Coped Up!

Comfort, Connection and Coping with Childbirth
Couple's Course Guide

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Please use this guide to help you pace yourself, to record questions you may have for your Provider, to notate what's working in your pain-coping practice and anything else you want to remember for your baby's birth.
"M" = mother's answer and "P" = Partner's answer
Explore! Enjoy!

Module 1A: Where Am I Starting From?

When thinking about physical pain or discomfort (think head-aches, cramps, exercise), what do you already DO to cope with it?

M-

P-

What about emotional pain? (dealing with grief, work stress, hurt feelings, anger, fear)

M-

P-

Psychological pain? (stuck in a meeting, stuck in traffic, insomnia, etc)

M-

P-

1B: Mapping the Mind:

Observe your habits 4-7x this week. How does your mind try to find a way out? How does it cope?

If using ice for "contractions": 60 seconds on, 30 seconds off. Switch hands each time.

Mother:

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2A: The Power of Relaxation

Relaxation is important for two reasons:

1) A rested, relaxed body has more energy to labor efficiently.
2) Conserve energy for the unpredictable nature of Labor. Labor can stop and start. Labor is often long.

What does relaxation commonly look like?

Where do YOU store tension?

M -

Tips for Relaxation:

Ideas that sound awesome to me (ways I'd like to plan to relax):

Ways my partner can best help me relax:

2B: Brain Skill: Breath Awareness

Notes:

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2C: Body Skill: Positions for Rest

Side-Lying:

The ¾ Lie:

Quadriped in the Bed:

Airplane Sleeping:

- on the Ball:

-on the toilet:

In the Tub:

Goddess Pose:

What's available at my home for any of these?

What positions are appealing or comfortable for me now?

What is available at my place of birth for these?

Are there any questions I want to bring to my Provider or on a tour?

2D: Homework

Practice Breath Awareness 4-7x during times of discomfort or through ice "contractions".

Observe what helps you quiet your mind. How are YOU making it work? Record in 2B practice log.

Try the Body Skills practice in your own home. Pair Breath Awareness with physical positions.

Fill out the "Early Labor Plan" below.

An Early Labor Plan

Finalize the Hospital Bag:

What items need to be added last minute? (Phone chargers, snacks, slippers, tooth brushes, etc)

Last Minute Logistics:

What tasks need to be completed before we leave? (pet care, trash out, neighbors alerted, etc)

Alert the Troops:

My doctor/midwife's number: _____

My Doula's Number: _____

Who else needs to be notified? _____

Nourishment:

What foods do I want to eat during early labor?

Resting Plan:

What steps will I take to rest/sleep during early labor? Bath? Positions?

Distractions:

What would I like to use for distraction? Specific movies? Tasks?

Do I have an "early labor project"? Baking or cooking? Finalizing baby room details?

3A: The SHIFT

Laborland:

Primary hormones are Oxytocin and Endorphins.

Oxytocin Effects:

Shifts in Perception –

Behavioral Changes –

What fosters Oxytocin. (yay!):

What disrupts Oxytocin. (boo!):

How partners can help:

What would I like to put in place NOW to plan for lots and lots and lots of Oxytocin?

What questions do I have? What do I need to ask my Provider or on a tour?

How can my supporters best help ME with this hormonal interplay?

3B: Brain Skill: Non-Focused Awareness

Notes:

SEEING…

HEARING….

TOUCH…

Mother:

BREATH…

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3C: Body Skill: Laborland Support

Two basic principles: Ways of talking and ways of touching.

What ways of talking and verbal support are helpful?

Mothers, what kind of verbal support sounds good to YOU? Anything sound awful to you?

I love it when my partners speaks to me like_____.

What sort of touch and physical support is helpful?

Mothers, what kind of physical support sounds good to YOU? Anything sound not so great?

I love it when my partner touches me like_____.

Other notes:

3D: Homework

Non-Focused Awareness 4-7x during stressful times, daily activities and with ice (hand or wrist).

PRACTICE WITH PARTNER SUPPORT (if applicable).

- Observe what helps you quiet your mind. How are YOU making it work? Record in 3B practice log.

- Try the Body Skills along with the NFA practice.

- Fill out the "Birth Ecology Plan" below.

Birth Ecology Plan

People:

Who would I like to invite for the birth? For all of it or a specific part?

Do I want to notify anyone when I go into labor? Who will be in charge of updating those people?

Do I want to invite anyone immediately after the baby is born? At what point do I want visitors?

How do I feel about students observing for any of the birth? What is my hospital's policy?

Do I feel comfortable with all of the doctors or midwives in my practice?

Are there any docs/midwives I would like to get to know better?

Environment:

What can we pack with us to get Oxytocin going? (flickering lights, my own clothes/robe/pillow, etc)

What is available at the place of birth that I would like to utilize?

How do I feel when I tour my place of birth? Do I need to visit one or two more times to integrate it?

4A: New Physicality

Active Labor is technically when the cervix has reached 5cm.

