An exploration into the development of resilience in student midwives

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AN EXPLORATION INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE IN STUDENT MIDWIVES

A longitudinal case study approach in one Higher Education Institution (HEI) in England during the first 18 months of their programme (November 2015-March 2017) involving one cohort of midwifery undergraduate students.


Aims of study

- To explore what the concept of resilience meant to student midwives.
- To ascertain the role that resilience might play for student midwives and whether it developed or not during the first 18 months of their midwifery programme.

Research design & timescales

- Four focus groups were conducted twice (18 participants) and six participants were involved in one-to-one interviews, to explore issues raised in the focus group. Thematicaly analysed using Braun and Clarke (2013) stages.
- Biographical information and assessment scores (first 18 months of programme).

Key Findings

- Pairwise comparisons revealed that there were significant differences in True Resilience Scale® scores between the first and the second completion (p = 0.034) and time 1 and time 3 (p = 0.002); there were no significant differences between time 2 and time 3 (p = 1.0).
- In this cohort of student midwives the scale showed that the majority had developed their resilience during the study.
- The participants described themselves as developing resilience despite the programme being very hard. They believed that being passionate about midwifery, being adaptable and learning from reflection was key to being resilient as a student midwife. The importance of support and belonging in clinical practice and their mentors were key to success.
- Despite the challenges they encountered on the programme, they felt supported and prepared to become midwives.

Conclusions

- The current resilience discourse should be challenged.
- Resilience is an ‘umbrella’ term.
- Resilience cannot be taught but can be promoted.
- A model, which defines resilience for student midwives, is presented for consideration in midwifery curricula to strengthen how reflection and reflexivity is taught and supported. It is based on Fredrickson’s ‘broaden & build’ theory and Tinto’s integration model (adapted for student midwives).

References

Wagnild, G., Young, H. (2015) The True Resilience Scale® (updated version) [Personal communication with Gail Wagnild].