

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF NURSE-MIDWIVES PHILOSOPHY OF MIDWIFERY

We, the American College of Nurse-Midwives, affirm the power and strength of all people seeking midwifery care and the importance of health in the wellbeing of families, communities, and nations. We believe in the basic human rights of all persons and recognize that some incur disproportionate risk when these rights are violated. Human dignity and bodily autonomy are basic human rights that should be protected and respected in all areas of care, including in reproductive and sexual health.

We believe every person has a right to:

- Equitable, ethical, accessible, quality health care that promotes healing and health.
- Health care providers that demonstrate respect for human dignity, individuality, and diversity among groups; act without bias or discrimination; and actively seek to disrupt systems of power and privilege that cause harm.
- Complete, accurate, and accessible information to make informed health care decisions.
- Self-determination and active participation in health care decisions, as the final decision maker of the health care team.
- Involvement of people the individual considers important to them, to the extent desired, in all health care experiences.

We believe the best model of health care:

- Includes the full scope of health across the lifespan.
- Involves a continuous and compassionate partnership between persons seeking care and their health care providers.
- Recognizes the importance of interdisciplinary, collaborative care.
- Respects the individual's absolute right to bodily autonomy.
- Honors a person's expertise, life experiences, community, and historical knowledge.
- Includes methods of care and healing guided by research and best available evidence, centered on the individual's decisions, values, and preferences.
- Balances watchful waiting and support of physiologic processes with the appropriate use of interventions and technology.
- Involves therapeutic use of human presence and skillful communication.

These beliefs and values, centered in cultural humility and delineated in ACNM’s Vision, Mission, and Core Values provide the foundation for commitment to individual and collective leadership at the community, state, national and international levels to improve health. We affirm that midwifery care incorporates these qualities and that healthcare needs are well-served through midwifery care.

Source: ACNM Board of Directors Approved 1989, revised 2004

2023 Revision: ACNM Philosophy Task Force. Approved by ACNM Board of Directors August 2023