

# Why consent matters in pregnancy and maternity care

*Hearing the voice of the pregnant person and the role of the midwife*

*Ms. Gráinne Milne,  
Director of Midwifery,  
Louth Hospitals  
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**RCSI HOSPITAL GROUP**  
GRÚPA OSPIDÉAL RCSI

# Content

- ◉ Role of the Midwife
- ◉ Professional Standards
- ◉ Policy and Legislation
- ◉ Hearing the Voice of the Pregnant Person  
(NMES)

# Role of the Midwife

- ◉ Definition
- ◉ Nurses and Midwives Act 2011
- ◉ Uniqueness of the role

# Midwifery Philosophy

*The ethos of midwifery care is to work in partnership with women.*

# Midwifery Values

- The woman is the primary decision-maker in her care and she has the right to information that helps her to make decisions.
- Midwives value empowerment of women to assume responsibility for their health and for the health of their families

# Mothers comments

A mothers guide and support before, during and after delivery of baby

My aunty Mary  
(She's a midwife)

Supportive, helpful,  
always there

Spokes-person  
for mothers

Large woman  
about 50 with  
bun in her hair

Without her I  
would have been  
lost

People that know what  
they are talking about

# Advocate:

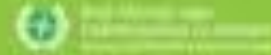
- noun: a person who helps and supports another person and who, if necessary, will act on behalf of the other person.
- verb: to empower a person by supporting them to put forward their views and claim their entitlements and, if necessary, to act as a representative for the other person and negotiate on their behalf.

# Professional Standards

Practice Standards  
for Midwives

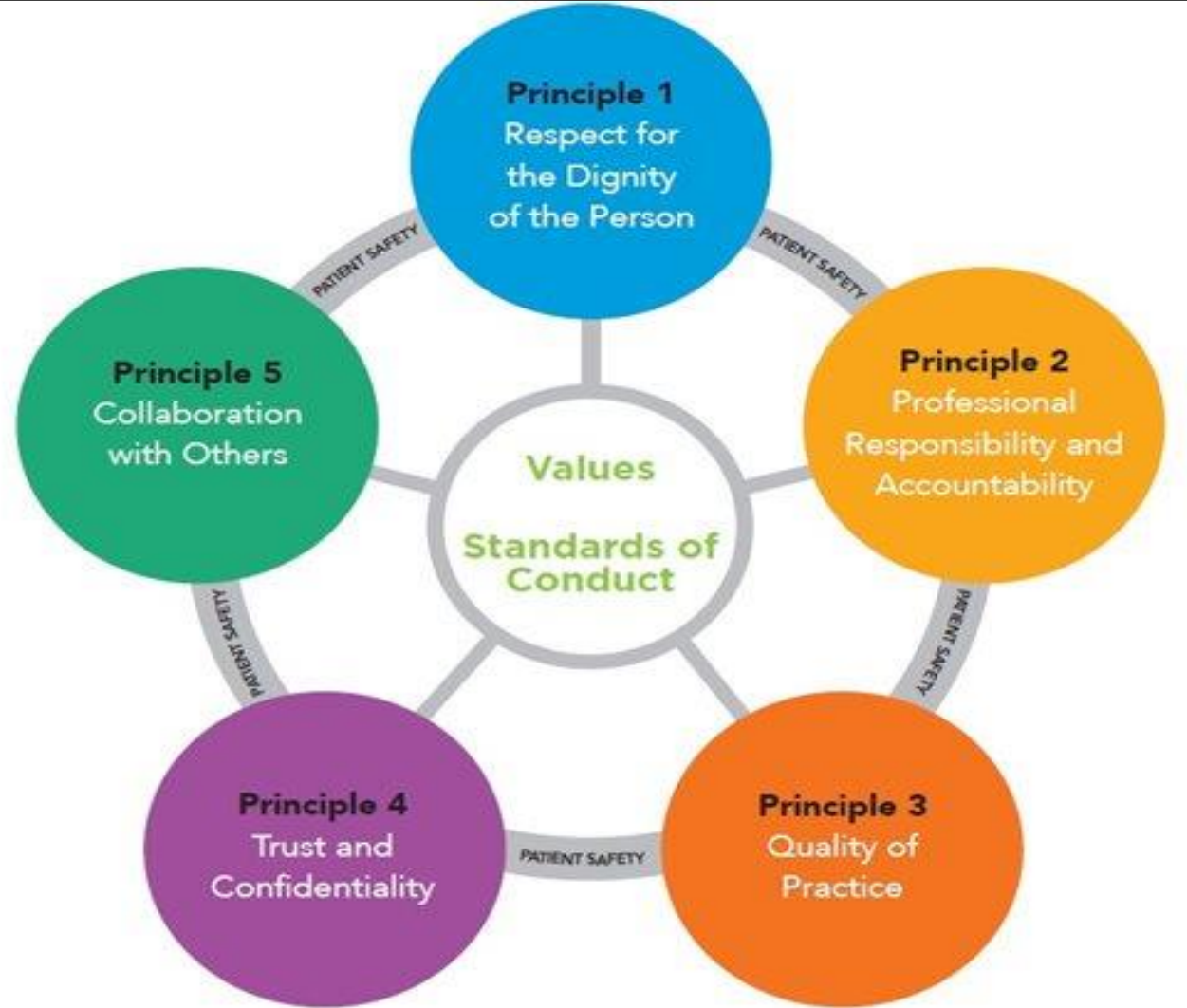
Code of Professional  
Conduct and Ethics  
for Registered  
Nurses and  
Registered  
Midwives

Practice Standards for Midwives 2015, clearly aligned with the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives 2014






CODE OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
CONDUCT AND  
ETHICS FOR NURSES  
AND MIDWIVES



Principles – Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives



**Principle 1**  
Respect for  
the Dignity  
of the Person

Practice Standards for Midwives

- Practice Standard 1: Midwifery practice is underpinned by a philosophy that protects and promotes the safety and autonomy of the woman and respects her experiences, choices, priorities, beliefs and values.

