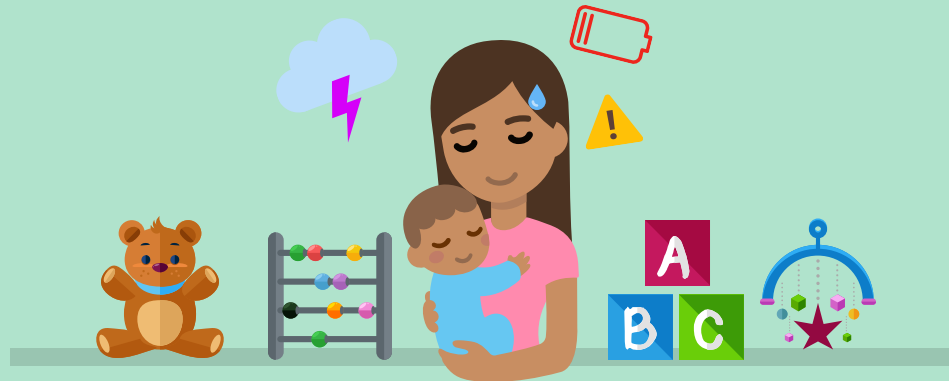


A Partner's Guide to Birth Trauma

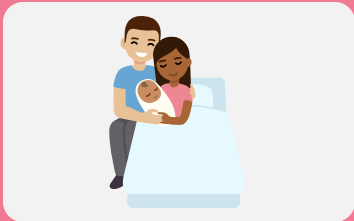
If a mother thinks her birth was traumatic, then it was a traumatic birth.

whole heart
MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH



What is it?

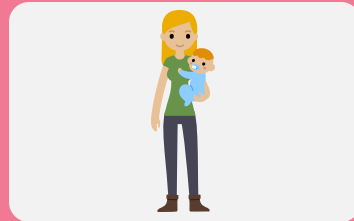
A traumatic birth experience can be upsetting, confusing, and difficult for the mom and partner alike. Birth trauma is physical, emotional, or psychological distress experienced by the mother during or after childbirth. It can be caused by a variety of negative experiences during birth or the mother's emotional state during the birth.



What are the signs?

A mother may have experienced birth trauma if she is experiencing...

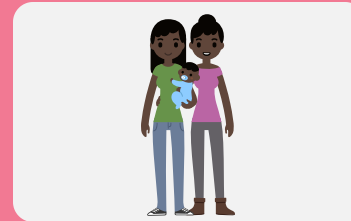
- Hypervigilance
- Difficulty concentrating
- Flashbacks or nightmares
- Sleep disturbances
- Diminished memory of birth
- Difficulty bonding with baby
- Avoiding sex/touch
- Mood swings
- Obsessive behaviors or fixations



How can a partner help?

By...

- Encouraging her to seek help from a trained mental health provider
- Listening actively to her
- Saying that her emotions are valid
- Reminding her of your alliance to her
- Reassuring her it wasn't her fault and she didn't do anything wrong
- Advocating for her well-being when necessary in a medical setting
- Taking care of yourself around the trauma you have experienced



How can a partner hurt?

By saying things like...

“You should be over this by now”
“At least the baby is healthy”
“It could have been a lot worse”
“Move on” or “Get over it”
or by...

- Ignoring her emotions and feelings
- Distancing from her
- Belittling her grief

