

## Strategies for Specific “Triggers” of Anxiety during Childbirth

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1. List of things that make you feel safe.

2. Your usual way of coping with pain and fear.

3. List of possible triggers of anxiety, body memories or flashbacks that may occur during childbirth. Check those that evoke anxiety reactions. These are the items for which to plan specific personalized strategies. You describe what makes it fearful and you and your counselor strategize to avoid it or cope with it. Keep this sheet to discuss with your caregiver and to refer to in labor.

✓	Trigger	Personal Meaning	Strategy
	Changed appearance (make-up, hairstyle, clothing)		
	Nakedness/exposure of sexual parts of the body		
	Secretions (show, blood, amniotic fluid)		
	Body positions (hands and knees, squatting, on back with legs spread)		

✓	Trigger	Personal Meaning	Strategy
	Hospital environment (smell, machines, sounds, uniformed personnel)		
	Blood draws		
	Intravenous fluids		
	Vaginal exams/AROM		
	Connection to lines from body to machines or containers (EFM cords, IV line, continuous BP cuff, bladder catheter, epidural catheter, oxygen mask)		
	Restriction to bed		
	Pain with labor contractions		
	Pain-related behavior, panic, loss of control		
	Expressions of pain (facial, vocal, bodily tension)		
	Pain medication "trade-offs": <input type="checkbox"/> Narcotics (groggy, sleepy, less pain, more relaxation) <input type="checkbox"/> Epidural (numb, less participation, inability to do as much, possible inadequate pain relief/less pain, more relaxation)		

✓	Trigger	Personal Meaning	Strategy
	Relationship with your doctor or midwife (gender, familiarity, trust, expectations, confidence)		
	Strangers (nurses, unfamiliar caregivers)		
	Behavior of caregiving staff toward you (respect, control, individual treatment, asking before touching)		
	Issues re partner, doula, family, friends (disapproval, abandonment, unreliability, inadequacy, disagreement, trust, dependency)		
	The actual birth, baby bulging the perineum, emerging from your body		
	Pushing effort, sounds and the pain		
	Episiotomy/tearing		
	Forceps or vacuum extractor delivery		
	Cesarean section		
	Holding and suckling baby		
	Postpartum (inspecting vaginal canal, stitches, fundal massage)		