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Leona Dann
Midwifery Director

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Midwifery Director: Leona Dann

What does it mean to be a champion?

For me as a midwife helping people to quit smoking means well women and well babies.

Leona's story:

Smoking was something that often came up during my years as a self employed midwife. I would always ask mothers-to-be if they were smokers, if they wanted to change their smoking behaviour and if they wanted support to stop completely. If they did, I would refer them to cessation services. Smoking cessation has always been a part of my work.

Ultimately a mother that smokes will have consequences for her baby in some way. So helping Mum's to quit means well women and well babies which is what we all want as midwives.

Still births are another reason to quit smoking. It is often hard to say why a baby dies and is still born. But we tell families that at least by quitting smoking you can increase the chance of a healthy outcome in future pregnancies.

It's important to encourage people in all areas to reduce smoking or to stop smoking and there are a number of ways to do this. I prefer to ask "are you a person who smokes" and then ask them about their smoking habits. If they have good smokefree habits such as smoking outside and not in the house or car I will congratulate them on this and ask them if they had thought about taking the next step towards changed behaviours or quitting smoking all together.

From the ABC smoking cessation training I have learnt that most people attempt to quit around 14 times before they are successful. I find this knowledge really useful when talking to people about smoking because most people have unsuccessfully tried to quit and then just assume it's something they can't do. For them to know this is normal and expected is important as hopefully it will motivate them to keep trying.

Also from ABC Smoking Cessation training I learnt that if you quit before the age of 30 you can eradicate the effects of smoking you will have had. I find this is a great tool to use when encouraging people to quit who are under 30 years old as it shows them that it's not too late to reverse the effects of smoking.

Smoking cessation training is often wrapped up into many other training sessions so should be an everyday practice at work.