

Reflections on Summer 2023 Clinical Experiences

Coleen Salazar

Midwives College of Utah

CLNC 3010: Phase Three Practicum

Lynnette Elizalde-Robinson & Stephanie Sibert

August 14, 2023

Reflections of Summer 2023

This term of clinical work was like no other term to date. With two clinical courses, the requirement of a minimum of 160 hours felt daunting at the onset, since I was taking 9.5 course credits while balancing my new role as primary midwife under supervision. At the onset of the term I knew the month of June would have no births (my preceptor is intentional about scheduling “off call” time/family time); however, I didn’t anticipate some of the challenges that came our way. To be honest, I don’t know if I could have.

Recent feedback I received from my preceptor, sparked journal reflections in the area of intuition and emotional connections. I definitely had opportunities to explore the depths of both this term. We witnessed incredible highs as we supported our clients with amazing community birth experiences and held space for folks within our community as they navigated unexpected grief. To be clear, the losses were not maternal or fetal within my preceptors practice; however, we navigated feeling the impact and connection within our sweet community birth families. Unexpected, heartbreaking losses.

My academic work included a prenatal complications course - timing felt oddly appropriate, and I was provided with what seemed to be a memorable punctuation of the rare, yet devastating impact some viruses can have during pregnancy. This term especially, I had to draw on my faith, grateful for a power greater than myself, and extremely focused on doing the next best thing, in support of my clients and myself. Throughout my life, professional and personal growth has never felt easy, but with hindsight, most of the time I could see the lessons in the experiences. This term more than ever I learned that sometimes there are no lessons in the experience of loss. Just grief, and the realization that loss is part of life, and people are stronger than they know. When we love greatly, with all our heart, losses are absolutely heartbreaking. A

supportive community can hold a person or family up when they feel they can't bear the pain. I'm thankful for the ability to hold space for people in moments of joy and sorrow.

Overall, I exceeded my goal for clinical hours this term and gained confidence in my abilities to manage a variety of clinical scenarios. With more prenatal and postpartum client visits I gained deeper understanding and connection with clients. The feedback that I received from my preceptor was that I came out of my books and into my more emotional and intuitive self. I agree with her. I felt more vulnerable, yet stronger in my clinical decisions. I pray for continued strength and healing for our community. I feel extremely honored to walk (sometimes crawl) this midwifery journey and I hope to remain grateful for intense experiences that deeply influence the midwife I am.