

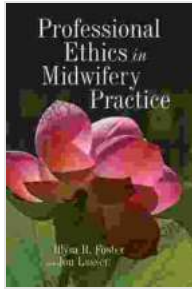
# Professional Ethics in Midwifery Practice: Ensuring Safe and Equitable Care



Midwifery is a profession dedicated to providing care to women and their newborns before, during, and after childbirth. As a healthcare professional, midwives have a crucial role in ensuring the well-being of their clients and adhering to the highest ethical standards in their practice. Understanding and upholding professional ethics is essential for midwives to maintain public trust, foster positive client relationships, and deliver high-quality care that respects the rights and autonomy of individuals.

**Professional Ethics in Midwifery Practice** by Illysa R. Foster

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5



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## Ethical Principles Guiding Midwifery Practice

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) has established ethical principles that guide midwives in their practice. These principles include:

1. **Beneficence:** Acting in the best interests of the client, promoting their well-being, and avoiding harm.
2. **Non-maleficence:** Avoiding actions that could potentially cause harm to the client, including physical, emotional, or psychological distress.
3. **Respect for Autonomy:** Honoring the client's right to make informed decisions about their care, providing them with accurate information, and supporting their choices.
4. **Justice:** Ensuring equitable access to care for all clients, regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors.
5. **Fidelity:** Keeping promises made to clients, maintaining confidentiality, and advocating for their rights and needs.
6. **Veracity:** Providing accurate and truthful information to clients and colleagues, maintaining integrity in communication.

## Ethical Considerations in Midwifery Care

Specific ethical considerations arise frequently in midwifery practice, including:

### **Informed Consent**

Midwives must obtain informed consent from clients before providing any interventions or treatments. This involves providing clear and comprehensive information about the nature of the procedure, potential risks and benefits, and alternatives. Clients must have the opportunity to ask questions and make voluntary choices about their care.

## Informed Disclosure and Consent for Midwifery Care

### Overview

Pregnancy and Children is a profession of emotional, spiritual and physical wellness which has significant meaning to the mother, her family, and her community. Birth is a normal life process and not an illness. The birth process works best when respectful interaction is provided. We believe that it is every woman's responsibility to make the choice regarding all aspects of her healthcare and we believe that process. We is the primary decision maker regarding her care. The choice of professional, unregulated midwifery is one of the most important decisions of midwifery care. Midwifery encourages family centered care.

### Education, Education and Background

- 1998 Certified Nursing Assistant
- 1999 certified, healing touch practitioner
- 2001 Graduate, Utah College of Massage Therapy
- 2000-Current, Regional Birth School, Utah and Arizona
- 2007 Current, Children's Hospital, Occidental
- 2011-2013 Full Time, Midwifery Assistant
- 2011 Current, Adult and Infant CPR, AHA and AHA Resuscitation Professional Certification
- 2011 Current, American Academy of Obstetrics Midwifery Postgraduate Provider
- 2011 Current, National Midwifery Association of Student Midwives
- 2013 Current, American Midwifery Association of North America
- 2014 Current Member, Arizona Association of Midwives
- Current Member, North America Registry of Midwives
- Arizona Department of Health Licensed Midwife, License #AM110000000000000, Current 2016
- North America Certified Professional Midwife, License # 14000011, Feb 2014, Expires 2017

### Services Provided

- Prenatal visits are conducted at a minimum once every 4 weeks until 28 weeks gestation, once every 2 weeks until 36 weeks gestation and once a week until delivery.
- We will provide ongoing written and verbal information and education relating to all aspects of this pregnancy, birth and postpartum care. This includes prenatal, labor/delivery, placental, breastfeeding, any concerns, need for vaccination or transfer of care to a physician, CNM doctor, hospital, and available tests and procedures.
- One prenatal home visit prior to 35 weeks.
- Labor and birth/delivery and initial newborn care at home.
- Postpartum and newborn care/visits which generally occur on day 2 or 3 and day 7 or 10 or 2 weeks post or 3 weeks.
- 24 hour availability to a Midwife

### The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

HIPAA gives you rights regarding your health information. We may use or disclose your health information to provide or help us provide services to you. Examples would be medical consultation, referral, or care, lab or ultrasound orders, etc. We have clients and their families. You have the right to request a copy of your health record, request corrections to your health record, request an accounting of disclosures of your health information, and request that we do not disclose your health information to certain persons. We have not received or received that your records will be used for any other purpose. I understand the requirements regarding my rights.



