

## “zäme schwanger” – Group Prenatal Care

# From Theory to Practice: A Programme for Midwifery Students

Beatrice Friedli, Ramona Koch, Katherina Albert, Sandra Grieder, Virginia Storni

Institute of Midwifery, Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), Winterthur, Switzerland

### Overview

CenteringPregnancy®, a group prenatal care programme which has been successfully established in several countries, has demonstrated positive outcomes such as fewer cases of induced labour and less need for pain medication during childbirth (Rijnders et al., 2019). This care model combines medical examinations and health promotion, while also connecting pregnant women and their families (Schindler Rising & Houde Quimby, 2017). So-called “centering groups” support women’s self-management in coping with everyday issues and help them prepare for motherhood.

In the German region of Switzerland, the ZHAW Institute of Midwifery has initiated “zäme schwanger” (Pregnant Together), a programme providing practical midwifery training for student midwives at ZHAW, who offer prenatal care followed by group meetings, in which they are supervised by experienced midwifery lecturers.

### Aims

1. Pregnant women are empowered to take an active role in the physiological stages of their pregnancy (Picklesimer et al., 2012).
2. Lecturing midwives expand and deepen their practical expertise in providing prenatal care.
3. Bachelor’s students experience the transfer of theory to practice first hand by taking care of their clients and guiding them.
4. Master’s students become involved in an associated research project which provides them with a direct link to applied research.

### Methodology

The instructors involved in this programme were trained and supervised by midwives from the Netherlands with many years’ involvement in CenteringPregnancy®.

Institute of Midwifery lecturers look after groups of no more than eight pregnant women. The Bachelor’s students who support them in this task gain practical experience in prenatal care. The pregnant women are taught to measure their own vitals such as blood pressure, weight, or urine. They are also given a brief one-on-one exam by a qualified midwife.

Following this, the pregnant women engage in guided group discussions on topics related to pregnancy, health promotion, and becoming a family, in which they contribute their individual experiences and prior knowledge.

### Start of Pilot Programme

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the requirements of the Swiss authorities, protection measures were put into place for the pilot programme which started with a first group of pregnant women in April 2021.

### Associated Research

With the collaboration of ZHAW Master’s students, the Institute’s Midwifery Science Research Unit is engaged in a research project in conjunction with the pilot programme. Using focus group interviews, the process of implementing the new programme is explored from different perspectives.



“Learning directly from pregnant women and experienced midwives while I’m still a student is very valuable and helps me to develop further in my career as a midwife.” (BSc student)

### References

- Picklesimer, A. H., Billings, D., Hale, N., Blackhurst, D., & Covington-Kolb, S. (2012). The effect of CenteringPregnancy group prenatal care on preterm birth in a low-income population. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 206(5), 415.e1-415.e7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2012.01.040>.
- Klima, C., Norr, K., Vonderheid, S., & Handler, A. (2009). Introduction of CenteringPregnancy in a Public Health Clinic. *Journal of Midwifery & Women’s Health*, 54(1), 27–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmwh.2008.05.008>.
- Schindler Rising, S., & Houde Quimby, C. (eds). (2017). *The CenteringPregnancy Model: The Power of Group Health Care* (1st edition). Springer Publishing Company.
- Rijnders, M., Jans, S., Aalhuizen, I., Detmar, S., & Crone, M. (2019). Women-centered care: Implementation of CenteringPregnancy® in The Netherlands. *Birth*, 46(3), 450–460. <https://doi.org/10.1111/birt.12413>.

Contact: Institute of Midwifery, ZHAW School of Health Professions,  
Katharina-Sulzer-Platz 9, 8400 Winterthur, Switzerland  
[ihb.gesundheit@zhaw.ch](mailto:ihb.gesundheit@zhaw.ch)  
<https://www.zhaw.ch/de/gesundheit/institute-zentren/ihb/>