

BIRTH *VISION* WORKBOOK

EMPOWERED PARENTHOOD



contents

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Empowered Parenthood's BIRTH VISION Workbook - a tool to help you visualize the birth you want, but also consider the many variations that come with birth.

We prefer to use the term "VISION" instead of "PLAN" as they say "best-laid plans often go awry". Having a plan can also be a stressor to some women, as a plan can often appear rigid and leave little room for eventualities.

This workbook is to help you get clear on what is important to you for your birth experience, what you will do when things go awry and how to maintain an empowered position throughout your birth with informed choices and a great support team around you.

"Where attention goes, energy flows". Science proves our thoughts can become our reality, so if we focus on the birth we want, this puts energy and power into manifesting that outcome. A birth vision gives you something to strive towards while being flexible enough to "go with the flow" while still maintaining a position of understanding and the rights you have in all situations.

At the back of this workbook is a blank template for you to fill in your choices for your very own Birth Vision.

WHERE
ATTENTION GOES
ENERGY
FLOWS

E N V I R O N M E N T

The environment around you when you are birthing can have a big impact on the process of labor.

Home Space

You will hopefully be laboring at home for as long as you can to increase the likelihood of achieving a natural birth - that's if you are birthing at the hospital or a birth centre. The earlier in labor you transfer can actually lengthen your total time in labor or even stall the process. Hence, it is a great idea to have a labor/birth nest at home whether you are birthing at home or not.

With your environment you need to think about:

- Comfort - pillows, blankets, waterproof sheet, birth/swiss ball, wheat bag or hot water bottle, cold and hot cloths
- Temperature - what season is it where you are? Is it hot or cold? Will you need heaters or fans? Blankets or ice blocks?
- Lighting - remembering that you will labor and birth better with low or no lighting so you need to consider this in your lighting at home and then when you go into hospital. Research shows that blue light can hinder your labor process, so you may want to consider getting some blue light blocker sunglasses to wear if you are transferring from home to hospital.
- People - what people do you want around you? Who do you want on your birth support team? Make sure it is people you feel loved and supported by and that will be your champions in labor and respect your wishes. Don't just have your Mother-in-law there because she wants to be. It is also good to think about your relationship with your care provider here, do you feel 100% comfortable with them? Are they a good advocate for you? Do they respect your wishes? You will be birthing with them soon, one of the most vulnerable times in your life - you need to feel empowered and supported by them. If you do not, I recommend changing care providers. If you do not have the relationship you want with your care provider going into your birth it can alter the outcome and journey of it.

Other things to think about with environment:

Chatter/Conversation

Smells

Covering up clocks and not wearing a watch

Privacy - drawing curtains, limiting visitors

Birth affirmations - in our Online Antenatal Class BONUS content you will find 40 printable birth affirmations that you can put up around your birthing space

Hospital space

If you do have to transfer or if you are planning a hospital/birth centre birth you can try to emulate a similar birth nest and space that you had at home.

Things to consider:

Lighting - keeping lights dim and blue lights off

Having some birth affirmations (and blu tack) with you to put them up on the wall

People (hospital staff) coming into your room/space (student involvement/Doctors)

Having the curtains drawn

Taking aromatherapy oils and an infuser


Temperature in room

Comfort - setting up the room to be comfortable for you. Pulling the mattress onto the floor, asking for extra pillows if needed, bringing pillows or blankets from home.

PRIVATE

SAFE

RELAXED



L A B O R
T O O L S

As I speak about in our antenatal classes, it is a really good idea to have a collection of coping strategies that you can introduce each time labor is getting more intense and you are needing something extra or different to help you cope.

Here are some examples of things you can use in labor to help you get through:

- Eating yummy food/high energy treats
- Drinking lots of water (you need to keep all your muscles well hydrated)
- Peeing once an hour (keeping bladder empty and sitting on the toilet can be relieving)
- Homemade electrolyte drink and ice blocks
- Breathing - utilising breathing exercises and visualisation with your breath
- Words of encouragement - from your birth support team
- Visualisation - of your body opening and your baby in your arms
- Mobilising - dancing, rocking, swaying, walking, stairs, bouncing on birth/swiss ball
- Water - bath or showers
- Acupressure - <https://acupuncture.rhizome.net.nz/download-booklet/>
- Acupuncture (if you have someone able to attend to you in labor)
- Hideaway (private quiet space that you can escape to if things are getting too intense and you want to get away)
- Massage - usually on lower back but feet and shoulders can be helpful/nice too
- Nipple stimulation to restart a stalled labor or intensify/shorten labor
- Clitoral stimulation for pain relief
- Gas/Entonox - if having a homebirth some care providers carry entonox with them so check with them

I F T H I N G S
G O A W R Y

It is always good to consider what you might like to happen (or not happen) if things fall outside your birth vision.

