Maternal Support Practitioner Training

Class 5: Comfort Measures in Labour & Delivery

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Summary of Class 4?

- We looked at pregnancy and labour, screens & tests.
- We learned about the monitoring and procedures in labour and delivery.
- Fetal positioning was explored - let's get these babies in a good position (and keep them there!) It is a really important part of birth!

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What's coming up in Class 5?

- We will look at all things comfort measures!
  - Tips, tricks and tools for an amazing birth!
  - You will learn dozens of techniques to keep a mom as comfortable as possible during labour and birth.
  - Once you understand the Fear - Tension - Pain cycle, so much about birth will become clear this class.

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Non Medical Alternatives:

- We discussed the medications used for sensation management, and we will discuss the epidural further in the course.
- There are many options available to postpone or avoid using pain-management medications.
- As a labour doula, you will find what tips, tools and tricks work for you.

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Physical & Hands-On Techniques:

Please make notes from lecture examples...

- Double hip squeeze
- Counter pressure
- Acupressure
- Massage
- Roving body check
- Comforting touch
- Light touch massage
- Rebozo
- Heat/cold
- Hydrotherapy
- TENS machine
- Hypnobirthing
- Positions changes (see below)

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Informational Techniques:

- Offering explanations
- Answering questions
- Describing what's happening (to mom/ baby, during that part of labour, etc.)
- Offering information about pros/cons/ alternatives around decision-making

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Emotional Techniques:

- Take charge routine
- Comforting words/encouragement
- Attention focusing
- Music
- Reassurance
- Anticipating needs (drink/food, things to make her comfortable in general, explanations)
- The 3 R's Relaxation Rhythm and Ritual (see attached notes by Penny Simkin)

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The 3 R’s in Childbirth Preparation: Relaxation, Rhythm and Ritual (by Penny Simkin PT):

- What are the 3 R's?
- What are the three characteristics?
- Some examples?

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We will now look at different positions & explore the benefits

Photos by FitPregnancy or Baby & Me Fitness

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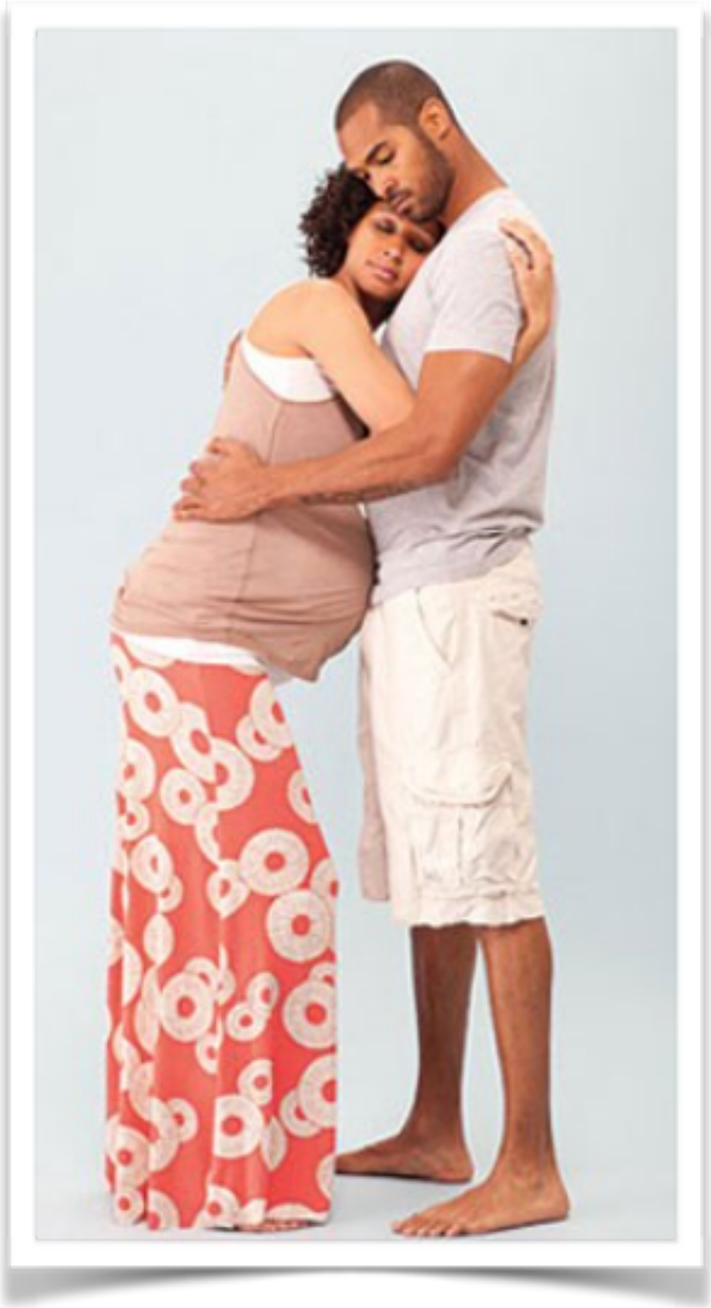
Standing and swaying

