



“The key to unlocking what is in your head” Clinical Supervision for Midwives a Grounded Theory Study



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Background: Clinical supervision (CS) as reported in this study is “Regular protected time for facilitate, in depth reflection on clinical practice”. It has been reported to aid recruitment and retention and decrease burnout by supporting staff in their working relationships and practice. Resources were allocated to training rural midwives in the skills of clinical supervision as a workforce planning strategy to address a predicted midwifery workforce shortage.

The aim of this study was to examine midwives experiences of clinical supervision.

Methods: A qualitative study drawing on Grounded Theory principles was conducted among Northern NSW midwives participating in CS. Midwives were interviewed to about their perceptions of clinical supervision. Data was thematically analysed to explain and interpreted their experiences and to generate a model grounded in this data.

Findings: The study demonstrated a dynamic interrelatedness between clinical supervision, management, midwife, team, clients and the organisation had built over time. Additional findings revealed midwives in this study had misconceptions and lack of knowledge about reflective clinical supervision. Managers felt supported in their role when they provided staff with this place of safe reflection.

Conclusions: Midwives in NNSW LHD confirmed the benefits of clinical supervision related to support, confidence, improved interactions, and best practice. It also contributed to achieving organisational goals of greater clinician engagement, feeling supported and positive team communication.

Midwives needed education to be aware of CS and the support it could offer. Manager’s roles were augmented by incorporating CS into their workplace.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on ‘view completed projects’

Bev has worked across all areas of midwifery for over 25 years, supporting childbearing women and families and is currently a Clinical Midwifery Specialist at The Tweed Hospital. Having experienced the benefits of reflective clinical supervision in her own practice, Bev now gains satisfaction from helping other midwives with this important self care strategy.

