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The Truth About Birth Trauma Every Mother Should Know

By Stephanie Mines, Ph.D.

Most people take birth trauma for granted, thinking it means the unavoidably compressive, difficult

journey through the birth canal that we all wish could be easier. What is not generally known is that the pressures of birth and the interactions required of mother and child for delivery are fundamental to health. The development of the baby's cranium is supported by the effort required for birth, and the newborn arrives with knowledge of what it means to partner with mom to win the race in the celebration of life.

There are times, of course, when compressive obstacles during birth are not positive, resulting in difficulties and even injuries. Birth trauma can also mean many other things, including that which is avoidable. Not all birth trauma has to happen. There are standard birthing room procedures in place in many hospitals today that actually contribute to creating birth traumas that are completely unnecessary.

Bright lights, loud noises, unfamiliar voices and cold temperatures are shocking for newborns that have lived in a warm, fluid environment where light and sound are diffused by a protective, maternal shield. The unborn child has spent nine months learning about mom and how to recognize her. To be separated from mother is the ultimate birth trauma. Indeed, this disappointment surpasses the definition of trauma and is more accurately labeled as shock.

Another source of overwhelming trauma is cutting the umbilical cord before it stops pulsing. Dr. Frederick Leboyer, writing about the 25th edition of his book BIRTH WITHOUT VIOLENCE comments on this subject: "What should we do during these critical few minutes of the transition of the blood from the old route through the placenta to the newly working lungs? We must understand that Nature herself doesn't take sudden leaps and has her own pace. She has left this time; these last few minutes, so that this changeover from one world to another can be made with ease."

Birth trauma is also created by what precedes it. "We are nine months old at birth," says pediatrician Tony Lipson. We are born with the memory of our experiences in the womb, though that memory is thoroughly somatic. Prenatal history contains chapters of unacknowledged personal experiences that are formative for every aspect of health. Prenatal life is an epic tale of challenge and survival that

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includes struggle, loss and victory, as well as profound learning.

The fetus learns primarily through movement, and through what can be perceived and heard from within the mother's body. Long term studies conducted by American, Canadian and European researchers show that in-utero behavior is replicated post-natally. These memories are displayed in play, illness, sleep patterns, dreams, and, of course, relationships. It is now clear that what the pre-nate, and the neonate, learn promotes (or discourages) later bonding and attachment.

The fetal nervous system evolves delicately and responsively during gestation, like ornate filigree on an elegant necklace. It is this finely wrought nervous system that sorts information and ultimately determines the time of birth. The final decision making process initiates at least three weeks prior to the onset of labor. The fetus evaluates, through its hormonal sensation, the optimal moment for launching postnatal life. It must assess the degree of its own physiological maturation to make this critical decision. Disregarding this decision contributes to birth trauma.

Birth marks the end of gestational hibernation and the sighting of the springtime of a new world. The stress of labor invites an outpouring of adrenaline that, surprisingly, serves to stabilize and calm the baby. This catecholamine power surge lasts for hours after birth, protecting the baby from danger. Given the brilliance of this perfect design, why interfere with Mother Nature unless life is threatened?

The hormonal arousal of birth promotes the parent-infant bonding that, we now know, is essential for the unfolding of post-gestational neurology. When we unnecessarily disrupt this process, we create birth traumas that play out for a lifetime of health and learning struggles. Immediately behind the ridge of the eyebrows lies the prefrontal cortex (the prefrontal lobes), the largest and most recent of brain additions. It plays a role in language development, interacting with the temporal lobes located on either side of the neocortex. The prefrontals evolve in two stages, the first of which is the immediate post-natal period. The second stage is during adolescence, at about age fifteen.

In the early period of prefrontal development, these lobes serve an integrative function, allowing the neonate to slowly absorb the powerful drama of birth. This lays the groundwork for later prefrontal development. However, further evolution is only possible if nurturing is received at birth through consistent eye contact with a primary caregiver and loving touch. Anything else is birth trauma.