Principles –  
Code of  
Professional  
Conduct and  
Ethics for  
Registered  
Nurses and  
Registered  
Midwives

Practice  
Standards  
for  
Midwives

**Principle 4**  
Trust and  
Confidentiality

- Practice Standard 4:  
Midwives work in equal  
partnership with the  
woman and her family and  
establish a relationship of  
trust and confidentiality.

Principles –  
Code of  
Professional  
Conduct and  
Ethics for  
Registered  
Nurses and  
Registered  
Midwives

Practice  
Standards  
for  
Midwives

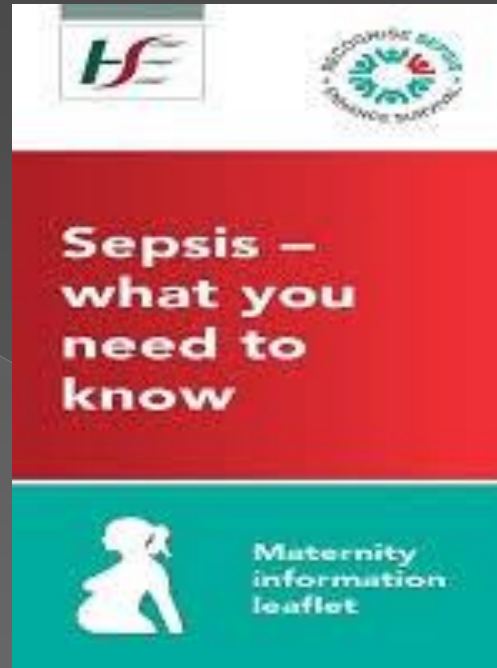
**Principle 5**  
Collaboration  
with Others

- Practice Standard 5:  
Midwives communicate  
and collaborate  
effectively with women,  
women's families and with  
the multidisciplinary  
healthcare team.



# Points to consider for Midwives

- Manner
- Place and time
- Repeating information
- Language
- Visual aids
- Questions
- Support person/ COVID 19



# Consent and Pregnancy

- Service users who are pregnant must have received sufficient information in a manner that is comprehensible to them about the nature, purpose, benefits and risks of an intervention or lack thereof on their health and life. Service users who are pregnant will need to receive sufficient information about the benefits and risks of an intervention or lack thereof on the viability and health of a foetus. They will also need sufficient information on the benefits and risks of an intervention or failure to intervene on the viability and health of the child that will be delivered.

# Examples of consent in pregnancy

- ◉ Booking history and booking bloods
- ◉ Internal examination
- ◉ Abdominal palpation
- ◉ Vital signs
- ◉ Fetal Heart Auscultation
- ◉ CTG
- ◉ Fetal Assessment Scanning
- ◉ Breaking waters (amniotomy)



# National Policy & Legislation



# National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026

- ◉ Informed consent
- ◉ Voluntary
- ◉ Sufficient Capacity
- ◉ Bodily Integrity
- ◉ Communication
- ◉ Decision Making
- ◉ Unforeseen events

# Refusal to Consent



- Cases might arise where a woman disagrees with the treatment recommended by her healthcare provider and may wish to refuse consent.
- Trust is necessary if such discussion and disclosure is to be constructive, and can most effectively be achieved following a process of ongoing communication between the pregnant woman and her healthcare providers throughout pregnancy.



# National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare

## Theme 1: Person-centred Care and Support

- Standard 1.4 Women are empowered to make informed decisions about their care.
- Standard 1.5 Informed consent to care is obtained in accordance with legislation and national policy.
- Standard 1.6 The dignity, privacy and autonomy of each woman and baby is respected and promoted.

2020

# Findings of the maternity survey



Visit [yourexperience.ie](https://yourexperience.ie)

# High Scoring Questions

- 81% of respondents said they were always treated with respect and dignity while they were pregnant
- 72% of respondents said that they always had confidence and trust in the healthcare professionals who cared for them while they were pregnant
- 75% of respondents said that their questions during labour and birth were always answered in a way they could understand
- 82% of respondents said that they always had confidence and trust in the healthcare professionals who cared for them during labour and birth
- 74% of respondents said they were always treated with respect and dignity while they were in hospital after the birth
- 90% of respondents rated their experience of the care their baby received in the neonatal unit as good or very good.

# National Maternity Experience Survey: Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital

Midwives who looked after me during my delivery and also afterwards in the post natal ward were fantastic-they were so kind, compassionate and non-judgmental

Everything was explained at each step and I had the opportunity to ask questions when needed. They were also answered in a manner in which we understood.

The care provided in the MLU in Drogheda hospital was exceptional and I could not recommend it enough.

The midwives were amazing and they're the ones I find that really listen to the mother

From the moment I entered the hospital with contractions to the day I left with or baby-I could not commend the midwives enough for everything. They made me feel so safe and ensured I was well informed in all areas.

Yes I felt like I always had support. I could be checked out when I felt I needed to be or I could pick up the phone and ring if I had a query.



# In Conclusion



*“Midwifery is the very stuff of life”*

Thank you

[grainne.milne@hse.ie](mailto:grainne.milne@hse.ie)

0871932341

@gra\_milne12

@OLOLMat\_Unit

