

Raising concerns case studies

Case study 4: Student midwife in a community setting

Sarah was a second year student midwife who has recently started a community placement. One afternoon she was observing her mentor, a community midwife, in the antenatal clinic. One of the ladies was attending for her first booking visit with a midwife and the community midwife was advising her about the antenatal blood screening tests, which are performed between 10-12 weeks for fetal abnormalities. Sarah had just finished an assignment looking at the options and evidence base for antenatal screening, and thought that some of the advice her mentor had given was misleading.

Stop here As staff what they think Sarah should do.

Sarah thought about it overnight and worried that the lady would be making decisions about fetal screening based on inaccurate information. She decided to wait until she was alone with her mentor the following day and to bring up the subject of antenatal screening advice, specifically making reference to the advice which she had given out the previous day. Her mentor listened to her but told Sarah that she was incorrect and that “things were different in real practice settings”.

Stop here As staff what they think Sarah should do now.

Sarah was still worried and decided that she should talk to her university personal tutor about it. She was able to arrange to see her later that afternoon but she also knew that she could talk to the practice education facilitator/link lecturer for the community placement or to the local supervisor of midwives. Sarah’s personal tutor said she had done the right thing by coming to talk to her, and that it seemed that her concerns were justified.

The tutor called the midwifery community manager responsible for the area and explained the situation. The manager agreed to talk to Sarah’s mentor the next day, during which her mentor admitted that, after reflection, perhaps her advice had been rather misleading and she agreed to meet with the woman again and make sure she had the correct information. She also agreed to do some further reading around the subject to ensure she was up to date with the latest evidence base.