Human development occurs in stages that are windows of opportunity. Prenatal life is a house of windows, and the birth experience is a window to the world. These windows open on a predetermined schedule that assures a precise pattern of neurological maturation. When prenatal and birth trauma occur, these windows do not close completely. Rather they remain slightly or partially ajar. If unattended to, however, these windows become impossibly sticky and extremely difficult to open.

What is needed to open such windows is the kind of stimulation that should have occurred originally. Touch, awareness and consistent, unwavering attention create an awakening of possibility. Love has to be infused through connective tissue that will communicate via the spinal cord to the basal ganglia, setting off a relay of responses throughout the brain. As brain structures respond, changes occur.

Treatment for birth trauma is most effective when it is employed as soon as possible after the trauma

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occurs. The longer the wait, the more prolonged the recovery process. The TARA Approach, a subtle energy medicine system of healing, has specific designs for treating birth trauma in infants, children and adults. TARA treatment designs incorporate neurological and embryological awareness and use subtle touch along with other non-invasive modalities. The emphasis is on self-care. The TARA Approach is an empowerment based, non-pharmaceutical healing system, oriented towards self-pacing. It is one of the few treatment programs that focus on birth trauma, and can be extremely healing in a great variety of situations.

Stephanie Mines, Ph.D. is a psychologist with great interest and experience in prenatal development. She is the developer of the TARA approach, a system of medicine blending east and west traditions to resolve and trauma and shock.

<http://www.tara-approach.org>

Tips For Avoiding Adoption Fraud

By Karl Hinsworth

For many people, adoption is a wonderful way to have a child and start a family. Although not an easy decision for the birth mother or the adoptive parents, with the assistance of a reputable adoption agency and facilitator, good matches can be made and the adoption process successful and with little stress. In addition to agencies, adoptive parents can also find children independently through local newspaper advertisements or on the internet through various registry services.

Take the online option for example. With this, if you were interested in adopting, you would have the possibility of viewing profiles to include in-depth details about both birth mother, possibly birth father, and the baby if born, along with photographs. However, this type of service also benefits the birth mother and/or father in that they too can view potential parents for the baby. Once a connection is made, initial communication would take place via email, phone, or letters, allowing each party to share information or ask questions.

If the two parties believe there is a potential match, a meeting would be scheduled to meet in person. The thing to remember is that most adoption processes, even those done independently go very well. Unfortunately, as with many things, there is a slight risk, especially when using the internet to look for a baby in which a woman may pretend to be pregnant just to get the money. You see, many adoptions for pregnant women will involve her living expenses being paid until the baby is born, on top of a large fee that generally starts around \$10,000.

Keep in mind that if you are interested in adopting, use good, common sense. In other words, pay attention to things said, follow up on information provided, and if at any time your gut instinct says something is not quite right, listen. In fact, even if you choose an independent adoption, we still strongly recommend you have an adoption attorney to assist. In this case, the attorney would be responsible for doing some research, drawing up legal papers, handling the money, and so on.

Two of the most common signs associated with adoption fraud are pressure and guilt from the birth

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mother and/or father. In other words, if you start being pressured for more money, or the birth mother/father begins to put a guilt trip on you for money, food, clothing, and other items beyond the agreement, you should take this as a red flag. Additionally, the birth mother should always be willing to release medical information to you and answer any questions you might have. If this information is held back, you should wonder why.

Other warning signs would include the birth mother/father living in motels or being transients, the mother refusing to accept medical care, and a birth mother/father not providing you with a phone number and address where she/he can be reached. Again, most adoption processes go smoothly, connecting a birth mother with adoptive parents who will love and cherish the child. However, the more you can learn about the adoption process and meet with other parents in your same situation the more empowered you become to ensure you do not become involved with fraud, as well as a broken heart.

Karl Hinsworth is the owner and writer for the website

<http://www.adoptionmesa.com>

which a site

dedicated to researching Adoption related topics and contains all the very latest Adoption news and views. For more details please visit

<http://www.adoptionmesa.com>



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