

Vera Berard

Registered Midwife | Lions Gate Hospital

What does it mean to you to inspire inclusion and support gender equity?

Inspiring inclusion and supporting gender equity means consistently showing up in my practice, community, and within provincial professional organizations, health authorities and hospital committee structures. My commitment revolves around fostering collaboration, accountability and nurturing mutual respect by listening, educating, advocating and dismantling access barriers.

Over the past thirty years, I have been privileged to witness and contribute to remarkable transformations in perinatal care. Collaborating with clients, their families, colleagues, researchers, administrators, and policymakers has driven significant progress in B.C.'s perinatal care options. Today, choices like midwife attended hospital or home birth, the accessibility of UBC's midwifery program for diverse individuals, babies feeding rights and the integration of midwives into innovative care models across B.C., highlight the impact of this collective effort. I became a midwife, partly due to the primary care independence midwifery offers. This enabled me to live my values and learn how to support a mother's autonomy. Secondly, I had the opportunity to connect and work with people, who valued the human body's innate ability to grow, birth and feed a baby. Together, we appreciated that the process of pregnancy, birth and the first weeks and months of life are all-encompassing experiences, which can have a profound effect on a baby's life and that of their family. We worked to empower people in their childbearing, feeding and rearing experiences.

Throughout my career, I have marveled at the fulfillment of what feels like a true calling, while advocating for compassionate, holistic change and envisioning with others what could be. Life has kept me humble and has fostered in me a spirit of curiosity and gratitude.

