**Grief and Self-Care**

National Midwifery Institute, Inc.

Study Group Coursework

*Syllabus*

Description:

This module explores the complex nature of grief and grieving and their intersection with reproduction and pregnancy. It also lays out supports for midwives experiencing grief and stress through their work. It includes recommended reading materials in print and online, and asks students to complete short answer questions for assessment, long answer questions for deeper reflection, and learning activities/projects to deepen your hands-on direct application of key concepts.

Learning Objectives:

* Identify when people may experience grieving.
* Understand the spectrum of grief response and the grieving cycle.
* Identify the transitional time of pregnancy and postpartum as opportunities to further resolve past loss.
* Explore personal experiences of loss and identify specific support helpful in your own grieving.
* Appreciate, through discussion with other midwives, clients, and students, how loss and grieving may affect our families, communities and culture.
* Learn some practical tactics that can support a person’s grieving process.
* Identify community resources for grief support.
* Identify national organizations and local or internet contacts for grief support after pregnancy loss or stillbirth.

Learning Activities:

* Research and read appropriate study sources, seeking out additional study sources where needed
* Complete short answer questions in attached module document for assessment
* Complete long answer questions for deeper reflection in attached module document for assessment
* Complete learning activities listed in attached module document for assessment
  + Create a referral list of therapists, counselors, and alternative practitioners
  + Hold a conversation amongst friends about grief and grieving and measures for self-care and write a reflection piece on the experience
  + Implement at least one self-care practice into your life for one week, and write your reflections
  + Self Awareness Exercise (*optional*)
* Submit work to Study Group Course Coordinator
* Reflect on feedback from Study Group Course Coordinator and re-submit work as needed

Study Sources (print):

The following texts are recommended for completion of this module. Use them to cross reference and build a more comprehensive understanding.

Using keywords from the Learning Objectives, search the index. Read those pages listed, and read the chapter in which they are found. Establish a context for the information so that you understand how other topics are related. In addition, read the chapter headings in the Table of Contents, and flip through each text to familiarize yourself with the content of chapters. As you work through Study Group modules, you will eventually read each text in its entirety.

* Varney’s Midwifery
* Myles Textbook for Midwives
* Heart and Hands, Davis
* On Grief and Grieving, Kubler-Ross
* Trauma Stewardship, van Dernoot Lipsky

Study Sources (online):

See NMI website Grief and Self-Care module web resources section for current online study sources for this module.

Related Modules:

* Cesarean and VBAC
* Anti-Racism in Midwifery
* Ectopic Pregnancy
* Pregnancy Loss: Abortion, Miscarriage, and Stillbirth
* Gender and Sexuality
* Fertility and Conception
* Prenatal Genetic Screening
* Hemorrhage
* Apnea/Hypoxia/Respiratory Distress
* Physical, Sexual, and Other Abuse
* Perinatal Mental Health
* Preterm Labor
* Substance Use and Abuse
* Transporting

Submitting Module for Assessment:

Study Group modules are accepted electronically in PDF format *only*. We encourage you to submit modules as you complete them throughout each quarter of enrollment.

Please e-mail your completed Study Group module to:

Erin Ryan, Study Group Course Work Instructor nmistudygroup@nationalmidwiferyinstitute.com

Once your module has been e-mailed to us, you will receive an e-mail confirmation that we have received it. Study Group modules are reviewed and returned in digital format as PDF documents. Modules can take up to 1 month from submission to be reviewed and returned to you. We will return your module as an e-mail attachment. Each module includes an Evaluation Sheet at the end of the pdf. The module’s page on the student portal also includes a link to a fillable online module evaluation sheet. Please take the time to fill out the module evaluation sheet and return it to us for each module, it helps us to improve our course work.

Please follow these formatting guidelines when submitting modules:

* Your first initial and last name in title of PDF, along with name of module. Example: “ERyanFirstStage.pdf”
* Title of module on the document’s front page
* Your name on the document’s front page
* Provide the text of each question, followed by a blank line and then your thoughtful answer (without the question, you have commentary without context)
* Blank line between the answer for a question and the next question: question, blank line, answer, blank line, question, blank line, answer…
* Please leave margin space for our comments!
* Don’t use script or cursive writing style text
* Font size not smaller than 12
* Credit sources of direct quotes

Completion Requirements and Feedback:

