a functional partnership. The balance of ‘power’ within the partnership fluctuates but it is always understood that the woman/wāhine has control over her own experience.

Performance Criteria

The midwife:

- 1.1 centres the woman/wāhine¹ as the focus of care
- 1.2 promotes and provides or supports continuity of midwifery care
- 1.3 applies the principles of cultural safety to the midwifery partnership and integrates Tūranga Kaupapa within the midwifery partnership and midwifery practice²
- 1.4 recognises Māori as Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa and honours the principles of partnership, protection and participation as an affirmation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- 1.5 recognises and respects the woman’s/wāhine ethnic, social and cultural context
- 1.6 facilitates, clarifies and encourages the involvement of family/whānau as defined by the woman/wāhine
- 1.7 respects and supports the needs of women/wāhine and their families/whānau to be self determining in promoting their own health and well-being
- 1.8 promotes the understanding that childbirth is a physiological process and a significant life event
- 1.9 communicates effectively with the woman/wāhine and her family/whānau as defined by the woman
- 1.10 provides up to date information and supports the woman/wāhine with informed decision-making
- 1.11 negotiates the midwifery partnership, recognising and respecting the shared responsibilities inherent within
- 1.12 maintains confidentiality and privacy, and
- 1.13 formulates and documents the care plan in partnership with the woman/wāhine

¹ Note: The word “woman” or “wāhine” used throughout includes her baby/tamaiti/partner/family/whānau.

² Tūranga Kaupapa are guidelines for cultural competence developed by Nga Maia o Aotearoa and formally adopted by both the Midwifery Council of New Zealand and the New Zealand College of Midwives. For Midwifery Council standard of cultural competence, as required under s118 of the HPCAA 2003; refer to the Statement on Cultural Competence for Midwives 2011 (www.midwiferycouncil.health.nz).



Competency Two

“The midwife applies comprehensive theoretical and scientific knowledge with the affective and technical skills needed to provide effective and safe midwifery care.”

Explanation

The competent midwife integrates knowledge and understanding, personal, professional and clinical skills, within a legal and ethical framework. The actions of the midwife are directed towards a safe and satisfying outcome. The midwife utilises midwifery skills that facilitate the physiological processes of childbirth and balances these with the judicious use of intervention when appropriate.

Performance Criteria

The midwife:

- 2.1 provides, and is responsible for, midwifery care of the woman/wāhine and her family/whānau during pregnancy, labour, birth and the postnatal period
- 2.2 confirms pregnancy, if necessary; orders and interprets relevant investigative and diagnostic tests, carries out necessary screening procedures, and systematically collects comprehensive information concerning the woman’s/wāhine health and well-being
- 2.3 assesses the health and well-being of the woman/wāhine and her baby/tamaiti throughout pregnancy, recognising any condition which necessitates consultation with, or referral to, another midwife, medical practitioner or other health professional
- 2.4 utilises a range of supportive midwifery skills that facilitate the woman’s/wāhine ability to achieve her natural potential throughout her childbirth experience
- 2.5 attends, supports and regularly assesses the woman/wāhine and her baby/tamaiti and makes appropriate, timely midwifery interventions throughout labour and birth
- 2.6 identifies factors in the woman/wāhine or her baby/tamaiti during labour and birth which indicate the necessity for consultation with, or referral to, another midwife or a specialist medical practitioner
- 2.7 provides and is responsible for midwifery care when a woman’s/wāhine pregnancy, labour, birth or postnatal care, necessitates clinical management by a medical practitioner
- 2.8 recognises and responds to any indication of difficulty and any emergency situation with timely and appropriate intervention, referral and resources
- 2.9 assesses the health and well-being of the newborn and takes all initiatives, including resuscitation, which may be necessary to stabilise the baby/tamaiti
- 2.10 regularly and appropriately assesses the health and well-being of the baby/tamaiti and initiates necessary screening, consultation and/or referral throughout the postnatal period
- 2.11 proactively protects, promotes and supports breastfeeding, reflecting the World Health Organisation’s “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding”



