"Our children will have the best start in life and are ready to succeed"

National Outcome, Scottish Government 2007

The experience and outcomes of maternity care and integration of the pregnancy journey with the wider health and social care agenda is important to this vision.

Compassionate Connections is a collaborative project between NHS Education for Scotland and NHS Health Scotland to support the workforce learning and development actions outlined in the Refreshed Framework for Maternity Care in Scotland (Scottish Government 2011) and Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition a Framework for Action (Scottish Government 2011).

The ability to work in a compassionate person centred way is at the heart of the learning and development activities of the project which includes an understanding of inequalities sensitive practice, supporting health behaviour change and using strengths based approaches.

The educational resources developed from the Compassionate Connections Project will support this learning by building on the existing knowledge and skills staff currently have and connecting them with new insights, experiences and understanding.

Compassionate Person Centred Care

In the Compassionate Connections Project we have used the six key themes of compassionate caring identified within the Leadership in Compassionate Care Programme (Edinburgh Napier University and NHS Lothian 2012) as a framework to show how compassionate person centred approaches may be used in everyday work.

The approaches are not performed in isolation; they are interlocking, occurring simultaneously in multiple situations and are universally applicable. In the Compassionate Connections Project we have applied the themes from a maternity care perspective to support the learning outcomes.
Compassionate Person Centred Themes

Work so far…

Implementation Scoping Event – November 2012

Key staff from across Scotland gathered to consider how the Compassionate Connections resources could be used to support learning and development locally. The participants identified the potential to support a broad range of learning and development priorities and the need for national support for local implementation and evaluation. Event evaluation report

Regional Posts

Following the implementation event, NHS Education for Scotland made a successful application to the Scottish Government for appointment of 3 full time, fixed term educational posts to support implementation and evaluation of the resources.

Compassionate Connections Story Worlds

This Learning Resource uses stories, based on the lived experience of maternity care staff and women, as the vehicle for learning. The stories follow two families: a young couple Mairi and Jason; and a teenage mum called Jo, her Nan Effie and her three year old son Ewan.

Each of these Story Worlds shows how a compassionate person centred approach to care affects clinical outcomes as well as the health and well-being of women, babies and their immediate family.

The situations depicted in the Story Worlds are drawn directly from preparatory field work carried out with maternity care staff and women. The Story Worlds are intended to bring the policy landscape to life in a way which is meaningful and engaging for the learner. Each Story World enables the learner to see, hear and feel examples of the key learning points and the learner is guided through a reflective process to meet the learning outcomes.

The Story Worlds are a highly flexible educational resource and in addition to the specific learning outcomes could be used to support a range of learning and development activities:
• topic specific (for example, substance abuse, child protection or gender based violence)
• skills based (for example, raising sensitive issues or leadership)
• policy related (for example the Getting it Right for Every Child approach).

Who are they for?

Developed for the maternity care workforce, the Story Worlds are designed to be used flexibly by maternity care providers for workforce development at operational, managerial and leadership levels. The Story Worlds have resonance beyond maternity care and may be of benefit to a wider workforce involved in the support of women, children and their families.

Serious Gaming – virtual learning environment

Digital Design Studio of Glasgow College of Art has completed a computer based scenario to support the Learning and Development activities in relation to smoking cessation in pregnancy. A small scale evaluation of this resource will be undertaken prior to wider launch.

Raising the Issue of Maternal and Infant Nutrition

Raising the issue of maternal and infant nutrition is a new and interactive elearning module.

Developed by NHS Health Scotland with input from nutrition specialists and workforce representatives, the 1-2 hour module focuses on exploring the baseline knowledge, skills and attitudes required by staff in all settings who have a role to play in raising the issue of maternal and infant nutrition.

Used alongside the Health Behaviour Change (HBC) core skills modules, it aims to enable practitioners to raise and briefly discuss the issue, clarify current guidance on and access a range of resources to help women and their families improve their maternal and infant nutrition.

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Please visit our website for more information on Maternity Care
If you want to subscribe to this Newsletter or would like to give us your feedback please contact us