In order to complete this module for graduation purposes from National Midwifery Institute you must review all resources, complete the attached short answer questions for assessment, long answer questions for deeper reflection, and learning activities/projects, and submit them as detailed above. Upon return to you, your coursework may have feedback or ask for additional information or exploration on certain topics. Your work will be evaluated n the following Rubric (pasted below). You must achieve a minimum score of **7.5** in order to move on to your next module, though we encourage all students to strive for a **10.**

|  | **Level 1**  **(0 Points)**  **Not Adequate** | **Level 2**  **(1 Point) Developing Adequacy** | **Level 3**  **(1.5 points)**  **Meets Basic Expectations** | **Level 3**  **(2 points) Exceeds Expectations** | **Student Score** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Completion of module prompts and elements** | -Module not completed | -Major Elements of module are missing | -All aspects of module elements present, with some minor questions unanswered or missing | -All aspects of module elements present and answered completely |  |
| **Demonstrates Comprehension of module content and concepts** | - Lack of comprehension | - Responses are unclear and do not reflect basic comprehension of module concepts | - Responses are clear and reflect basic comprehension of module content and concepts | - Responses are clear, well written, and reflect in-depth comprehension of module content and concepts. Added subpoints and additional reflections demonstrate a deeper knowledge and curiosity. |  |
| **Analysis** | - Key terms not defined | -Inaccurate definitions of key items  -Limited connections made between evidence, subtopics and clinical experience | -Accurate definitions of key items  -Connections made between evidence, subtopics and clinical experience -Incorporation of original ideas and incorporates some clinical experience  in responses where possible | - Accurate definitions of key items  -Strong connections made between evidence, subtopics and clinical experience |  |
| **Evidence** | - No research evidence used | -Research not used  -Research not clearly connected to questions asked in module | -Research is present but limited -Research presented is weak or not relevant to communities served by midwives | -Research is abundant -Research is compelling and relevant to communities served by midwives |  |
| **Engagement with Learning Resources** | -Evident study sources were not utilized | -Evident study sources were partially utilized | -Evident that study sources were fully utilized | -Evident that study sources were fully utilized and independent research was undertaken -Full incorporation of original ideas, personal analysis and incorporates relevant clinical experience in all areas possible |  |

Skills

Following are excerpts from the NMI forms for assessment of midwifery skills, which include all skills identified and required by NARM. Review the following skills and consider how they each relate to the content of this module. If you are currently working with a preceptor, take this opportunity to focus on these areas. During Supervised Primary Care you will formally evaluate these skills together using the NMI forms *Form 52 - Assessment of Student’s Midwifery Skills* and *Form 53 - Student Self-Assessment of Midwifery Skills.*

1. Midwifery Counseling, Education and Communication:

A. Provides interactive support and counseling and/or referral services to the mother regarding her relationships with her significant others and other health care providers B. Provides education, support, counseling and/or referral for the possibility of less-than- optimal pregnancy outcomes

C. Facilitates the mother's decision of where to give birth

1. The advantages and the risks of different birth sites

2. The requirements of the birth site

3. How to prepare, equip and supply birth site

D. Educates the mother concerning the natural physical and emotional processes of pregnancy, labor, birth and postpartum

E. Provides individualized care

F. Advocates for the mother during pregnancy, birth and postpartum

G. Provides education, counseling and/or referral, where appropriate for:

1. Complications

2. Postpartum care concerning complications and self-care

Introductory and Further Thoughts:

*The topics of Grief, Grieving, and Loss are ever-present in midwifery care, experienced by our clients, our communities, and ourselves. Things don’t always go as planned in midwifery and a wide spectrum of experiences can cause disruption and feelings of loss within our work. Too often midwives internalize these losses without processing and community support. Sometimes this internalized grief can add to existing traumas and lead to burnout or needs to step back from our work. It is critical that we as midwives learn not only to care for our clients through unexpected times, but also that we learn to care for ourselves and our midwifery community in sustainable, enriching ways.*

*Self-care is a skill not easily taught, but it starts with reflection and awareness. We hope this module will start the wheels turning for you in anticipation of setting up a self-care system for yourself when you are practicing. Don’t just breeze through this module, really take some time to do these important reflections. It will serve you for years to come.*

*As you work through this module remember the most general definition of grief.*

*Grief is experienced anytime we experience an unexpected outcome.*

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*Short Answer Questions*

**Caring For Clients**

1. Define, for you:

1. grief
2. loss
3. trauma
4. post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

2. From a broad perspective, why might our clients sometimes experience grief and loss while in midwifery care?

3. Kubler-Ross writes extensively about, and researches, grief and grieving. She has opened the door for others to expand and deepen our understanding. Reflect on the Kubler-Ross 5 and 7 Stages of Grief Model.