- use of gravity
- hip manipulation

Slow-dancing w/ partner or doula

- use of gravity
- hip manipulation
- weight supported by partner/doula
- feel close and safe



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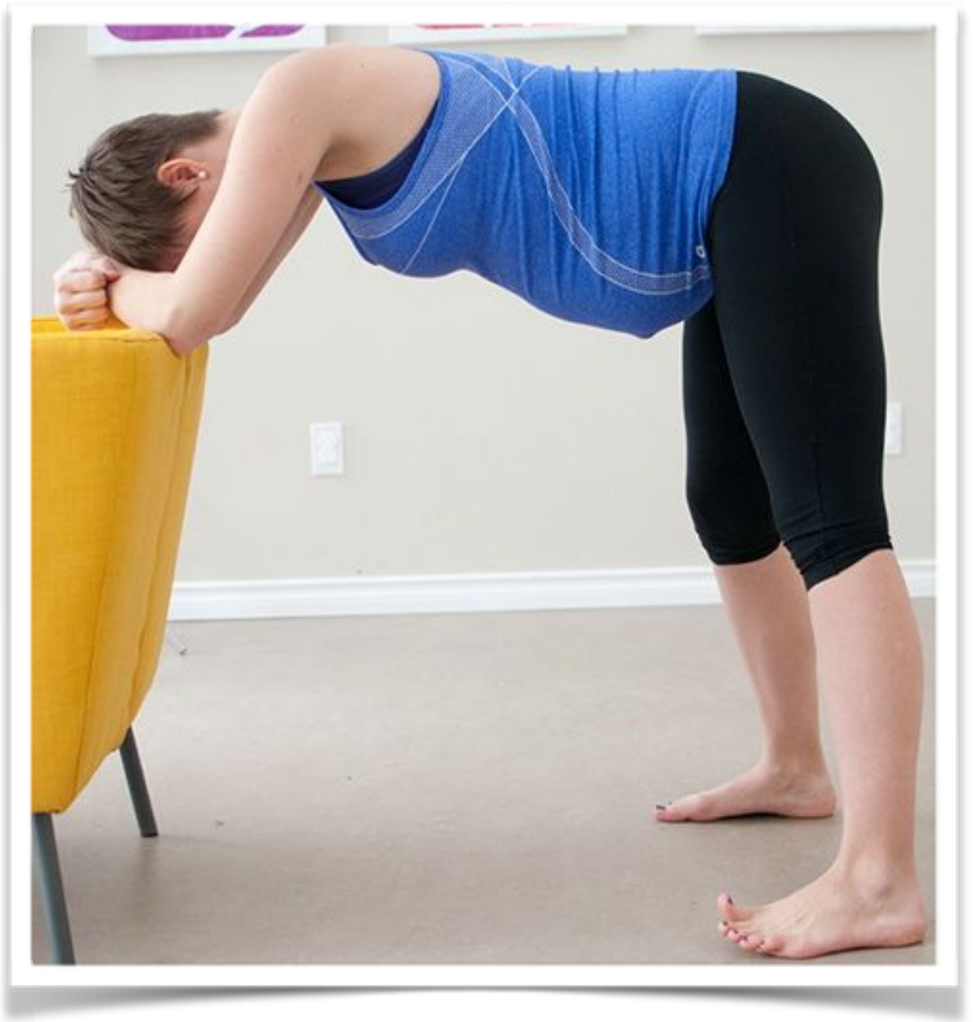
Standing Lean (over counter)

- use of gravity
- ease back pain



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Sitting Upright on Birth Ball