## Confidentiality

Midwives have an ethical obligation to maintain the privacy of their clients. This includes protecting sensitive information about their medical history, diagnoses, and treatment plans. Confidentiality must be maintained even after the midwifery relationship has ended.

## **Autonomy and Shared Decision-Making**

Midwives respect the autonomy of their clients and involve them in decision-making about their care. They provide information, discuss options, and support clients in making choices that align with their values and preferences. This approach fosters a collaborative and empowering relationship between the midwife and the client.



## **Cultural Sensitivity**

Midwives provide care that is respectful of the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of their clients. They make efforts to understand and incorporate cultural factors into their care plans, ensuring that clients feel comfortable and respected throughout the birthing experience.

## **End-of-Life Care**

Midwives provide holistic care to clients facing end-of-life issues related to pregnancy or childbirth. They work with clients and their families to navigate difficult decisions, provide emotional support, and ensure a dignified and compassionate experience.

## **Ethical Challenges and Decision-Making**

**Ethical challenges can arise in midwifery practice, requiring midwives to carefully consider their responsibilities and make informed decisions. Some common ethical dilemmas include:**

### **Balancing Maternal and Fetal Well-Being**

Midwives have a responsibility to both the mother and the fetus. In situations where their interests conflict, midwives must make decisions that prioritize the well-being of both parties to the extent possible.

### **Conflicting Values**

Midwives may encounter situations where their personal values or beliefs conflict with their professional responsibilities. In these cases, they must seek guidance from ethical principles, discuss the situation with colleagues or supervisors, and make decisions that they believe are ethically sound.

### **Resource Allocation**

Midwives may face challenges in allocating resources equitably, especially in settings where access to care is limited. They must prioritize care for the most vulnerable clients and advocate for policies that promote access to essential healthcare services.

## Editorial: Research ethics: issues for midwives

28 February 2011



evidence  
based  
midwifery

### Editorial: Research ethics: issues for midwives

The four main principles of research ethics for midwives are the same as for any researcher who has contact with human beings: respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice. These ethical principles therefore challenge all researchers to consider the risk of harm to the persons involved in their research endeavour and to do all in their power to reduce or minimise that risk. Evidence Based Midwifery, March 2011

Research ethics: issues for midwives

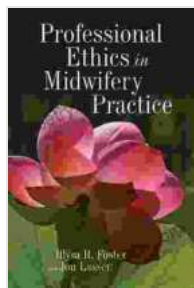
Keywords: Technology; childbirth; doctoral midwifery; research ethics; society; evidence-based midwifery

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However, from a realist perspective, when carrying out research that involves human beings, achieving "informed consent" is recognised as impossible: human subjects research by its very nature can be "sensitive" and every individual is prone to variation in their perception of the benefits, harms and all that lies in between in this context of participation. The four principles of ethical research must therefore always be imposed on the researcher, that is the students, supervisors and sponsors, must be accountable for ensuring that all logical and auditable steps have been taken to demonstrate that their research is ethical, rigorous and commensurate with good ethical practice. In relation to midwifery research, the midwife researcher must, not inappropriately and within the sphere of her role as a research practitioner, protect the rights of the individual woman, do her no harm, obtain informed

Professional ethics are foundational to midwifery practice, guiding midwives in their interactions with clients, colleagues, and the community. By adhering to ethical principles, midwives promote trust, respect, and empowerment for individuals and families. Through ethical decision-making, they ensure that care is provided in a compassionate, evidence-based, and culturally sensitive manner. As the profession of midwifery

continues to evolve, ethical considerations will remain paramount in shaping its practices and ensuring the well-being of women and newborns.



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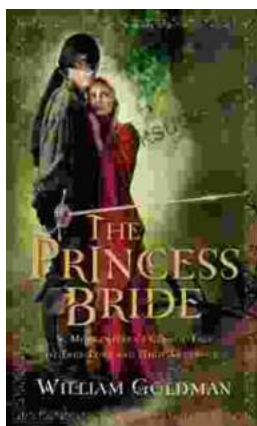
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