

Addressing Fear Couples Assignment

Addressing fears held by **both** partners is key to creating a peaceful birth space and positive experience. This is accomplished by working through fears together to enable both partners to enter the labor and birth experience with confidence that they can and will handle whatever comes their way.

Instructions: Find a time when you will be undisturbed and **both** of you can focus on having this discussion. Be prepared to take your time - don't rush it.

Take turns answering the questions below. You can have one partner answer all the questions or do each question together. You can also do it in segments or all at once. Be flexible. This is the time for an honest and vulnerable conversation. You may need to have this conversation multiple times leading up to birth to address multiple fears - that is ok! This has the potential to change your birth experience for the better if you do the work!

Let's address our fears and empower our birth!

Question 1:

What do you fear about the upcoming labor and birth?

(Be specific. "Emergency" is not specific. What specific scenario or emergency do you fear? Do you fear a certain procedure? A person?)

Ex: "I fear my doctor cutting an episiotomy without telling me."

Question 2:

What is the worst-case scenario with that fear? What would it look like if that fear played out during labor/birth?

(Ex: Your doctor cuts an episiotomy and then I have to get stitches and have that to heal from postpartum.)

Question 3:

Can you live with the outcome you just described in question 2?

(Yes or no? Why?)

Question 4:

What can I learn about this fear? What is the risk or likelihood of it happening?

(This is a time to learn everything you can about your fear(s). What are the statistics? What experiences have others around me had in relation to said procedure/emergency/etc? How does it affect labor? Affect birth? Affect postpartum? Recovery? What are ways to prevent it? What support do I need before? After?

Ex: episiotomy used to be standard practice, but now only 2 doctors in my area are known for cutting episiotomies and neither are at the hospital I plan to birth at. Episiotomy is a surgical cut of the perineum from vagina to anus. The doctor would stitch it up after birth using xyz. Recovery would include special care of the cut site and xyz. Healing typically occurs after 4-6 weeks. I can prevent it by not going to doctors who do it.)

Question 5:

What can you do *-if anything-* to prevent this scenario/procedure/person from affecting your labor and birth?

Question 6:

What would you tell a friend or family member who expressed the same fear you have? Now have your partner tell you that and tell yourself that assuring message in the mirror as often as you need.

Question 7:

How can your partner support you in preparing for labor and birth knowing about this fear? Anything else you want them to know? Anything you need them or someone else to do?

Question 8:

How do you feel about your fear now? Has it been adequately addressed? Does it feel as big or consuming as it initially did? Has a new fear emerged?

Question 9:

Are you still holding on to your fear from question 1? Or can you breathe deeply...

insert deep breath

...and let it drift away on the breeze?

Question 10:

What can you do together to prepare for your labor and birth experience? How can/will you address fears in the future?

Question 11:

Any last thoughts? Anything come to mind about how you would like to approach the experience ahead? Anything you want or need to do differently moving forward?

Other tips and ideas:

Birth affirmations (make or print some)

Written plans

Journaling

Calming playlist

Walking

YouTube hypnobirthing tracks