- use of gravity
- opens up pelvis nice and wide
- can rotate hips around to give baby room to move
- restful

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Lunging

- use of gravity
- opens up your pelvis (the side that you are lunging into)
- encourages baby in posterior position to move to anterior

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Sitting and Leaning backwards

- use of gravity
- restful

Sitting and Leaning forwards

- use of gravity
- restful
- eases back pain
- great for receiving back massage

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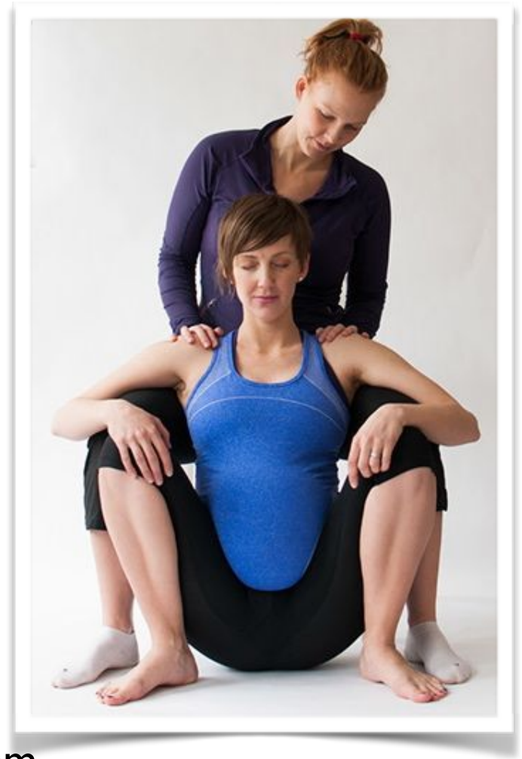
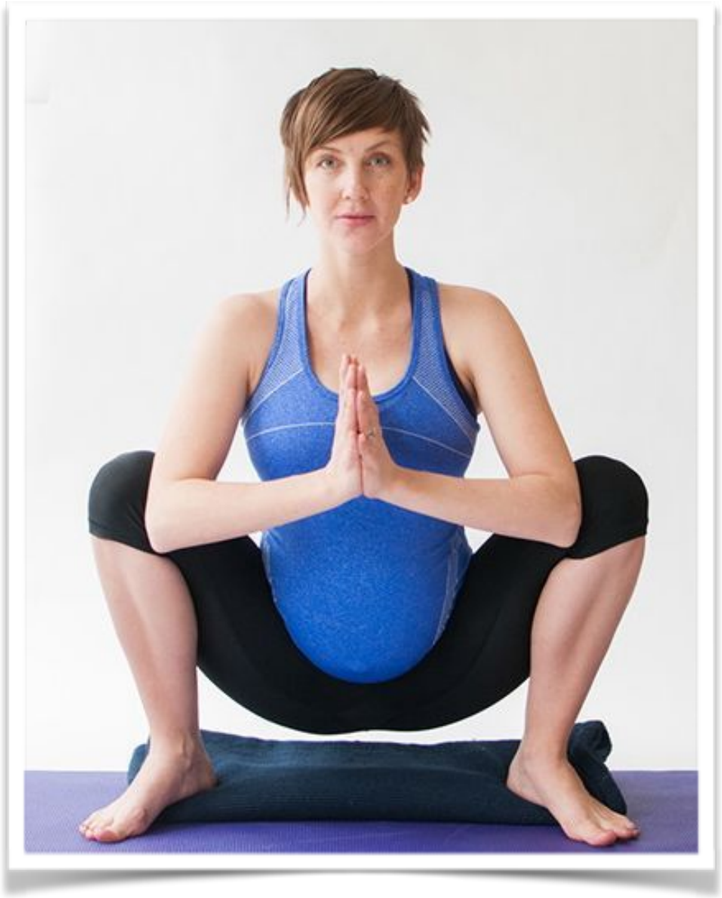
Supported Squat

- use of gravity
- supported so its not tiring
- really opens up pelvis wide and gets baby nice and low
- puts pressure on cervix to help it dilate





Squatting

- use of gravity
- really opens up pelvis wide and gets baby nice and low
- puts pressure on cervix to help it dilate

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Hands and Knees

- eases back pain

- can wiggle hips back and forth relieving pain and giving baby room to move around

- encourages baby in posterior position to move to anterior

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Side-lying/Semi-prone

- restful, can sleep
- keeps hips open with pillow between knees

Flat on your back

- can allow for more room if the back of your pelvis is wider
- restful

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On the Toilet

- use of gravity
- brings contractions on stronger by putting more pressure on cervix
- opens up pelvis like a squat
- no pressure on the perineum; able to bulge and relax

Notes: she can straddle the toilet and you can place pillows on the tank and wrap a blanket over mom. This will expose her back and hips for massage and counter -pressure.

