



How much practice time do you both need to learn the skills for your equal but different jobs and then be able to work successfully as teammates?

- Until your skills feel like second nature.
- Until you have confidence in your ability.
- Until you know you'll use your skills wherever you birth, whoever is your birth provider, and whatever medical care happens.
- Until you absolutely know you will continue to work with your baby's efforts to be born until he/she is.

If you think that's a lot of time and all this is just too much effort, remember that, once your baby is born, you will put much more time and effort into the next 20 years as a parent. Think of this as practice for parenting!

EXERCISE: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Ask yourselves these questions.

Woman: When you're in pain

- Are you stoic?
- Do you whine?
- Do you need a lot of attention?
- Do you like to be left alone?

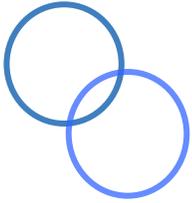
Coach

- How have you previously dealt with seeing her pain?
- Did you want to help?
- Did you prefer to leave her alone?
- When you help, does she thank you or push you away?

EXERCISE: WHAT DOES "PAIN" MEAN TO YOU?

When you think about pain, what do you think of?

Discuss this with each other. If you have very different viewpoints, you want to acknowledge that and flesh out how exactly they differ. Talking about your



perceptions of pain develops the skill of common knowledge. It's hard to work as a team if you're on different pages. And in labor, it would be inappropriate to say to a woman, "Oh, it can't be THAT bad!"

Men, to understand why labor pains are intense, please consider this blunt and straightforward analogy. You know the hole in your penis? If it had to stretch large enough to fit a baby's head through (the size of a grapefruit), would it hurt? Heck yes! A baby is not like a deflated balloon that squeezes out, then suddenly inflates once it's born. Labor hurts, because the woman's tissue has to stretch to accommodate a large object.

Next, talk about the answers you gave yourselves to the above questions. This will further develop your common knowledge of each other.

EXERCISE: HOW DO WE COPE WITH PAIN?

Discuss how you both normally cope with pain, but don't make your normal reactions the expectation. Birth is not a "normal" situation. The woman might behave similarly or surprise herself and her coach, either pleasantly or unpleasantly. Use the below examples as a framework for your discussion:

- Injury: car accident, twisted ankle, sports injury. Make a list of all the painful injuries you've ever had, and think about how you managed the pain and whether you used any skills to cope.
- Illness: sore throat, appendicitis, heart attack. Make your list of painful illnesses and how you coped and the skills you used.
- Death: most people fear that our own death will be painful.
- Dental appointments, surgery: oh, those speak for themselves.
- Other painful experiences: getting a tattoo, painful menstrual periods. Go ahead; make your list and skills used.

If the skill you primarily used in other scenarios was to take pain relief, you understand how easy it seems to do the same in labor. There is no right or wrong. That will be your choice. Work with your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills as best you