Things to consider:

Instrumental Birth

- Informed consent
- BRAIN model - is it absolutely necessary - can you buy time, regroup yourself, find some inner power and push your baby out?
- Epidural - if baby is in a poor position and you are exhausted is there a potential that getting an epidural could help you get some rest, help baby turn and buy you time to push your baby out?
Weigh up having an epidural versus an instrumental birth - keep in mind though that even if having an epidural you still may need an instrumental birth. Also, it depends why the instrumental is being recommended, if it is fetal distress then there may not be an alternative.
- Theatre - are you having to go into theatre? Is the instrumental being recommended as a "Trial of Instrumental" - see below about what you
- Episiotomy or Tear naturally (if going to)
- If episiotomy, requesting pain relief (local)
- Practitioner doing suturing (who and how skilled)
- Active management of 3rd stage consent
- Immediate skin to skin
- Delayed cord clamping/Lotus birth/Who is cutting the cord?
- Only clinically required people in room
- Student involvement (including Medical)
- Pain relief postnatally

Cesarean Birth

- Medications given are conducive to breastfeeding and being cognizant and aware of what is going on and that an epidural or spinal is preferred unless a medical emergency requires a general anaesthesia
- If a general anaesthetic is required, the baby is taken to the father as soon as is possible for skin to skin.
- The potential of having a caesarean birth is another great reason to antenatally express and harvest colostrum and if you have a store of it, Papa can give the baby a couple of 1ml syringes to ensure baby's blood sugar stays up until they can get to Mama and have their first breastfeed
- Dropping the drape (you can't see the incision but you can see baby be born) - if this is available in your facility
- Vaginal seeding (you need to make sure your care provider knows what they are doing) and that they avoid baby's eyes when doing this. We talk a lot about the importance of your and baby's biome and how it can be positively and negatively affected, vaginal seeding and immediate skin to skin are positive things you can do for your baby's biome.
- Environment (asking for as few people as needed in theatre, music if allowed/wanted, being talked through procedure (or not!), asking that the staff refrain from general chit chat about their weekends)
- Immediate skin to skin for Mama and if unable for Dad (if baby comes out crying and there are no medical issues then the baby check etc can be delayed until the parents are ready - preferably after 'The Golden Hour')
- Mama having all cables and IV on non-dominant arm so she can hold baby with the other arm
- Delayed cord clamping and Dad cutting cord if allowed
- If baby is showing signs of wanting to feed in theatre that this is facilitated/assisted

T H E
G O L D E N
H O U R

Things to consider:

- Delayed cord clamping/Lotus Birth/Who is cutting the cord?
(ensure your care provider or yourself know how to treat the placenta properly if you are having a lotus birth)
- Immediate skin to skin
- If baby needs resuscitation, can it be done beside Mama with the cord still attached?
- Baby left undisturbed on Mama for at least 1 hour for skin to skin and baby led feeding/ self-latching
- Lighting - dim or no lights for baby's eyes readjusting to seeing light for the first time
- Baby checks either done on Mama or delayed
- Vitamin K - do your research
- Eye ointment - do your research
- Vaccinations required - do your research for each one/look at inserts
- Cord blood - does this need testing/taking? Have you been explained why?
- NICU - is baby being transferred? Are you being communicated with what is happening and what is needed?
Is your informed consent being gained?
- Respect - who is touching/handling your baby? Are they doing it with respect and talking to baby?
- Are you keeping your placenta? Planting it? Encapsulating it?

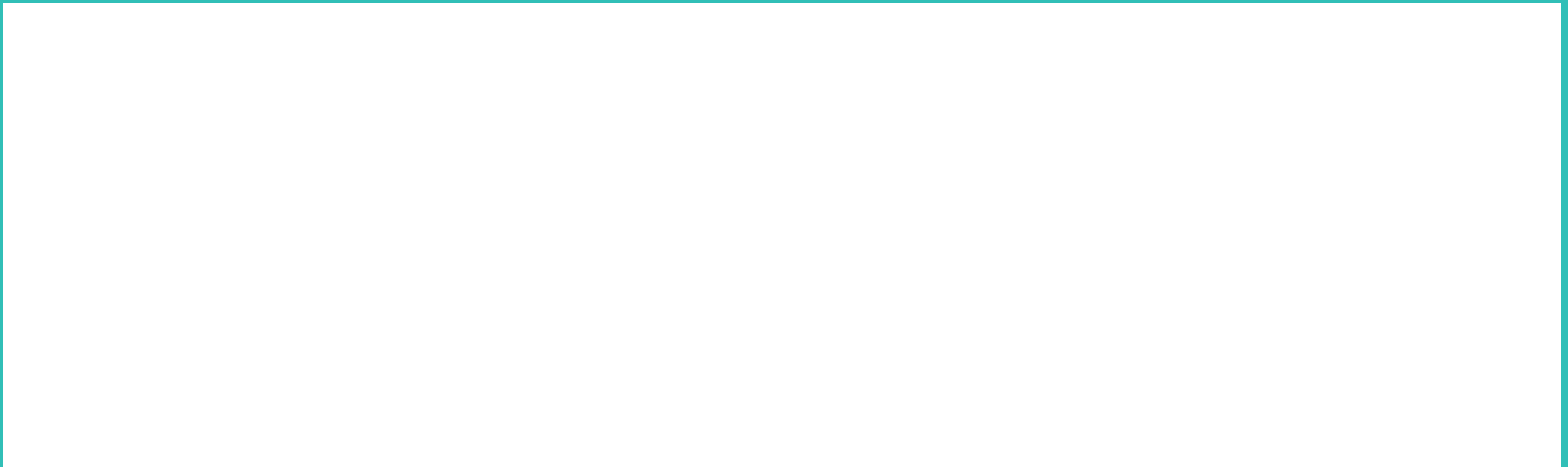
P O S T N A T A L
C A R E

Things to consider:

