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| **Exercise 5.5.4 Problem Statement and Arguments (Sample 2)** |

**Working Title**

New Moms on Campus: Understanding the Needs of Graduate Counselling Students as They Adapt to Motherhood

**Problem Statement**

As more female students in graduate-level counsellor education choose, concurrently, to start a family, post-secondary institutions are called on to provide relevant, effective support (Stewart, 2014; Thorton et al., 2016). **Understanding the challenges of early motherhood and the rigorous demands of graduate school prepares such institutions to create an educational environment that is conducive to both healthy postnatal adjustment and academic success.**

**Key Arguments**

1. Women's period of peak fertility overlaps with the general timing of graduate school (André & Paré, 2017; Manning et al., 2018).
2. As more women enter graduate studies, increasing numbers of women face family planning decisions during their pursuit of a graduate degree (Manning et al., 2018; Stewart, 2014; Thorton et al., 2016).
3. The transition to motherhood is a multifaceted experience (Stewart, 2014); many new mothers are surprised by the reality of motherhood and the variety of simultaneously occurring challenges (Thorton et al, 2016; Victory & Lamb, 2015); they often feel unprepared to navigate the new terrain.
4. Graduate level counsellor education is demanding and intense, and can add additional layered demands and new challenges to mothers who are already overburdened (Manning et al., 2018; Sagherian & Saghi, 2014; Victory & Lamb, 2015).
5. The policies, practices, and prevailing beliefs at some post-secondary institutions can make this period of transition and adaptation more difficult (Eois et al., 2015; Reddekopp, 2018).
6. By understanding the needs of new mothers, post-secondary counsellors and psychologists are better prepared to provide effective supports for new mothers on campus (Stewart. 2014; Victory & Lamb, 2015).
7. Post-secondary counsellors and psychologists are called on to advocate for family-friendly policies and practices (Eois et al., 2015; Reddekopp, 2018; Wiseman & Slave, 2013).
8. Graduate students who feel supported by their post-secondary institution are more likely to experience a healthy transition to motherhood (Eois et al., 2015); consequently, they are more likely to complete their programs of study successfully (Alvise, 2016; Reddekopp, 2018; Thorton et al., 2016).

**Purpose of the Study**

To explore the ways in which counsellor education programs can respond to the unique challenges faced by students in early motherhood and support their success in meeting the rigorous demands of graduate school.

**Note**: The sample problem statement, arguments, purpose, and citations provided here have been constructed for the purpose of this activity and do not necessarily reflect the current professional literature.