



Indigenous Midwifery Knowledge and Skills: A Framework of Competencies

Indigenous midwives are vital to the well-being of our communities. They provide high-quality sexual and reproductive care for women, babies, and families and uphold our peoples' languages, oral cultures, and traditions. Indigenous midwives play a key role in building healthy and safe Indigenous communities. The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) is a leading voice for Indigenous midwifery across Canada. With 140 members consisting of registered midwives, midwives practicing under the Ontario Exemption Clause, midwife Elders, and student midwives from all over Canada.

More and more communities are seeking to reclaim the power of Indigenous midwifery, recognizing community-based midwifery-led births as central to healing and wellbeing. We know that the demand exceeds the supply. **Education is an essential part of restoring midwifery to Indigenous peoples across Canada.** To bring Indigenous midwifery knowledges and training back home to our communities, NACM undertook a process to articulate what makes Indigenous midwifery unique. This work was done in partnership and with support from Save the Children Canada (SCC) and the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM).

The process took place over a nine-month period and involved an initial workshop with diverse, experienced and Elder Indigenous midwives from coast to coast to coast. **Nine core competency areas** were identified. Each of these areas were expanded on to identify the competencies and associated skills, subskills, knowledge, and abilities. The competencies were reviewed and validated one at a time by groups of NACM midwives.

Through this process, NACM developed a tool to share and use this information. In June 2019, NACM published **Indigenous Midwifery Knowledge and Skills: A Framework of Competencies**.

The intent of this document is to provide a competency framework which can be used to start growing and teaching Indigenous midwifery. This document can be adapted as communities and Nations input their own knowledge, traditions and ways.

An Indigenous midwife offers clinically excellent primary sexual and reproductive care. An Indigenous midwife is the keeper of ceremonies, a leader and mentor, and someone who passes on important values about health to the next generation. The care and knowledge provided by Indigenous midwives is vital to the health and well-being of Indigenous communities. Indigenous midwifery knowledges and training must be brought home to our communities. As we work to grow Indigenous midwifery, we hope to increase the pathways to education for Indigenous midwifery students, decolonize training experiences, remove barriers to midwifery practice in our communities, and support retention.

Indigenous midwives are agents of social change, vital to the wellbeing of our communities. We hope that this tool will help you recognize and understand the work of Indigenous midwives and that you will support us in our work to reclaim, grow and sustain Indigenous midwifery.