

TABIB, M., FORBES-MCKAY, K. and HUMPHREY, T. 2023. "Doing" is never enough, if "being" is neglected: exploring midwives' experiences of an emotional intelligence (EI) programme: a qualitative study. Presented at the 15th International labour and birth conference, 24-26 April 2023, Grange over Sands, UK.

"Doing" is never enough, if "being" is neglected: exploring midwives' experiences of an emotional intelligence (EI) programme: a qualitative study.

TABIB, M., FORBES-MCKAY, K. and HUMPHREY, T.

2023

The Creative Commons licence applied to this file covers only the authors' own text and images. Any third-party materials present in these slides remain under their original terms of use.

'Doing' is never enough, if *'being'* is neglected. (Tolle 2004)

Exploring midwives' experiences of an emotional intelligence (EI) programme, a qualitative study

Research team: Dr Mo Tabib (Robert Gordon University), Dr Katrina Forbes-McKay (Robert Gordon University), and Professor Tracy Humphrey (University of South Australia)

Background



Study aim

To explore midwives' experiences of an EI programme.

What is EI?



(Goleman 1996/2020)

EI Programme



- A 4-month programme delivered over six group sessions (total 24 hours)
- A combination of in person and online sessions

EI Programme



- Theoretical learning
- Relaxation practices for self and others
- Case-based learning
- Practice-based learning

Design, Method & Analysis

- Descriptive qualitative design
- Focus group interviews
- Reflective thematic analysis

Setting & participants

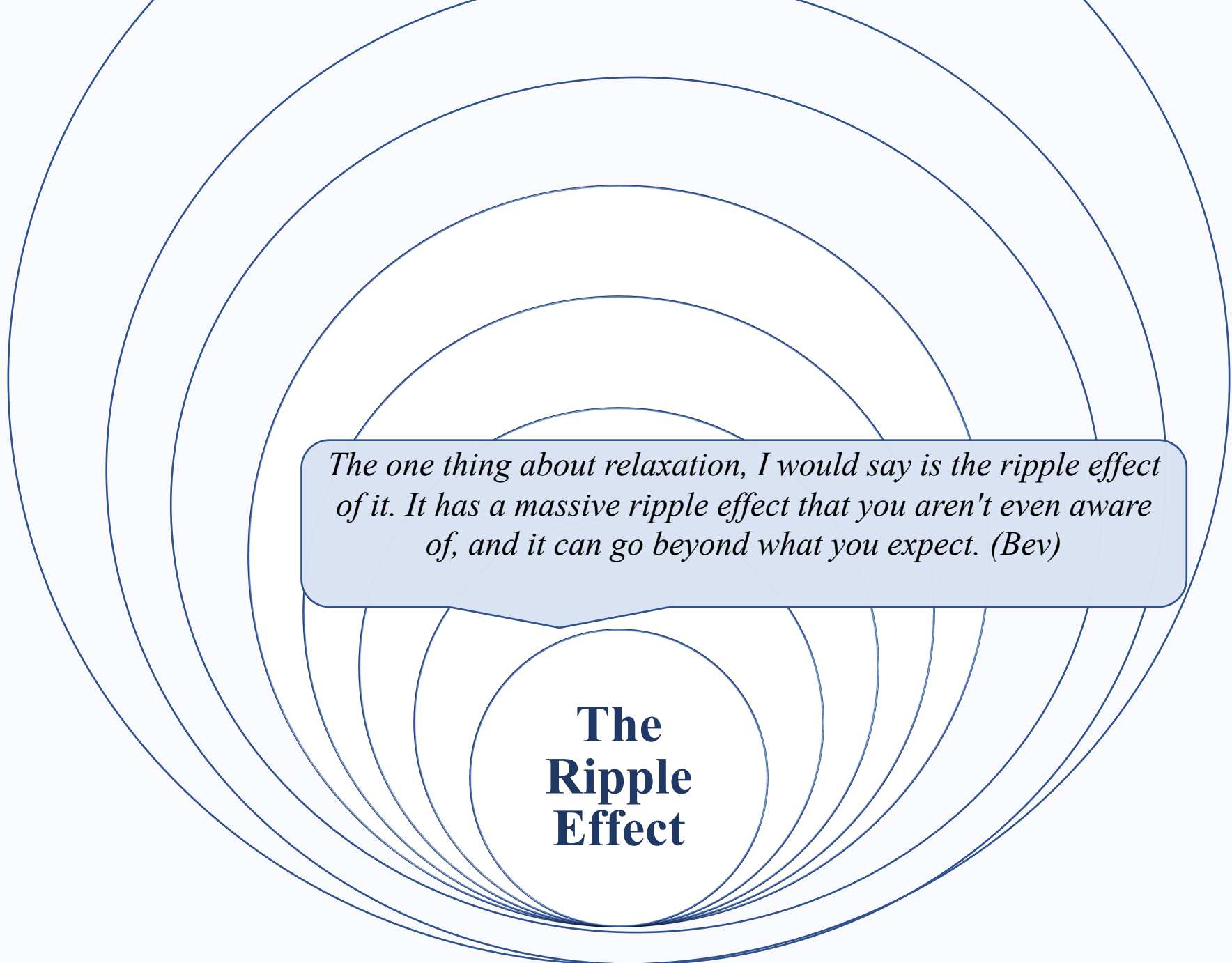
- One Scottish health board
- Midwives from different community teams

