

WHAT IS TRAUMA INFORMED ANTENATAL EDUCATION?

Having awareness of trauma in an antenatal class setting can help parents and practitioners to create safer environments and resources for antenatal learning

Make Birth Better follows seven core values of trauma-informed care, developed from our workshops and other research. These aim to enhance an approach to care which supports anyone who may have experienced trauma, and in turn to prevent trauma from being caused by us. You can read more about these in the MBB Training Manual. These are:

- **Consent** (offering truly informed, individualised consent)
- **Kindness** (having compassion at the forefront of our interactions)
- **Communication** (considering language and tone, even in an emergency)
- **Trust** (creating a relationship where disclosure is welcome and will be acted upon, but equally where disclosure is not necessary and universal precautions are used)
- **Safety** (creating physical and psychological safe spaces, support for staff to process their own trauma)
- **Respect** (for physical and psychological autonomy, considering cultural, LGBTQI+, historical, disability and gender issues)
- **Collaboration** (considering collaboration between professionals, with the woman or birthing person at the centre of their care).

KEY POINTS

Be aware that anyone you work with may have a previous trauma, either birth or non-birth related and those with previous trauma are more likely to experience trauma related to birth.

Consider the language you use. Is it open, non-judgemental and permissive. Consider materials used. Birth videos & images can be triggering, sending links can be easier than using in a class setting.

Connect with local Perinatal Mental Health services and midwives so you can signpost anyone who may need additional support before birth.

Keep education compassionate and fully informed. Choices and options should be explained using evidence based information.

Consider parents' needs and offer options, if there is trauma signpost to professional services, keeping the space safe for all.

WHAT CAN I DO RIGHT NOW?

It can be useful for practitioners to connect with their local MVP (Maternity Voices Partnership) to know who and where to signpost to locally.

Contact your local Psychological Therapies services and Perinatal Mental Health services to find out what is available near you.

Consider content of current education and how this can become trauma informed.

Be open to listening to people's birth experiences, with no judgement

Inform - birth trauma affects 30% of women & can affect birth partners, family members & staff

Refer – people to the free resources available on our site

Train – ask your local services if they need birth trauma training

Help – signpost people to health professionals, the Birth Trauma Association, Birthrights or AIMS

FURTHER READING



Please see also our crib sheet 'What is Trauma Informed Care?'

- If you are an NCT Practitioner, see the NCT Position Statement 'Trauma in Labour & Birth'
- AIMS UK offers books and a helpline plus online resources
- Birthrights
- Evidence Based Birth has online articles

- Books:
 - Kathleen Kendall-Tackett 'Psychology of Trauma 101'
 - Bessel van der Kolk 'The Body Keeps the Score'