

Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Welfare Corporation

(Nowra)

A 'Nesting Education Program' developed and delivered by the Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation (Waminda) aims to provide holistic support to first time mums and women who have had traumatic birth experiences in the past.

within their family and talk about their traditional or cultural beliefs related to birth and parenting.

The final session is a belly casting and painting experience so that women have a reminder and keepsake from the program.

well throughout their life. This approach is also consistent with the broad aims of the NSW Health 'Toward a Normal Birth Policy,' one of which is to minimise fear and increase support during pregnancy and labour.

"It is a unique approach but it all goes to supporting our vision for a holistic model of care. We believe that in order to be physically well and strong, you need to be in a mentally safe space and be in a good state of mind," Kate said.

Kate also works with the women on deep relaxation techniques in preparation for labour and introduces them to various craft activities, which is a tool to help them "take time out, learn to focus on one thing at a time and create a special time for them to think about their baby."

Partners are also welcome to attend the sessions, which Kate said can help open up an important dialogue for a couple, about birth and parenting expectations in the family. "It just helps to make sure that a couple is on the same page and encourages them to start thinking about the positive contribution their little baby is going to make to their family."

Waminda plans for the Nesting Education Program to grow through increased promotion and hopes to focus more on cultural support into the future.

"Our ultimate vision is to invite an Elder from the community to take the women back to country and have these important conversations. Some women we see have lost that cultural connection but they really crave it. We believe this will help them achieve a positive state of mind by the end of their pregnancy and feel more complete and happy within themselves."

For more information contact Kate Stein on (02) 4421 7400 or <http://www.waminda.org.au>

Nesting Education Program

The program, delivered in either small group or individual settings, is flexible in that it can be tailored to suit the needs of individuals but Waminda midwife Kate Stein said it is ultimately about supporting women to "overcome any true fears and questions they might have of themselves or their female ancestors throughout the generations."

Kate said the idea for the program came about from seeing women who were struggling to come to terms with previous trauma that led them to adverse outcomes during pregnancy and labour.

"It's about helping women 'connect in' with their pregnancy early on in a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual way, to gain awareness and become the mother they want to be."

"We knew there had to be more to it than just teaching women about the birth passage and how their baby came out," Kate said.

The four sessions held as part of the program are focused on having meaningful conversations with women and encouraging them to visualise themselves positively as a woman, as a pregnant woman and as a mother. Participants are also encouraged to find out about and discuss birth experiences from

Kate admits this might all sound "a bit airy fairy to people on the outside" but Waminda believes opening up these conversations aid or assist the women to build confidence in themselves which may lead to better health outcomes including fewer caesarean births and reduced use of epidural. It also aims to build resilience within young families and provide mothers with coping skills that will serve them