Findings; Sample characteristics

- Thirteen (86.6%) community midwives (out of 15 who attended the programme)
- All female
- Aged from 23 to 58 ($M = 42.86$, $SD = 13.57$),
- From five rural and urban midwifery community teams
- Between 1 to 30 years ($M = 17.43$, $SD = 12.76$) of work experience

Thematic findings





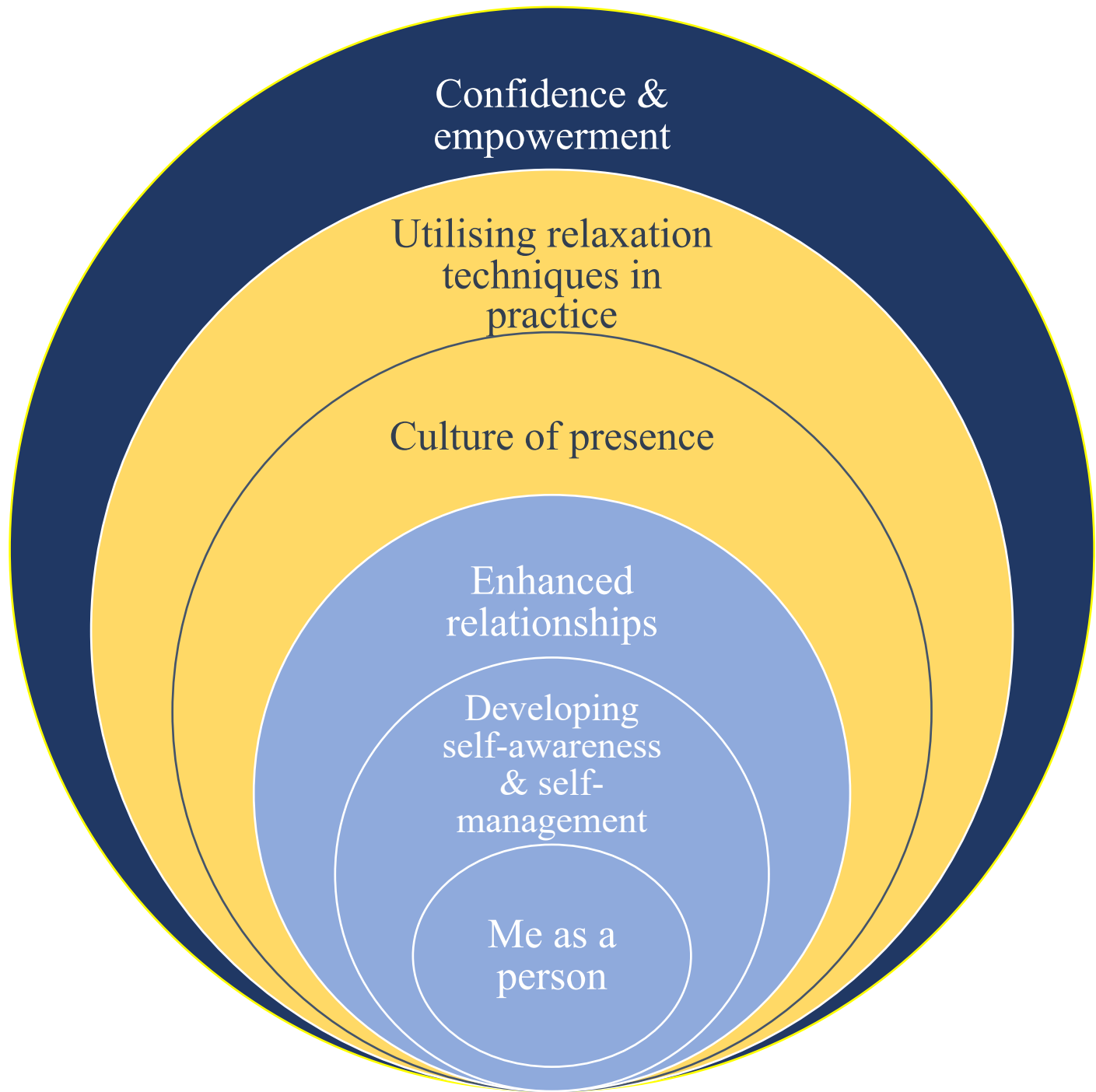
The one thing about relaxation, I would say is the ripple effect of it. It has a massive ripple effect that you aren't even aware of, and it can go beyond what you expect. (Bev)

**The
Ripple
Effect**

3. Confidence
&
empowerment

2. A different
approach to
practice

1. Me & my
relationships



I thought it was more going to be based on having to deliver a session to women through all kind of childbirth spectrum. (Veronica)

I'm surprised at how helpful it was for me, as a person as well as me as a midwife. (Yvonne)

**Me as a
person**

Developing self-awareness & self-management

Yeah, just (developed) a greater self-awareness ... just differentiating between 'the thinker' and 'the observer'. (Celina)

It's made me a calmer person rather than getting stressed, has helped me change as a person, to see things differently, not overthink as much, and just take a breath and calm down. (Nina)

Developing self-awareness & self-management

She was having late decelerations and so, that initial panic, thinking about so many things in my head ... my on-call midwife was 45 minutes away and I knew ambulances were always going to be an issue. So, it was just that kind of initial panic. But then taking that step back and I've never experienced anything like that before, it was a really strong feeling where I felt like I was almost out with my body looking at the situation and just telling myself, alright, this is what you need to do, and this is the order you need to do it in. It's just taking that step back from being the thinker to become the observer and dealing with the situation. (Celina)

It's just made me more aware of like how I'm coming across. (Neave)

Because you can relax yourself, then, we're a lot more open to taking more time for other people and really taking on what they're saying. I think if you come across more open and relaxed, they're a lot more willing to divulge things to you, whether that be like staff or women. (Amanda)

It changed my relationship with my youngest daughter, that's a winner for me that she's managed to break through that, to talk to me about her emotions. (Bev)

Enhanced relationships

Developing self-awareness & self-management

Me as a person

Utilising relaxation techniques in practice

Culture of presence

*I think in the NHS, we definitely have a culture of just keep going attitude, keep going on to the next shift, onto the next clinic. It's just given me an opportunity to make the most of little pockets of time, just taking five minutes or 10, just with the woman, explore how she's feeling and go into that a bit deeper as maybe what I would have done before, **just taking that moment together.** (Veronica)*

Developing self-awareness &
self-management

Confidence and empowerment

Utilising relaxation techniques in practice

I had this couple come in for the first appointment and they'd had a really negative experience with her first baby. He was really angry; they came in the room like completely standoffish ... I was really stressed. So, I started thinking about the breathing techniques, and I thought I'd just be quiet for a few minutes, it felt like forever, but just sat, relaxed my shoulders, listened and after about five minutes, that atmosphere completely changed. I've never had that before. They were like laughing and like fine by the time that they left. It completely changed the whole experience and I thought, that's because of that course I've been on. (Neave)

Developing self-awareness & self-management

Confidence and empowerment

Utilising relaxation techniques in practice

... she had a long latent phase and said 'I just don't want to go home. I'm too scared'. I said, 'do you want to try some relaxation?'. I think doing that little relaxation with her made her more relaxed and reaffirmed that she could do it at home. Then she did go home and came back four hours later fully dilated where she was only one centimetre when she went home. Yeah, it worked. She just needed that confidence to do it herself. (Jude)

Developing self-awareness &
self-management

Confidence & empowerment

It's just kind of given me that belief in my role and the power that we have as midwives.

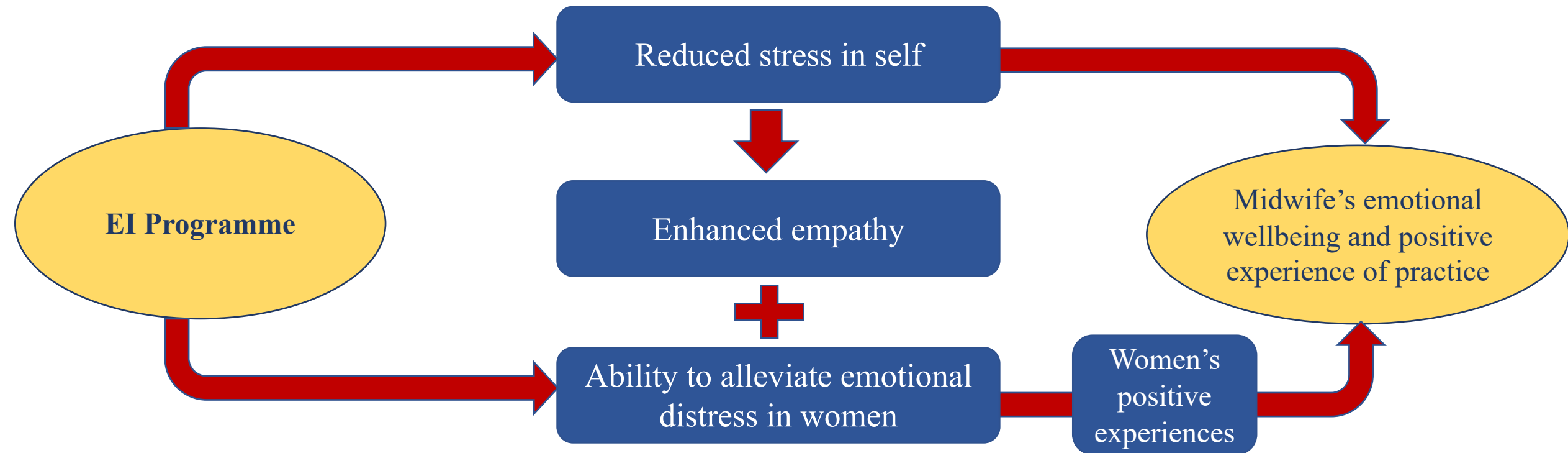
(Amanda)

And the difference we can make to somebody's experience, taking it from something that can potentially be very negative, to turn that round to making it a positive experience and helping them cope and manage. (Celina)

And yourself as well. (Nina)

Enhanced relationships

Discussion



Strengths

- First qualitative study exploring midwives' experiences of an EI programme
- Participants' diversity in terms of age, seniority and workplace (remote & rural)

Limitations

- Small number of participants
- Single study site
- Only community midwives

Conclusion

Equipping midwives with emotional management skills may improve their emotional wellbeing, experiences of practice and potentially the quality of the care they provide.

Therefore, implementation of evidence-based EI education in midwifery undergraduate curricula and midwives' CPD should be considered.

Future research

Large-scale, multi-centered studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of evidence-based EI education on:

- The wellbeing of current and future midwifery workforce
- The maternity care quality

A pilot survey



Any
questions?



References

Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2019. Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 11(4), pp.589-597.

Goleman, D., 2020. *Emotional intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Goleman, D. 1996. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury.

Hunter, B., Fenwick, J., Sidebotham, M. and Henley, J., 2019. Midwives in the United Kingdom: Levels of burnout, depression, anxiety and stress and associated predictors. *Midwifery*, 79, p.102526.

Sandelowski, M., 2000. Whatever happened to qualitative description?. *Research in nursing & health*, 23(4), pp.334-340.

Tolle, E., 2004. *The power of now: A guide to spiritual enlightenment*. New World Library.