

A Preview

Late miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death

A learning and teaching resource package for
midwife teachers

Jointly produced by Sands (the stillbirth & neonatal
death charity) and Middlesex University

Information and background

Welcome to this learning and teaching resource package. The package is based on six original learning outcomes produced by Sands. These outcomes formed the basis of a teaching package and set of learning resources which were trialled by midwife teachers and student midwives at Middlesex University. Teaching on bereavement and related topics was delivered to a cohort of student midwives in their second year. Students evaluated the teaching sessions, online reading materials and other information arising from the learning outcomes, and the results of this trial informed this learning and teaching resource pack. This package contains learning outcomes, teaching notes and session plans, a PowerPoint presentation, advice on how to use the package, and evaluation/feedback forms.

Thank you for your interest in applying for the package; may we remind you that we ask you to adhere to the following

- Please do not modify the package from the original, apart from the insertion of Trust or University specific information requirements, or updating of statistics if necessary.
- Please provide feedback via evaluation forms for teachers and students

These teaching materials are provided separate to, and are independent of those study days and sessions already provided elsewhere by Sands for student midwives, midwife teachers and other health professionals.

Structure of the resource package

Pre-registration midwifery programmes must all meet the current Nursing and Midwifery Council requirements, and be validated by both the NMC and the Higher Education Institute at which the programme is delivered. Each programme will therefore be different, and may devote more or less time to the subjects appearing in the resource package. The package takes account of this, and you will be able to tailor the detail to your own needs, without changing the overall content.

Terminology

The package covers all aspects of late miscarriage, stillbirth, perinatal and neonatal death, and termination of pregnancy for fetal abnormality. It does not cover early miscarriage or termination of pregnancy, although it acknowledges that the feelings of loss associated with these may be very similar. For the sake of clarity, definitions of terms used are given in the package, but on occasion, to avoid repetition, the terms perinatal loss, childbearing loss and pregnancy loss may be used, and these encompass all the losses covered in the package.

Preparing to use the package

Please read the whole package through before you begin to use it with students; you might think points are missing and want to add them in, only to find that they appear later in the pack than you expected!

There are links to websites and to relevant documents in the package that you might want to upload to your University e learning platform, and that you will be able to refer students to.

The six learning outcomes

There are six learning outcomes and associated content. At the end of each session, students will have received information to help them:

1. explore key policy guidance and evidence surrounding late miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death

Content: national and personal impact of late miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death; why evidence & guidance at national level is important; definitions of terminology used in late miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death; legal requirements and implications; the role of MBRRACE; importance of audit and case review; national and local statistics on late miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death; RCOG Greentop guidelines on reduced fetal movement, late intrauterine fetal death and stillbirth; Sands publications on bereavement and preventing pregnancy loss.

2. reflect on the nature of grief and grieving, and understand the impact on parents family and friends

Content: the nature of grief and grieving; the potential impact on parents and families of the death of a baby during pregnancy, labour, or shortly after birth; the potential length and depth of grief after perinatal death; differences between experience and expressions of grief; differences in expression of grief by individuals, their partners, men and women, and in different cultures; effects on parents ability to listen, remember, and make decisions, and take this into account when talking to parents; parents' need for ongoing support after leaving hospital or other centre where care was delivered; offering information to parents about local and national sources of support, including Sands, Miscarriage Association, Bliss, ARC and Child Bereavement UK; anxiety and needs of bereaved parents in relation to subsequent pregnancies and births. Input by bereaved parents and experienced midwives should be included in this session if possible. The link <https://www.uk-sands.org/support/sands-groups/find-your-nearestgroup> will enable you to contact a local Sands group

3. demonstrate the ability to sensitively communicate with parents and families in a way that facilitates and supports their choices

Content: building on content from Learning Outcome 2, and on communication skills in general; breaking difficult, or bad news; how consent is gained for post mortem; who can gain consent from parents; making sure parents have understood what they have been told; using sensitive terminology; cultural differences; respecting others' views; local and national support services

4. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of clinical risk factors and complications surrounding late miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death

Content: main known risk factors for late miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death in the United Kingdom; identifying and documenting risk factors antenatally and intrapartum; appropriate referral when risk factors are present

5. identify the midwifery skills and abilities that are needed to offer effective support to parents and families who have experienced a perinatal loss

Content: taking opportunities to work with experienced midwives providing care for parents whose baby has died at any stage of the pregnancy; how fetal death is confirmed; midwifery care antenatally and in labour, including aspects of safety and emergency care for women if appropriate, drugs used to induce labour, pain relief for the woman; helping women cope with lactation; creating memories, for example seeing and holding the baby, washing and dressing the baby, taking photographs, making hand and footprints, taking the baby home, coming back to hospital to see the baby; use of cold cots to delay physical deterioration of the baby; legal and other paperwork; giving information about a funeral if required.

6. develop the insight and self-awareness necessary to seek personal support to benefit own emotional wellbeing

Content: recognising the influence of one's own experiences; seeking help for past personal experiences so these don't intrude into professional life; knowing where to seek help; understanding the responsibilities of Trusts and employers in relation to staff support; knowing how to promote own health and wellbeing, getting exercise, relaxing, sleeping well.

Other information

The learning outcomes are designed to be generic, and conform to the principles of the current Nursing and Midwifery Council Proficiency Standards for student midwives. They are also designed to conform to most UK university learning outcomes for student midwives. The information in the PowerPoint presentation is also generic, and there is facility within the slides and presentation to insert additional information which is specific to your own institution and partner Trusts. The pack takes account of the main points students identified as being key to their learning, which are:

- Being “protected” from perinatal loss leading to lack of contact with bereaved parents
- input on practical issues, such as bathing and dressing the baby

- information on the paperwork associated with perinatal loss
- guidance on what to say, or not to say to parents, especially in situations of uncertainty, where, the death is not yet confirmed, for example between the two scans required to determine if the fetus is dead, or following prenatal diagnosis
- meeting bereaved parents in the safety of the University setting, hearing their stories and being able to talk to them

Students may need guidance to see how the sessions fit with, and complement their modules and practice experience.

The PowerPoint presentation addresses each of the learning outcomes and associated content. There are also case studies and activities which can be used to generate discussion. Students are encouraged to share experiences from practice, to form a basis for discussion. Access to rapid response apps for students to use in class, is helpful so students can respond to general questions without having to be identified.

Most universities have an e learning platform which can contain links for students to current websites such as RCOG, RCM i-learn, Sands, etc, and can link to additional learning materials and tests for students. The package includes links to websites and other learning materials throughout.

The evaluation forms at the end of the package are an important way of monitoring the uptake and usefulness of the package. They are also included as separate attachments for ease of use. The more information you and your students can give us the better!

Teaching plans for all the learning outcomes and slides are provided in the full pack.