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Positions for Birth:

Side-Lying

- restful
- lots of room for baby to move; no pressure on coccyx
- good for a baby whose heart rate is low

Squatting/ Supported Squat

- use of gravity
- bearing down is easier / more natural in this position
- good for increasing the strength of a mother's push
- opens up pelvis for optimal room

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Positions for Birth:

On the Toilet

- no pressure on perineum; able to bulge
- opens up pelvis like a squat position, but mother is not using as much energy
- mother may feel more comfortable with pushing efforts as the toilet is where she is used to eliminating

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Positions for Birth:

Flat on Back

- restful
- can pull knees right up to open up pelvis

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Breathing:

- Surge breathing
- Calm breathing
- Birth breathing
- Breathing through the urge to push

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Rules For Labour Support Massage:

- Always make sure the client is in a comfortable position, use pillows for support and make sure she is able to let go and relax as much as possible
- Always ask for permission to touch her and ask her about pressure: A good idea is to come up with hand signals for more pressure or less pressure (thumbs up or down or stop)
- Always stroke towards the heart, unless working on the torso where direction is not as important
- Always work with confident hands and work smoothly and rhythmically to promote relaxation and avoid creating a tickling effect
- Always ask how it feels for her and adjust accordingly

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Massage for *early labour*:

- More options for hands on techniques
- Client is more aware and able to express her wants and needs in terms of comfort
- Great time to teach partner techniques to perform on her
- Always communicate with client of pressure, speed, type of strokes but DON'T overdo it
- Read her body language
- Sets the stage for techniques she may like later in labour

Techniques

Effleurage on the back
Finger tip kneading the shoulders or feet
Stroking the back or legs (open palmed)
Rib raking on the back (fingers spread)

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Massage for *active labour*:

- A very important time for physical support in some woman
- Always as to ask her before engaging in any massage, she may not want to be touched during this stage
- Try a variety of techniques if she agrees, depending on how she is feeling she may want more soothing slow strokes or more firm

Techniques

Counter pressure on the sacrum (back labour or low back pain)
Thumb kneading the low back (back labour)
Holding at the ankles (reassurance)

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Massage for *transition*:

- Least likely to be the appropriate time for massage during labour
- Very intense sensations
- If anything, holding techniques with a confident firm hand or counter pressure on the pelvis and low back

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Hypnobirthing:

- Hypnobirthing Theory
- Does it work?

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Ice Exercises:

Gate Control Theory - Your body can process only so many signals at once. If you focus on pain, you will feel pain. If you are able to focus on something more pleasant as a distraction you will feel less pain overall. (for example, watching a great movie while you have a headache may make you forget the headache!)

In this exercise you will practice a 60 sec. labour contractions with a bag of ice, each time we try a contraction we will try different coping techniques.

NOTE: Please alternate hands between each

1. Baseline - No Technique
2. Relaxation and Slow Breath
3. Focal Point (real or imagined)
4. Touch (partners)

***But what if comfort measures and position changes are not enough?

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Homework:

We would love you to create a **visual of a comfort measure**. Sky is the limit! Be creative. We are keeping this vague intentionally as we want you to express what you would take from this exercise and lecture and experiences. Please email completed copies (you can scan or take a photo of your creation) and email it to **bianca@bebomia.com**.

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Summary of Class 5?

- We looked at comfort measures.
  - You have learned many tips, tricks and tools for an amazing birth!

You have learned many techniques to keep a mom as comfortable as possible during labour and birth.

You now have an understanding of the Fear - Tension - Pain cycle and how it impacts labour and birth.

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What's coming up in Class 6?

We will explore all things fitness related to pregnancy and the postnatal period.

You will get answers to the FAQ like:

What exercises are safe and when?

How will I work out with my baby?

Do I have to stop running because I'm pregnant?

Take lots of notes!

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