

Having a baby together can be an exciting experience, however, this is not always the case. Therefore it is important that your partner feels supported during their pregnancy so that the difficult times may not linger as long or be as hard.

Often if there are signs during the pregnancy that things are not going well, then the post birth experience could be similar. If your partner can be helped during the pregnancy, they will have a much better chance of having less issues afterwards. If your partner has suffered a traumatic birth before, then it is vital you are able to give them the support they need.

In any case, even if the pregnancy is going well, showing interest and support can help you both feel more connected and help your partner's ability to stay well.

- Educate yourself about what to expect during the pregnancy, the birth and afterwards
- If your partner had a traumatic birth before, then being aware of birth trauma and how it may impact with the current pregnancy is essential
- Be aware of any mood changes where your partner may be becoming more anxious or depressed and discuss this with them
- Be a good listener if your partner wants to talk about any worries they may have about the pregnancy, birth or afterwards. Being able to patiently listen, not interject and not judge can help your partner feel that they are not alone
- Be as understanding and empathic as possible
- Help your partner make decisions about the birth. If your partner had a traumatic birth before, this is essential so that they feel safe and secure.
- Help your partner have realistic expectations about the pregnancy, birth and afterwards to lower disappointment and sadness postnatally
- Gather information for your partner, or with your partner about:
 - Therapists who specialise in perinatal work
 - Self-help approaches that can be supportive during pregnancy

- Become an advocate for your partner with the hospital, especially if your partner has already experienced a traumatic birth, so that they get the support they need prior to the birth, during the birth and afterwards
- Encourage your partner to do positive things and to look after their wellbeing so that they are healthy during the pregnancy
- Try to go to all hospital appointments, scans and antenatal classes together
- Make sure you know what your partner wants for the birth and that you would be able to clearly express this to hospital staff or home birth midwives
- Be aware of the risk factors that may lead to birth trauma afterwards – i.e. previous trauma history of and/or current psychological issues such as anxiety in pregnancy, a high need for control, unhelpful coping skills.

WHAT CAN I DO RIGHT NOW?

Educate yourself on pregnancy, birth and post birth and any difficulties that may arise

Start gathering information that may help with the pregnancy, birth and afterwards

FURTHER READING

Websites:

Pregnancy: [Make Birth Better](#), [National Childbirth Trust](#), [The Baby Centre](#)

Psychoeducation about anxiety and depression: [getselfhelp](#)

Finding a psychologist or psychotherapist: [The Birth Trauma Association](#), [The British Psychological Society](#), [The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](#), [The Counselling Directory](#)

Books:

[Mindful Birthing](#) (Nancy Bardacke),

[Becoming a Parent](#) (Jackie Ganley)