- 2.12 assesses the health and well-being of the woman/wāhine and baby/tamaiti throughout the postnatal period and identifies factors which indicate the necessity for consultation with or referral to another midwife, medical practitioner, or other health practitioner
- 2.13 demonstrates the ability to prescribe, supply and administer medicine, vaccines and immunoglobulins safely and appropriately within the midwife's scope of practice and the relevant legislation
- 2.14 performs a comprehensive end-point assessment of the woman/wāhine and her baby/tamaiti within the six week postnatal period, including contraceptive advice and information about and referral into well woman and well child services, including available breastfeeding support and immunisation advice
- 2.15 shares decision making with the woman/wāhine and documents those decisions
- 2.16 provides accurate and timely written progress notes and relevant documented evidence of all decisions made and midwifery care offered and provided
- 2.17 demonstrates an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of legislation affecting midwifery practice and obstetric nursing
- 2.18 collaborates and co-operates with other health professionals, community groups and agencies when necessary, and
- 2.19 provides the woman/wāhine with clear information about accessing community support agencies that are available to her during pregnancy and to her, the baby/tamaiti and family/whānau, when the midwifery partnership is concluded

Competency Three

“The midwife promotes practices that enhance the health of the woman/wāhine and her family/whānau, and which encourage their participation in her health care.”

Explanation

Midwifery is a primary health service in that it recognises childbirth as a significant and normal life event. The midwife is, therefore, responsible for supporting this process through health promotion, education and information sharing, across all settings.

Performance Criteria

The midwife:

- 3.1 demonstrates the ability to offer formal and informal learning opportunities to the woman/ wāhine and her family/whānau to meet their specific needs
- 3.2 encourages and assists the woman/wāhine and her family/whānau to take responsibility for their health and that of the baby by promoting self-health and healthy life-styles
- 3.3 promotes self-determination for the woman/wāhine and her family/whānau
- 3.4 promotes and encourages exclusive breast feeding as the optimal way of feeding an infant



- 3.5 demonstrates an understanding of the needs of women/wāhine and their families/whānau in relation to infertility, complicated pregnancy, unexpected outcomes, abortion, adoption, loss and grief; and applies this understanding to the care of women and their families/whānau as required
- 3.6 uses and refers to appropriate community agencies and support networks, and
- 3.7 ensures the woman/wāhine has the information about available services to access other health professionals and agencies as appropriate

Competency Four

“The midwife upholds professional midwifery standards and uses professional judgment as a reflective and critical practitioner when providing midwifery care.”

Explanation

As a member of the midwifery profession, the midwife has responsibilities to the profession. The midwife must have the skills to recognise when midwifery practice is safe and satisfactory to the woman/wāhine and her family/whānau.

Performance Criteria

The midwife:

- 4.1 accepts personal accountability to the woman/wāhine, to the midwifery profession, the community, and the Midwifery Council of New Zealand for midwifery practice
- 4.2 recognises the midwife’s role and responsibility for understanding, supporting, and facilitating the physiological processes of pregnancy and childbirth
- 4.3 demonstrates the ability to provide midwifery care on her own professional responsibility throughout pregnancy, labour, birth, and the postnatal period
- 4.4 recognises strengths and limitations in skill, knowledge and experience, and shares or seeks counsel, consults with, or refers to, a relevant resource, other midwives, or other health practitioners
- 4.5 assesses practice in relation to current legislation, the Midwifery Scope of Practice and Competencies for Entry to the Register of Midwives, the Midwifery Council Code of Conduct and the New Zealand College of Midwives’ *“Handbook for Practice”* and *“Code of Ethics”*
- 4.6 directs, supervises, monitors and evaluates the obstetric nursing care provided by registered obstetric nurses, enrolled nurses, registered general nurses or registered comprehensive nurses
- 4.7 participates in Midwifery Standards Review using professionally recognised standards; and reflects on, and integrates, feedback from clients and peers into midwifery practice
- 4.8 recognises own values and beliefs and does not impose them on others
- 4.9 is aware of the impact of gender, race and social policies and politics on women, midwives and the maternity services



- 4.10 demonstrates a commitment to participate in ongoing professional development
- 4.11 participates in cultural competence education and development
- 4.12 assists and supports student midwives in the development of their midwifery knowledge and skills in clinical settings, and
- 4.13 works collegially and communicates effectively with other midwives and health professionals