

# International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) Competencies & Statements related to

## Culture, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural appropriateness &/or Cultural Relevance

*Excerpts from Four Core Documents and One Position Statement*

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Excerpts from the [ICM Essential competencies for basic midwifery practice](#) 2010, Revised 2013

### “KEY MIDWIFERY CONCEPTS

...

- **cultural sensitivity**, including working with women and health care providers to overcome those cultural practices that harm women and babies; (p.2)

### COMPETENCY IN SOCIAL, EPIDEMIOLOGIC AND **CULTURAL CONTEXT** OF MATERNAL AND NEWBORN CARE

**COMPETENCY # 1:** Midwives have the requisite knowledge and skills from obstetrics, neonatology, the social sciences, public health and ethics that form the basis of high quality, **culturally relevant**, appropriate care for women, newborns, and childbearing families.

#### Knowledge

##### BASIC

The midwife has the knowledge and/or understanding of...

- **local culture and beliefs** (including religious beliefs, gender roles) (p.3)

#### Professional Behaviours

##### BASIC

The midwife...

- behaves in a courteous, non-judgmental, non-discriminatory, and **culturally appropriate manner** with all clients
- is **respectful** of individuals and of their **culture and customs**, regardless of status, ethnic origin or religious belief (p.4)

### COMPETENCY IN PRE-PREGNANCY CARE AND FAMILY PLANNING

**COMPETENCY # 2:** Midwives provide high quality, **culturally sensitive** health education and services to all in the community in order to promote healthy family life, planned pregnancies and positive parenting.

#### Knowledge

##### BASIC

The midwife has the knowledge and/or understanding of...

- **cultural norms** and practices surrounding sexuality, sexual practices, marriage and childbearing
- **culturally acceptable** and locally available natural family planning methods (p.6)

## Skills and/or abilities

### BASIC

The midwife has the skill and/or ability to...

- prescribe, dispense, furnish or administer (however authorized to do so in the jurisdiction of practice) locally available and **culturally acceptable** methods of family planning (p.7)

## COMPETENCY IN PROVISION OF CARE DURING LABOUR AND BIRTH

COMPETENCY #4: Midwives provide high quality, **culturally sensitive** care during labour, conduct a clean and safe birth and handle selected emergency situations to maximize the health of women and their newborns.

### Knowledge

#### BASIC

The midwife has the knowledge and/or understanding of...

- psychological and **cultural aspects** of labour and birth (p.11)

## COMPETENCY IN PROVISION OF CARE FOR WOMEN DURING THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD

COMPETENCY # 5: Midwives provide comprehensive, high quality, **culturally sensitive** postpartum care for women. (p.14)

## COMPETENCY IN POSTNATAL CARE OF THE NEWBORN

COMPETENCY# 6: Midwives provide high quality, comprehensive care for the essentially healthy infant from birth to two months of age.

### Knowledge

#### BASIC

The midwife has the knowledge and/or understanding of...

- traditional or **cultural practices** related to the newborn (p.16)

## COMPETENCY IN FACILITATION OF ABORTION-RELATED CARE

COMPETENCY #7: Midwives provide a range of individualised, **culturally sensitive** abortion-related care services for women requiring or experiencing pregnancy termination or loss that are congruent with applicable laws and regulations and in accord with national protocols.” (p.18)

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Excerpt from: [ICM Position statement: Heritage and Culture in Childbearing](#), 2011

“In recognition of the variety of cultural traditions and practices surrounding pregnancy and birth, the midwife will:

- In partnership with women and childbearing families: provide leadership in establishing and maintaining maternity services that are **culturally safe and free from discrimination**
- **be knowledgeable about cultural traditions and respect those practices** that will not cause harm to women and childbearing families
- in instances where such practices can cause harm: work with the community to eliminate the harmful practices” (p.2)

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Excerpt from: [Core Document: International Code of Ethics for Midwives](#), 2014

“II. Practice of Midwifery

- a. Midwives provide care for women and childbearing families with respect for **cultural diversity** while also working to eliminate harmful practices within those same cultures. ...
- c. Midwives use up-to-date, evidence-based professional knowledge to maintain competence in safe midwifery practices in all environments and **cultures.**” (p.2)

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Excerpt from: [ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education](#), 2013

“These minimal education standards can be expanded to include higher expectations and to reflect country specific needs for curriculum content and **cultural appropriateness.**” (p.1)

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Excerpt from: [ICM Core Document Philosophy and Model of Midwifery Care](#), 2014

“ICM Philosophy of Midwifery Care

...

- Midwifery care promotes, protects and supports women's human, reproductive and sexual health and rights, and respects ethnic and **cultural diversity**. It is based on the ethical principles of justice, equity, and respect for human dignity.
- Midwifery care is holistic and continuous in nature, grounded in an understanding of the social, emotional, **cultural**, spiritual, psychological and physical experiences of women.” (p.2)

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