

**Using Community Engagement Strategy with Students to Transform Midwifery Practice. How Speed Dating for Pregnant Women to Meet Student Midwives @The Family Place enabled connectivity with community groups (Young Parents) and primary maternity services**

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Clinical placement opportunities for student midwives have traditionally been limited to or dominated by institutional acute care settings, such as hospital and clinic environments. While these settings make an important contribution to midwifery education and practice, within these contexts care and communication with women can be episodic and fragmented. In isolation these settings do not provide a holistic framework for primary health care practice or the relational continuity of being “with woman” articulated in national standards, Griffith University meta-values and integrality framework described in The Lancet Midwifery Series for global maternal / newborn health. It is critical to capacity building that students experience clinical placement in a wide range of contexts, including local communities. Furthermore, core requirement of the National Standards for midwifery education mandate each student complete a number Continuity of Care (CoC) follow through experiences with women across the continuum of pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. Students can be challenged by processes to recruit pregnant women for follow through experience. This presentation showcases an innovative, emancipatory teaching and community engagement strategy undertaken by student midwives from Griffith University in partnership with a local early childhood centre, The Family Place.

Initial planning involved a one off ‘community event’ to facilitate introductions between students and women seeking relational continuity for their pregnancy care. These partnerships were enabled by a midwifery curriculum that is focused on building graduate capacity in leadership, citizenship and social justice. These attributes have been shown to support graduate employability and success. The community event – a speed dating morning tea for pregnant women – offered further opportunities for students, women and the community centre.

The strategy facilitated growth and implementation of other innovative community development activities; e.g. planned midwifery antenatal and postnatal outreach from hospital clinic services involving students, and future implementation of young parent groups to link families with other established services offered at the centre.