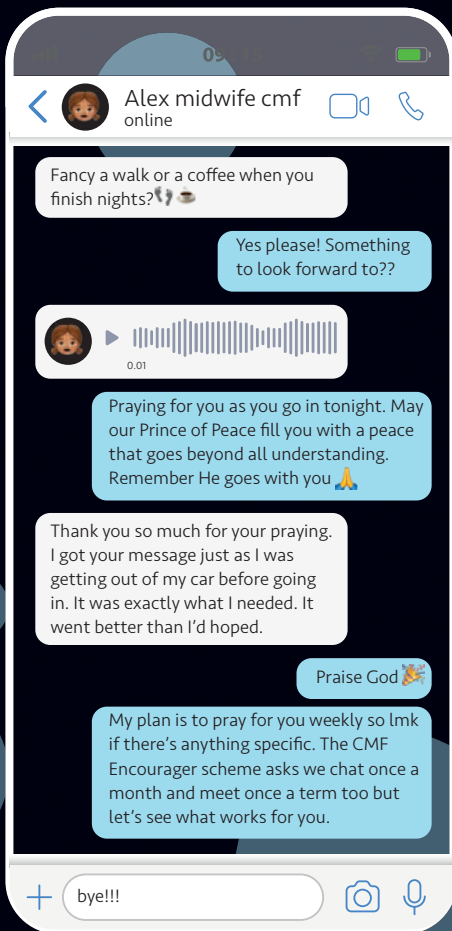
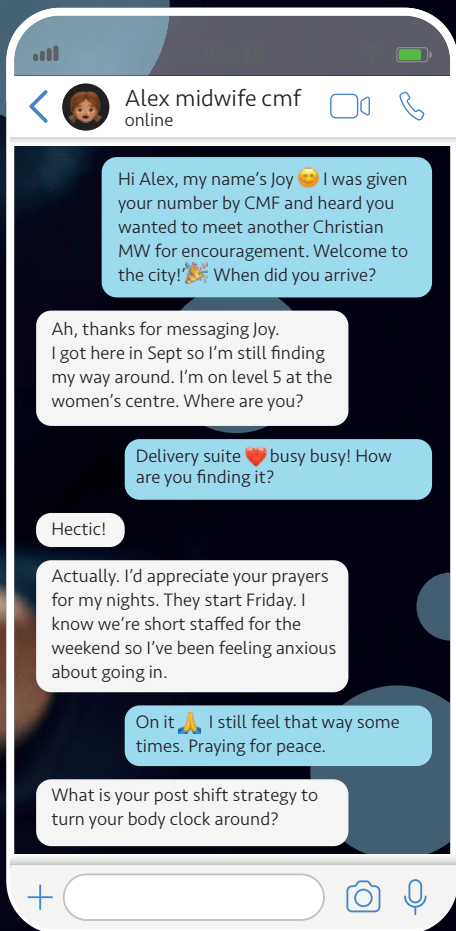


witness

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to share or not to share

Georgie Coster looks at how we can be public with our faith in the workplace

If you're reading this, you're probably a newly qualified nurse or midwife. And I also hazard a guess that one of your most pressing questions is something like this: Can I share the gospel with my patients? You might have a longer list of questions about boundaries. Can I pray with my patients? Am I even allowed to tell my patients that I'm a Christian, or is that totally inappropriate?

Have you heard of the NMC Code? That's a rhetorical question. You and I both know that

you've heard more about it than you ever thought possible. And that's only right. It is our guide for professional practice and behaviour, designed to protect our patients from substandard care and malpractice.

The Code tells you that as a nurse or midwife, you must '*make sure you do not express your personal beliefs (including political, religious or moral beliefs) to people in an inappropriate way.*'¹ Those words could send a shiver down the spine of even an experienced nurse or midwife, let alone one newly qualified.

The prospect of having the PIN you've worked so hard for snatched from you straight away may make you want to vow never to mention the name of Jesus when you're on duty.

Did you know, that's how many of your Christian nurse and midwife colleagues feel? Silenced. Gagged, even. Knowing they have words of life – words that can point to the most reliable source of peace, joy, and hope there is – but feeling totally unable to share them. That can be very difficult. Must it be that way?

I think the mistake many of us make is forgetting those final four words of instruction from the NMC: '*in an inappropriate way*'. Take those words out of the sentence and the message changes entirely. But the NMC chose to put them there, and that tells me that they believe it is possible for nurses and midwives to express their personal beliefs (including political, religious, and moral beliefs) to people in a way that is appropriate. The NMC are not asking us to be undercover Christians. Isn't that encouraging?

I love these words of Jesus – as if he hears our sigh of relief and reassures us that we can indeed call off the search for a basket big enough to hide in.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
(Matthew 5:14-16)

Are you asking those questions I mentioned at the start of this article? They were pressing questions for me as a newly qualified nurse too. I found very practical answers by doing a Saline Solution course, aimed at equipping Christian healthcare workers to be witnesses for Jesus in the workplace. The course was so helpful to me that I later trained to teach it myself, and I think every Christian healthcare professional should do it at least once!

To find out more about Saline Solution, visit cmf.li/Saline, or to check if there's an upcoming course near you or online, visit cmf.li/NAMEvents or email stephanie.moss@cmf.org.uk.

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reference

1. Nursing and Midwifery Council. The Code. January 2015. Updated October 2018. nmc.org.uk/standards/code