- Unless homebirth - are you going to stay at hospital/birth centre or go home?
- How long are you going to stay in unit? 1 night, 2 nights, etc?
- Do you have your support network set up for after baby is born?
- Have you worked out a plan for your other children?
- Do you have a carseat/capsule for your newborn?
- Have you done lots of freezer food prep?
- Are you going to delay baby's first bath for at least a few days?
- Do you have your postpartum recovery items purchased and packed? You may want to wait to see what kind of birth you have for a few of the items but there are some you will almost certainly need.
- Are you going to antenatally express and harvest/save colostrum? Do you have the right items to do this? See our Antenatal Hand Expressing tutorial in our Benefit your Birth package, or our Online Antenatal Classes.
- If baby requires blood sugar levels, are you being asked for consent?
- Breastfeeding - are you prepared for the first few days and weeks of breastfeeding? If you have any trouble, do you know who to see or talk to? Does baby need it's mouth checked for ties? Is there someone skilled in this available in your area?
- Care provision/Respect/Language used
- Do you need any blood tests to check your haemoglobin levels or rhesus negative?
- If you are 'required' to stay longer than you want to in a facility, have you been fully informed as to why?

MY BIRTH VISION

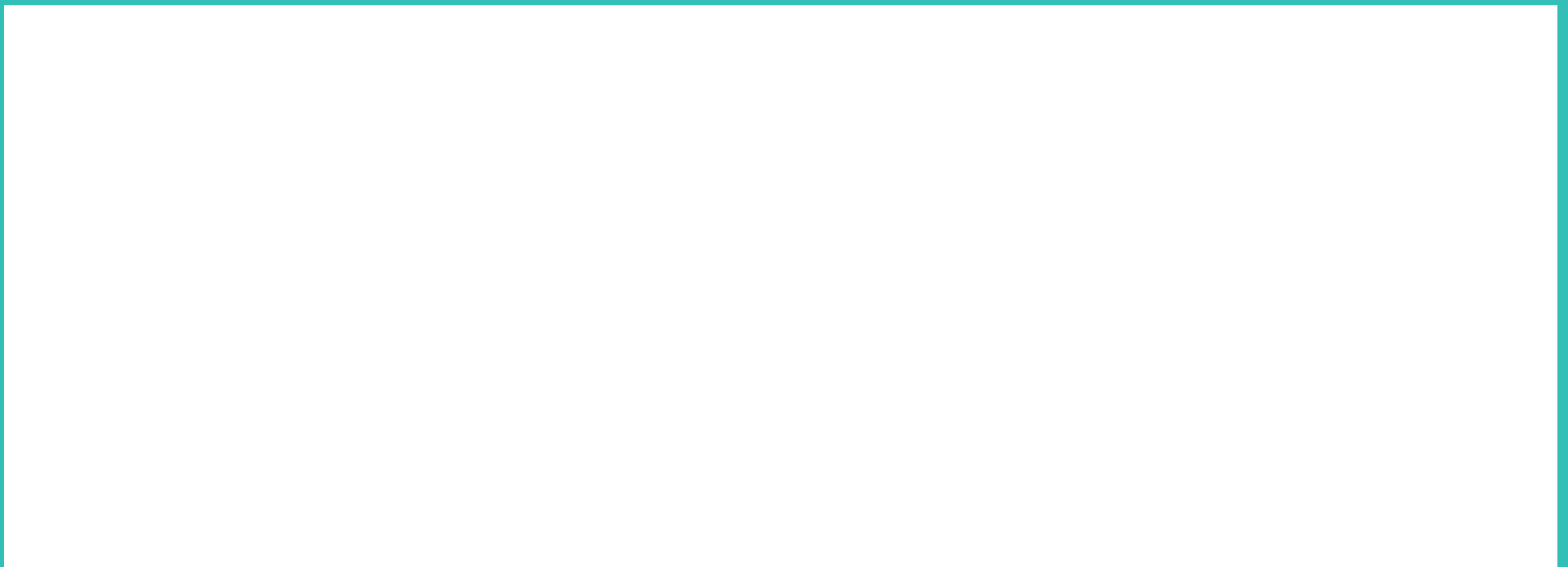
Environment:



Labour tools:



If things go awry:



Golden hour/Postpartum:

