

Hypno-Birthing talk by Hollie de Cruz
ACT London meeting – 19th November 2015

Hollie got into hypno-birthing by experiencing it herself in 2010 when she had fears about her own pregnancy. She felt that hypno-birthing enabled her to have a team experience, bringing the baby into the world together with her partner and felt that hypno-birthing helped to create intimacy between couples.

She is a member of the Hypno-birthing Association here in the UK.

She described three types of breathing that are taught and used during the birth:

1. **Calm Breathing** – for general relaxation
2. **Up Breathing** – for use during contractions or what they call ‘surges’
3. **Down Breathing** – when pushing the baby out

Calm Breathing - Breathing involves even inhale through the nose and exhaling through the mouth, counting to 8 in and 8 out. Uses visualization – filling a balloon to full capacity with the in breath, releasing the air with the exhale. Slow breathing with no sound.

Couples do this together for 5 minutes every day. Daily practice to help build up the lung capacity up to the count of 8.

Additionally, light touch massage is used on the back to stimulate nerve endings to release oxytocin and endorphins to enable a more efficient birth. These hormones are emphasized over adrenalin and cortisol which are the “enemies of birth” as they take blood and oxygen away from the uterus and to the peripheries as part of the defence mechanism.

Hypno-birthing believes that the language of birth that is traditionally used triggers things in the subconscious. For example, the word ‘contraction’ sounds medical, painful, about tightening? What does the word make you feel? They prefer to use words like surge-flow and movement that sound more positive and energetic. Also talks about Breech babies not being in the ‘wrong’ position. She has a Breech turning script.

Also words like pressure and intensity are used rather than ‘pain’ -which implies something is wrong.

We all experience things differently depending on the circumstances. Being in an environment where the woman feels nurtured and safe will empower her and change the experience.

Emphasis is also placed on making Informed decisions during the pregnancy and birth. The following acronym is used as follows:

- B** Benefits to me and the baby
- R** Risk to me and the baby
- A** Alternatives – other options?
- I** Instinct and the importance of trusting this
- N** Nothing – what happens if I choose to do nothing.

Partner acts as an advocate to help the woman feel empowered. Private decisions – encourages couples to make decisions together; even if it means they take 5 minutes out in private to decide on the next step.

Gets couples to consider the birth environment – where they feel safe, unobserved and relaxed. Out of 6 couples, at least 4 tend to switch to home birth option. Hollie talked about the majority of labours starting at night when dark and relaxed. In contrast, brightly lit hospitals often stop labour from progressing. Women birth best with people they know – birth partners, doullas, independent midwives.

She gets couples to take control of the environment with lighting, music, essential oils: eg Clarysage is good if labour stops (and should not be used before 37 weeks); lavender, rose and geranium and emphasized the importance of creating a nest like environment.

Midwives are also learning hypno-birthing techniques. Hollie would like to train midwives in hospitals.

She recommended a website called Motherland.net – Charlotte Philby about “natural caesarians”. Hypno-birthing is not only about ‘natural births’ but about a positive birth experience with the woman being calm and in control and feeling empowered. She should be an integral part of the team, being kept informed of the process with things being explained to her.

Hollie can be contacted at: Hollie@londonhypnobirthing.co.uk and Londonhypnobirthing.co.uk

You can also follow her on Instagram: Yes mum mum

She is based in East Dulwich but also teaches further afield.

Courses for couples are either 3 x Tuesdays or 2 x Sundays can can be taken anytime after the 20 week scan.

Fees: £295 per couple or £1050 for private 8 hour class.