1. list and describe each stage of grief
2. do you often see these patterns?
3. what might you add or set aside from this model?

4. What patterns have you seen with Grief and Loss in practice? How have clients reacted and moved through their grief?

5. What cultural differences might you observe in terms of processing grief with clients from different backgrounds?

6. How can you support someone experiencing grief?

1. what are your first steps
2. what are your broader steps?

7. Discuss the effect of pregnancy as a catalyst in the grief process. How do the transitional times of pregnancy and postpartum offer opportunities to further resolve past loss?

8. Recall a time you helped or apprenticed as your preceptor helped a client through processing grief and/or loss. Reflect on the loss.

1. what was challenging?
2. what was essential?
3. what was most beneficial?

9. How does your schedule of visits or available time to a client shift when they are experiencing grief and loss?

10. How can you support your clients’ bereavement supporters (partners, family, friends, etc.)?

11. How can supporting others through grief affects us personally. Reflect on a time when you supported someone through grief and loss what did this bring up for you..

**Caring For Ourselves**

12. From a broad perspective, why might we as midwives sometimes experience grief and loss

1. when we are practicing midwifery with clients?
2. in our personal and business lives outside of clients?

13. How does client grief affect you as the midwife?

14. Considering how much client baggage is present in our regular interactions, how do you draw boundaries to protect your emotional and spiritual self?

15. Explore the following terms:

1. compassion fatigue
2. provider burnout
3. secondary trauma
4. vicarious trauma

16. Explore the concept of Trauma Stewardship (Van Dernoot Lipksy).

1. define the concept of Trauma Stewardship
2. define the concept of Trauma Exposure Response
3. list the 16 warning signs of Trauma Exposure Response
4. how do you relate to these concepts?

17. What moves and inspires you?

1. how can you stay connected to these passions while working as a busy Midwife?
2. how might you need to adapt your relationship to these things while working as a busy midwife?

18. Describe the role of the midwifery community around you in supporting midwives experiencing grief and loss, vicarious trauma, burnout etc.

1. who can you call on? When? How?
2. what role may Peer Review play in support?
3. how else might you regularly connect with your community?

19. What does “self-care” mean to you? (this can be written out as one answer but address all the topics)

1. how was this manifested in your life as a student midwife?
2. can you see the need for self-care when working as a midwife?
3. what practices do you engage with to take care of yourself when busy and stressed or grieving?
4. how do you like to be cared for by others? how can you get clear with the support people in your life on your support preferences?

20. What medical or alternative therapies have you engaged with to care your yourself though stress, grief, and loss?

1. how have they worked for you?
2. what else would you like to try and explore?

21. Consider the “Module 3: Coping With Depression: Getting Help” handout in the online resources for this module.

1. while written to give to clients coping with postpartum depression, how may

it’s outlines help midwives as well?

b. in particular, how do you feels about the NEST-S program?

22. Reflect on a time in your student midwifery practice (an acute event or a general time) when you were overworked, traumatized, and/or grieving and you feel you recovered **well.**

1. describe the situation
2. what did you do to take care of yourself?
3. what worked and didn’t work?
4. how did other support you or not support you?
5. what did you learn from the experience?

23. Reflect on a time in your student midwifery practice (an acute event or a general time) when you were overworked, traumatized, and/or grieving and you feel you **did NOT recover well.**

1. describe the situation
2. what did you do to take care of yourself?
3. what worked and didn’t work?
4. how did other support you or not support you?
5. what did you learn from the experience?

24. What did you do today for your own self-care?

Continued …..

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*Projects/Learning Activities*

Projects(send completed projects with the rest of your course work for this module)

25. Create a referral list of counselors and therapists and alternative practitioners in your community who have experience supporting the grief process. Consider finding options for clients and for yourself.

26. Get together with some friends. Have a discussion about grief and grieving. Consider the effects of grieving on family, community, and culture. Also consider the effects of family, community, and culture on the grief process. Please write about the conversation.

27. Identify a self care measure and incorporate it in your life for one week. Write about your experience. How did it feel to be taking care of yourself? Consider what worked and what was challenging.Did you identify barriers to adding self care to your life.

Self Awareness Exercise

This exercise is a private one. You may share it or not. Think of a loss you have suffered. Recall how it was for you, what you did to cope with your emotions. What were your emotions? If you have experienced other losses, explore the differences and similarities in your grieving experience. Write about your experience.