

ENT's Advocacy Glossary

Know the Language. Find Your Voice.



The Language We Use Matters

At Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc., we know that having the language to explain how you are feeling, what you are experiencing and what you deserve can help families better understand their rights, ask informed questions, recognize when something does not feel right, and participate more confidently in decisions about their care. You deserve to understand what these terms mean and how they relate to your experience. This glossary brings together important terms related to healthcare rights and communication, birth justice, and equity. Knowing these terms is one more tool you can carry with you as you advocate for yourself, your baby, and your family.

Healthcare Rights & Communication

Advocacy

Speaking up for yourself or someone else to help ensure concerns are heard, questions are answered, and care is respectful.

Autonomy

Your right to make decisions about your own body and healthcare after receiving appropriate information.

Bias

A belief or assumption that can influence decisions or behavior. Bias may be conscious or unconscious.

Consent

Permission given freely and voluntarily before a healthcare provider performs an examination, touches your body, gives medication, performs a procedure, or carries out another intervention. Consent should be informed, voluntary, specific to each offering, and ongoing. Consent is given after information about what is being proposed is explained and understood. Being pregnant, postpartum, in a hospital, in labor, or having previously agreed to a procedure does not mean you have automatically agreed to everything that follows. Consent can be revoked at any time. This means that even if you have given consent, you change your mind and take it back at any time.

Cultural Humility

An ongoing commitment to listen, learn, and respect each person's culture, values, beliefs, and lived experiences.

Doula-Friendly Hospital

A hospital that welcomes doulas as members of the patient's support team and has policies and practices that support their presence and role during pregnancy, labor, birth, and postpartum care. A doula-friendly hospital respects the value of continuous support and works collaboratively with doulas, patients, and healthcare professionals.



Informed Consent

Your provider explains the benefits, risks, alternatives, and possible outcomes of a recommendation before you voluntarily agree.

Informed Decision-Making

Making healthcare decisions after understanding the benefits, risks, alternatives, and possible consequences of each option, including doing nothing.

Informed Refusal (Informed Declination)

Your right to decline recommended care after understanding the possible benefits and risks.

Medical Gaslighting

When symptoms or concerns are dismissed, minimized, or not appropriately evaluated, making a person feel unheard or doubted.

Patient Advocate

Someone who helps you understand information, ask questions, communicate concerns, and navigate healthcare. This may be a family member, friend, doula, or hospital representative.

Patient-Centered Care

Healthcare that respects your values, preferences, culture, and goals while involving you in decisions.

Shared Decision-Making

A partnership in which you and your healthcare provider make healthcare decisions together using medical evidence and your personal values.

Testimonial Injustice

When a person's symptoms or experiences are given less credibility because of prejudice or assumptions.

Trauma-Informed Care

Healthcare that recognizes the effects of trauma and promotes safety, trust, collaboration, and respect.

Birth Justice & Equity

Birth Equity

Ensuring everyone has fair access to the care, resources, and opportunities needed for healthy pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Birth Justice

The belief that everyone deserves safe, respectful, culturally responsive, and equitable maternity care and the resources needed for healthy families.

Community Care

The shared responsibility of families, healthcare professionals, and communities to support healthy pregnancies, births, and postpartum recovery.

Implicit Bias

Unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that may influence decisions and interactions.

Medical Racism

The effects of racism on healthcare access, treatment, policies, or outcomes.

Microaggression

A subtle comment or action that communicates negative assumptions or stereotypes, even if unintended.

Mother-Blame Narrative

The belief that mothers alone are responsible for pregnancy or birth outcomes while overlooking healthcare systems and social factors.

Obstetric Racism

Racism experienced during pregnancy, birth, or postpartum through unequal treatment, stereotyping, dismissal, or discrimination.

Obstetric Violence

Disrespectful, coercive, abusive, or non-consensual treatment during maternity care.

Reproductive Justice

A human rights framework recognizing everyone's right to have children, not have children, and parent children in safe, healthy communities.

Respectful Maternity Care

Care that protects dignity, privacy, informed choice, and freedom from discrimination or abuse.

What Words or Terms Would You Add?
Are there any terms that describe your experiences?