Two types of coping in Active Labor:

Movement:

Counter-Pressure:

4B: Brain Skill: Circular Breathing:

Notes:

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4C: Body Skill: Positions for Active

(Through all of these, BREATHE Together, Stay in Sync)

Movement:

Rocking Draped over a ball –

Sit, Rocking on a ball -

Swaying together –

Slow Dancing –

Counter-Pressure:

Hip Squeeze (while rocking on knees, draped over the ball, seated on a ball, standing and swaying)

Sacral Pressure (while on knees, while standing or leaning)

Belly Lift –

Belly Lift with a buddy -

What's available at my home for any of these?

What positions are appealing or comfortable for me now?

What is available at my place of birth for these?

Are there any questions I want to bring to my Provider or on a tour?

4D: Homework

Practice Circular Breathing 4-7x.

- Use Circular Breathing to calm yourself down.
- Use ice ON THE WRIST.
- Experiment with a cool shower
- Use Circular Breathing during sexy time.

Observe what helps you quiet your mind. How are YOU making it work? Record in 4B practice log.

Practice the Body Skill positions. Work on the ergonomics for everyone.

5A: True Intensity

Most likely when in "Transition", which is about 7-10cm. But use as needed!

What's inside of you:

Your own self-talk –

Staying Present to THIS moment –

MAKING yourself relax –

Using Positions -

What's around you:

Water, tools –

People/supporters –

5B: Brain Skill: Jedi Mind Tricks

How to BE with the intensity. Ways to approach this moment you are ALIVE!

Finding the Center:

Melt into the Center:

Powerful Breathing into the Center:

Sending sound into the Center:

Finding your inner Masochist:

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5C: Body Skill: BE the Tornado

What's INSIDE of you:

FORCE relaxation:

"Hot Spots" –

Keep Coping Sounds Low -

Horse Lips –

Loose Hands –

Close Eyes OR Find a Focal Point:

Self-talk and Self-Reassurance:

What's OUTSIDE of you:

Use of Water:

In Early Labor: Shower vs. Tub

In Active Labor: Shower vs. Tub

Counter-Pressure Changes:

Ask yes/no questions:

May need direction:

Partners Uber-Present:

Use Firm Touch -

Temperature flux –

Nausea/vomiting –

Anticipate Needs -

5D: Homework

Practice Jedi Mind Tricks 4-7x.

- Time for cold showers! Huzzah!

  Not dangerous, but uncomfortable.

  Decide ahead of time which technique you'll play with.

  Stay in until you either have some success or learn a way to relax fully.

Observe what helps you quiet your mind. How are YOU making it work? Record in 5B practice log.

Pair the ways to FORCE relaxation from 5C while in the shower.

6A: Brain and Body Skills for Minor Procedures

Vaginal Exams:

Other Cervical Procedures (Cervidil, Cytotec, Foley Bulb):

Triage:

External Fetal Monitor:

IV Placement (Hep Lock/Saline Lock):

Blood Pressure Cuff:

Machines and Lights:

What concerns do I have for any of these interventions?

What questions do I have for my Provider?

How can my partner help me through any of these?

6B: Brain and Body Skills for Epidurals (part 1)

When Anesthesiologist Arrives:

Receiving it:

Immediately after:

Other necessary interventions to minimize side-effects:

Continuous External monitoring –

Blood Pressure cuff –

Pulse-Oximeter (sometimes) –

Catheter –

Birth companions return:

Tips for resting:

6C: Brain and Body Skills for Epidurals (part 2)

Progress:

Itching:

Nausea/Vomiting:

Shakes:

If pain returns:

Hip Squeeze lying down:

Roll Towel under sacrum:

Fist against sacrum:

Same Brain skills as before:

Potential side-effects:

Breastfeeding challenges:

Headaches:

Pain at site:

What questions do I have for my provider?

How can my partner best support me at any point in an Epidural process?

6D: Brain and Body Skills for Birth by Cesarean

Mother/Partner Separated:

In the Operating Room:

When partner rejoins:

Procedure:

Baby Born:

New family together for the first time:

In recovery:

What concerns, if any, do I have for a birth by Cesarean?

What questions do I have for my Provider?

How can my partner best help me through this manner of birth?

7A: All About Pushing

Three ways pushing can happen:

Directed Pushing:

Physiologic Pushing with Urge:

Laboring Down:

Some Positions for Pushing:

Side-Lying –

Kneeling/Leaning –

Hands and Knees –

Birth Stool –

Squatting –

With a Squat Bar –

What questions do I have for my provider?

How can my birth companions best support me through 2nd stage?

7B: Brain and Body Skills for Pushing

Energy Shift:

Pushing Begins:

Directed:

Physiologic:

Mental Imagery:

Signs of Progress:

Resting Between Contractions:

The Home Streeeetch:

What new questions do I have?

Is there anything I would like to ask my Provider?

How can my supporters best support me through Pushing?

7C: Brain and Body Skills for 3rd Stage

Three main tasks of 3rd stage:

Placenta out!

Fundal Massage/Bleeding stopped:

Repair of any tears:

What questions do I have for my provider?

What would l like more information about?

How can my supporters best support me through this?

When the 3rd stage has fully ended, how would we like to spend our time with our baby?

How would we like to welcome our baby here?

7D: Homework

Practice for Pushing: While taking a poopy AND During Adult activities.

Mothers only this time:

Session Date: Activity Type:

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You've done it! What excellent parenting to help yourself and your baby in this way. I hope you have learned new things about life, parenting and yourself. All my best to you as you become parents!

Warmly,