

Childbirth Education Organizations – Centering Pregnancy

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The organization now called Centering Healthcare Institute began simply 1990 when Sharon Rising wanted to give her patients amore fulfilling prenatal care experience. She brought people together in small groups and gave prenatal information to everyone at the same time. This also allowed pregnant people to build a community with each other for support. Soon Sharon’s associates learned about her new way of providing prenatal care in a group setting and wanted to try it out for themselves. The idea spread by word of mouth and trainings were done all over the United States.

Originally this program was about finding a better way to give prenatal care to pregnant people. It has evolved into so much more than that. Now the Centering Healthcare Institute wants to change the outcomes of health and the way that healthcare is given for all people, but especially for those who belong to marginalized groups. They focus on providing evidence-based care, group settings, relationship building, and tearing down the systems that have made people’s health even worse.

The Centering model of healthcare encourages patients to build and strengthen their self-confidence, their relationship with their care provider, and become an active part of their community. Patients take control of their own health by being responsible for some simple tasks such as checking their own weight and blood pressure. They receive group appointments that last from 90 minutes to 2 hours as well as one-on-one time with their provider. During the group appointments education is given through interactive discussions and activities. Most people learn better and retain more information if they are engaged and having fun. Group appointments also give a sense of comfort and belonging. Often more than one person will have the same question, so they can all be answered at one time instead of individually.

The Centering model of care has made a huge impact on not only childbirth, but maternal and newborn health. “CenteringPregnancy decreases the rate of preterm and low weight babies, increases

breastfeeding rates, and leads to better pregnancy spacing. CenteringPregnancy has been shown to nearly eliminate racial disparities in preterm birth. African American women, who are at higher risk for preterm birth in the US, experience lower risk of preterm birth when enrolled in CenteringPregnancy than in traditional care” (Centering, 2022).

Some of the benefits of Centering Pregnancy and the centering model in general are becoming more of an active participant in your own prenatal and healthcare, building self-confidence, being part of a group and forming lasting bonds of friendship, belonging and community, learning while having fun, having more time with your care provider, and having better health outcomes. The Centering Healthcare Institute provides training, materials, and support for those who want to implement the Centering model into their healthcare practice.

One of the critiques to the Centering Healthcare Institute, specifically the website, is that they do not use inclusive language. This can be a major problem for those who do not identify as women or mothers. It would lead me to believe that their training and materials would be similarly discriminatory. Another critique is that some people may find the group setting intimidating or an invasion to their privacy. My final critique is that this model of care has an additional cost for their training and materials. This might be a hinderance for smaller practices that want to institute the Centering model of care.

I personally believe that this model of care could be an excellent addition to midwifery practices and OB/GYN offices around the world. There does need to be some adjustments to the language used to be more inclusive and less discriminatory for those who may not identify as women or mothers. I wish this company would offer its programs to at-risk communities for free or reduced cost. If they really cared about eliminating disparities and lowering the preterm birth rates, they would not allow finances to be barrier. The group prenatal care and empowering people to take control of their own health are a couple of great places to start in changing the current healthcare system. I think support from

community and care providers improves outcomes for parents and babies. CenteringPregnancy and the Centering Healthcare Institute are on the right track.

References

Centering Healthcare Institute. (2022). <https://centeringhealthcare.org/>