

The Emotional Birth Plan



Adapted from Penny Simkin, www.pennysimkin.com

My usual way of coping with pain and fear...

Think of a time when you are taken by surprise or otherwise emotionally triggered, feel unsafe or threatened, or even when you are anticipating excitement like lining up to go on a rollercoaster. Typical fear-based reactions are FIGHT (start swearing at everyone), FLIGHT (try to escape or avoid the problem) and FREEZE (going numb, quiet, paralysed). We tend to have usual "go to", but you may experience all three in different circumstances. Write below about a time you felt scared and how you reacted.

List of things that help me feel safe...

Now imagine those same situations again. What could another person do to help you to come back into contact with the present, and to feel safe again? For some people, this is kind and loving words, for others it is motivation and pumping you up. It could be just a touch or a look, or an action. It could be an image or a particular sound, such as your favourite song. What do you think yourself or others can do to help you feel safe again?



My Birth Plan

Now think about any fears or worries you have going into birth. These are possible anxiety triggers that may arise in the room. Remember to think not only of things happening TO you, such as a painful or unwanted intervention, and also things NOT done, such as not being informed or treated in a kind and empathic way.

Write below as many of these possible trigger points as possible. You may want to complete this with a therapist and/or your birth support partner.

Possible Anxiety Point	Personal Meaning for Me	Coping Strategy
<i>Having a foetal heart monitor</i>	<i>Worry may intensify that my baby is in distress.</i>	<i>Remember to listen to the strength of the heartbeat, and use distraction (music).</i>