Pregnancies and childbirths are not just biological or medical events. Childbirths are also emotionally intense situations, not only for the parents-to-be but also for those who work in delivery care. In addition, pregnancies and childbirths are sociocultural situations; there are norms about the normal birth.

This study investigates how future midwives learn about the interactive and emotional work involved in supporting women in delivery care. It focuses on norms about the normal birthing trajectory and on how a midwife should encounter patients' feelings and handle her own feelings in a "proper" way. Based on observations of collaborative group discussions within Swedish university-based midwifery education, the study shows how students negotiate the appropriate feeling norms in normal birth, as well as in complicated and even tragic situations. In focus are their discussions on how to support the birthing women, their partners, and the babies, and the categorization work needed to recognize potential deviations from the normal birth.

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