

Meet Amy Darmody



STEP 1

Completed Year 12 VCE at Catholic College Wodonga.

STEP 2

Completed the Bachelor of Nursing at Charles Sturt University.

STEP 3

Completed the 12-month Graduate Nursing Program at Northeast Health Wangaratta, with rotations in Rehabilitation and Medical Wards.

STEP 4

Worked as a Registered Nurse to gain industry skills and experience in a range of hospitals and wards including Medical wards, Critical Care and Intensive Care Units.

STEP 5

Completed the Graduate Diploma of Midwifery through La Trobe University online whilst working at Albury Wodonga Health Maternity Unit.

STEP 6

Work as a fully qualified midwife in both regional and tertiary hospitals including Albury Wodonga Health Maternity Unit and the Mercy Hospital for Women in Melbourne.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE A COURSE AND CAREER IN YOUR CHOSEN FIELD?

I always wanted to have a job where I could help and care for people. There are many different ways people can show acts of care and kindness, however, after having my own personal experiences as a patient in hospital, I knew that being a nurse was what I wanted to do.

I have always had a passion for women's health care and paediatrics, so hoped that one day I would be able to further my study and do Midwifery as well.

I chose to study a Bachelor of Nursing first and became a Registered Nurse. I worked for a couple of years and then went back to Uni to do a Post-Grad Diploma in Midwifery, and am now a Registered Midwife as well.

WHAT SUBJECTS AT SCHOOL HELPED YOU THE MOST WITH YOUR UNIVERSITY SUBJECTS?

When I was in high school, I also considered university courses in the legal field, so I had a broad range of subjects to keep all my options open.

For nursing (and later down the track when I did midwifery), having done Biology in Year 11 and 12 helped me significantly.

The anatomy and physiology in the first two years of university was challenging, however I already had the background knowledge from studying Biology at school, so was able to build on that.

I always worried that if I changed my mind and wanted to study something completely different at Uni, I wouldn't have done the right subjects at school. Some courses have pre-requisites and it's very useful if you have done certain subjects however don't let that stop you pursuing your passion, there is always a way.

WHAT DID YOU DO DURING SCHOOL TO RESEARCH YOUR CAREER FIELD?

When I was at school, I attended lots of the open days to get a sense of what each university could offer and what all the different courses were like.

There were lots of career days run through the school, which I found very helpful. It gave me the opportunity to talk first hand to past students who had studied the courses I was interested in. They were able to share their experiences and offer some suggestions.

I met with the College Career Adviser regularly who was able to give me lots of different resources about what my options were. She was able to help guide me and provided invaluable knowledge.

WHAT WAS STUDYING YOUR COURSE AT UNIVERSITY LIKE?

Every university is slightly different. I did a three-year Bachelor of Nursing degree first at one of the local Uni's in Albury Wodonga. Initially it was an adjustment to get used to the different pace and expectations of university. We had lab classes, tutorials and lectures each week, which continued throughout the entire course.

Throughout my degree I had to do placements in a variety of healthcare settings, including community settings, nursing homes and hospitals.

Given the nature of how many nursing students there are at any one time, this meant they were completed in health care services all across New South Wales and Victoria.

It was hard to be away from family and friends for long stints, staying in towns you didn't know and working in a hospital you had never been before. It did mean that I had the opportunity to see a variety of different hospitals and was given the opportunity to work on many different wards across the three years, providing invaluable experience.

After working as a Registered Nurse for 2 years, I went back and studied Midwifery. I completed this 12-month Post-Grad Course whilst working in the Maternity Ward 3 days a week, doing an extra 1-2 days a week of placement and studying full time.

It was a tough year but I am glad I had the background knowledge of nursing behind me whilst doing it.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK

A typical day in Midwifery depends on the shift I am on and what department I am working in. I work across the postnatal ward, antenatal ward, birthing suites and assessment and booking shifts.

A morning shift in birth suite starts by getting your allocated patient for the shift, which could be a lady in spontaneous labour or a lady being induced.

We have lots of tasks over the course of the day, including monitoring the babies wellbeing via a tracing machine, ensuring the patient stays vitally stable, putting in drips, collecting bloods, running infusions of a variety of medications, monitoring contractions and progress, documenting and lots of paperwork.

There are emergencies that happen, so you have to be able to identify when your patient is deteriorating or if the unborn baby is becoming distressed and act accordingly. If the baby is born on your shift, you assist the women in delivering the baby and the placenta, monitor blood loss, vital signs and their wellbeing.

Babies require close monitoring, temperature checks, vital signs attended, injections given, and baby checks done.

Whilst completing these tasks you also have to be supporting the woman and her family, answering questions, providing education and reassurance and making the birth experience the best you can for them.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR JOB?

There are SO many things that I love about my job. I love being able to support women and their families through one of the most special times in their lives. The role of a midwife is to 'be with women' and that really is the backbone of everything we do.

We advocate for our patients every step of the way. We are their biggest support through every stage, we reassure them when they are worried, encourage them when they feel like they can't do this anymore, laugh with them through the funny moments and cry with them when their worlds crumble.

I love that every day I can make a difference to their experience, as they become parents and a family. It's an honour to be a part of such a personal journey and an absolute privilege to do the job I do every single day. I love being a Nurse and Midwife and couldn't imagine my life without it.

WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS KNOW ABOUT MIDWIFERY THAT THEY WON'T READ IN A COURSE GUIDE?

You won't read anywhere about how hard being a nurse and midwife is.

Shift work was one of the biggest challenges to begin with. I had worked casually all through high school and uni doing 'shifts', but until you start doing full time work in a hospital, it's hard to fully understand. You will be more tired than you have ever been and emotionally drained. It doesn't get easier, you just get used to it and it becomes your new normal.

It's HARD!!

It is a very physically demanding job. You are busy, so so busy. Constantly running from patient to patient trying to get everything done and ensure they are getting all the required treatment and care they need (all without showing them just how busy you are!).

It can be so emotionally draining at times. The first time a patient passes away will stay with you forever. Every time a patient goes into cardiac arrest you'll remember. The first stillborn you deliver will leave an ache in your heart forever. Holding a mum up as she says goodbye to her baby as the tears creep down your cheeks. We are human and are allowed to feel emotions. It's tough some days, so tough. But I still wouldn't change it for the world.

You'll become so good at time management. You'll learn to fit three times the amount of tasks and care into your day then you ever thought possible.

Having a work family is a real thing and honestly one of the best parts about our job. Nobody fully understands our jobs quite like the people you work with. Your colleagues will become your friends, and there is no better friend than the one you ride the waves at work with.

Yes its hard, demanding, tiring and draining but the good moments make it all worth it. When a patient smiles at you and says thank you, you feel like you could keep going forever. It's honestly the best job in the world.

Thanks for your time Amy!