

Yes, educational preparation should be included in midwifery programs. I am a consumer who now works in and provides stillbirth education programs for midwives. Since the stillbirth of my son, Finn in 2002, I have written books and held many talks and workshops to give an insight into stillbirth from a mother's point of view. I never imagined that my work to help the bereaved would lead me to discover just how little training and support midwives are getting to prepare themselves for stillbirth and to heal after it has happened.

To include training around stillbirth is vital, so vital that even the government has a senate inquiry about prevention and education which I am a part of. As part of this inquiry an educational toolkit for stillbirth has been flagged and should hopefully be created in the near future. Over the last 15 years I have seen the implication of the lack of this training and especially the effects of long sustained grief on midwives who are simply left to cope with the effects stillbirth has on them in their careers.

My work in this space has shown me that no matter if a midwife has had 30 years experience or is a new graduate, stillbirth education has never been a big enough focus in their training and therefore has created years of grief that has been accumulating within their careers with is leading to mental health issues. In November 2019 I was part of creating a new training video on stillbirth with Caboolture Hospital and Qld Health. I was the mum role playing stillbirth again, while a 30 year midwife and 30year midwife educator and a new graduate all played roles to create a scenario around what is spoken and done in the room. Something that had never been done before. These women were brave and amazing in their roles but even as we recorded it was very clear that stored emotions were just beneath the surface. As well as the new graduate being quite unsure and unprepared for the emotions and duties she was faced with (and this was a safe place without a dead baby). Even the simplest thing like doing a footprint with a 26 week old "doll" created nerves and uncertainty. This is clearly not the place to learn if you are faced with capturing precious memories for parents and it is your very first experience of stillbirth.