



THE ROLE OF THE EPICC CORE COMPETENCY STANDARD IN SPIRITUAL CARE IN ENHANCING THE BIRTH OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES OF COUPLES

Dr Josephine Attard

University of Malta, Department of Midwifery, Faculty of Health Sciences

INTRODUCTION

Whilst much is known about the clinical management of labour and childbirth less attention is paid to what, beyond clinical interventions, needs to be done to make women feel safe, comfortable and positive about the experience (WHO, 2018). The growing knowledge on how to initiate, accelerate, terminate, regulate, or monitor the physiological process of labour and childbirth has led to an increasing medicalization of the process. It is now being understood that this approach may undermine a woman's own capability in giving birth and could negatively impact her experience of what should normally be a positive, life-changing experience Nystedt, & Hildingsson (2018).

Research has identified spiritual care as a crucial ingredient in effective practice for health professionals, including midwifery. The role of spirituality has been recognised as enhancing the quality of birth outcomes and positive experience to the couple. More Specific through 'being with women' the EPICC spiritual care core competencies may guide midwives to enable couples enhance their birth outcomes and experience.

AIMS

To contribute to the promotion of spiritual care competencies in midwifery practice to enable enhanced birth outcomes and experience to the couple.
To highlight how the EPICC core competencies in spiritual care may guide midwives to provide better birth outcomes and positive birth experience.

METHOD

Research on the couple's birth outcomes and experiences was synthesised using Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework.

FINDINGS

5 Themes were identified namely: Midwives attributes and behaviour; midwife's intimate involvement with the woman; connectedness and safeguarding the birth process; Listening to woman's Birth stories and narratives and Debriefing and healing.

These themes were cross-referenced with the identified EPICC core competency standards in spiritual care to explore 'fitness' with the standard.

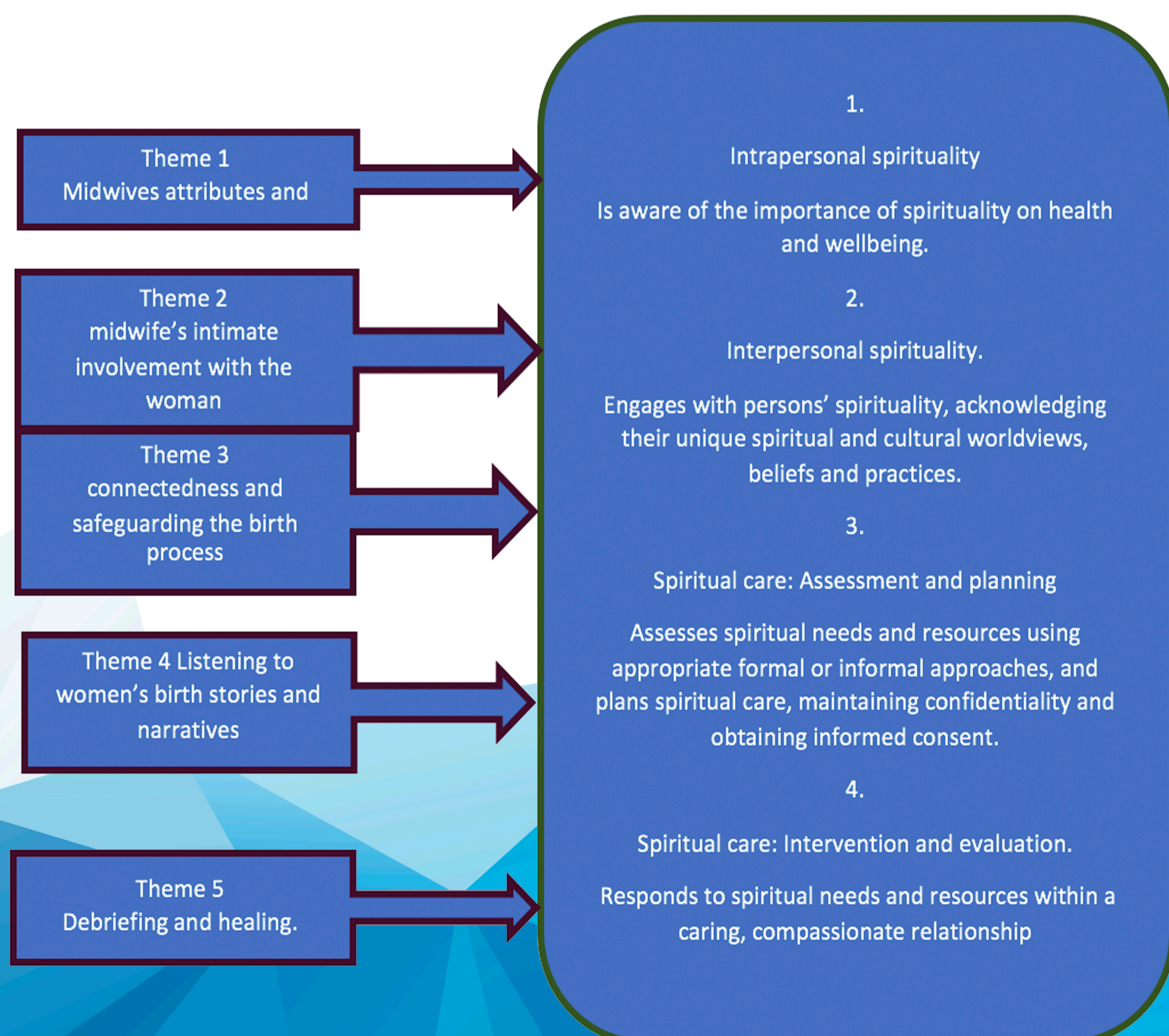
CONCLUSION

All 5 themes projected a good fit in the EPICC core competency standards in spiritual care.

The EPICC competency standard in spiritual care is a good framework to guide midwives in education and clinical practice on how to enhance positive birth outcomes and experiences for the couple.

EXPLORATION OF THEMES for 'FITNESS'
WITH THE EPICC CORE COMPETENCIES

THE EPICC 4 CORE COMPETENCY STANDARD



REFERENCES

- Braun, V. and Clark, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Journal of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, pp. 77-101.
- McSherry, W., Ross, L., Van Leeuwen, R., Giske, T., Attard, J., Kleiven, T. (2019) 'The European standard for spiritual care core competences for undergraduate nursing/midwifery students', Erasmus + funded project. <http://www.epicc-project.eu/>
- Nystedt, A., Hildingsson, I. (2018) 'Women's and men's negative experience of childbirth—A cross-sectional survey', *z* Vol.31(2), pp.103-109.
- World Health Organisation (WHO, 2018) Making childbirth a positive experience: The New WHO guideline on intrapartum care. <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/intrapartum-care/en/>