

Birth Preparation & Nervous System Support

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This resource is best used alongside the blog [Preparing for Birth: Strategies to soothe the nervous system](#) which provides information and practical tools to support preparation for labour and birth. It supports reflection and communication around your needs, preferences, and nervous system support and can be included as part of your birth planning or birth mapping.

About My Current Pregnancy & Birth Preferences

(Share as much or as little as feels right for you.)

Name: _____

Due date (or current gestation): _____

Primary care provider(s): _____

Birth partner(s): _____

Anything important about this pregnancy or my birth history you want health providers to know:

(Examples: previous birth trauma, difficult medical experiences, anxiety, loss, medical considerations details are optional.)

Example prompts:

- Previous traumatic or difficult birth
- Anxiety around medical settings
- Fear of loss of control or not being listened to
- No previous trauma, but feeling nervous about the unknown

My notes:

My current hopes or priorities for this birth:

(What matters most to you emotionally and physically?)

Example prompts:

- Feeling safe and listened to
- Clear communication and consent
- Emotional support
- Staying calm and grounded
- Flexibility if plans change

My notes:

1. My Preferences for a Calm Birth Environment

What helps me feel safe, relaxed, and grounded?

Example prompts:

- Dim lighting
- Quiet voices
- Minimal people in the room
- Music or silence
- Privacy
- Being asked before touch

My preferences:

2. Triggers That May Cause Stress or a Trauma Response

Are there things that may feel difficult or overwhelming for me during labour?

Examples

- Being rushed or pressured
- Unexpected procedures
- Vaginal examinations
- Loud voices or bright lights
- Feeling ignored or spoken over
- Loss of privacy

Possible triggers (no explanation needed):

3. What Helps Me Feel Calm and Safe

What usually helps my nervous system settle when I'm anxious?

Example prompts:

- Slow breathing
- Gentle reassurance
- Physical touch (or space)
- Clear explanations
- Being reminded I'm doing well

What helps me:

4. Strategies I Plan to Use During Labour and Birth

These are tools I would like to try if I feel overwhelmed, anxious, or in pain.

Examples

- Rhythmic movement (swaying, rocking, walking)
- Low vocal sounds or humming
- EFT tapping
- Visualisation
- Access to bath/shower
- Music with a steady beat

My planned strategies:

5. How the Birth Team Will Know I Need Extra Support

If I'm unable to communicate clearly, signs I may be overwhelmed include:

Example prompts:

- Holding my breath or rapid breathing
- Becoming very quiet or withdrawn
- Crying, shaking, or appearing panicked
- Tensing my body or jaw
- Hand signal/code word

My signs:

When this happens, I would like the team to:

Examples

- Speak slowly and calmly
- Reduce noise or stimulation
- Guide me back to breathing
- Explain what's happening before touching me
- Check in gently rather than asking lots of questions

My preferences:

6. Support From My Partner or Birth Team

What feels most supportive and reassuring to me?

Examples

- Calm verbal encouragement
- Eye contact and grounding touch
- Reminders to breathe or tap
- Advocacy if I'm unable to speak
- Protecting my space and preferences

My support needs:

7. My Plans for Unexpected Situations

If plans change, what will help me feel safer and more supported?

Examples:

- Clear explanations of benefits, risks, alternatives of any intervention
- Time to process information when possible
- My partner/birth support being included in decision-making
- Reassurance that I still have choice and support

My notes:

8. After the Birth

What will help me feel emotionally and physically supported after birth?

Example prompts:

- Quiet time and minimal interruptions
- Skin-to-skin contact
- Gentle emotional check-ins
- Clear explanations of what's happening
- Support with feeding and recovery

My needs after birth:
