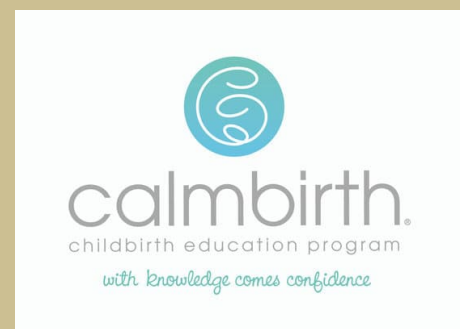
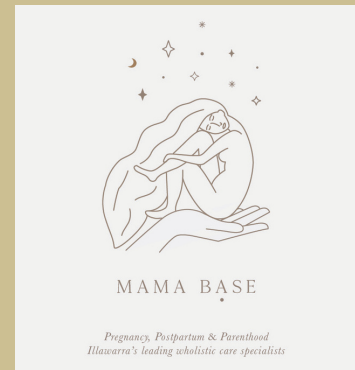


WHAT IS BIRTH TRAUMA?

- As beautifully articulated in the book 'How To Heal A Bad Birth' by Melissa Bruijn and Debby Gould, a 'good birth' is a birth where the woman needs to feel empowered, safe, supported by those around her and by her knowledge base, respected, nurtured, able to ask questions, and that her expert knowledge about herself and her baby is acknowledged and respected. A 'bad birth' is defined as a birth where the women may feel powerless, confused, fearful, isolated or abandoned, unacknowledged or unheard, and that her innate knowledge about her body and her baby are being disregarded.
- Trauma is a natural response to a distressing event affecting us emotionally, psychologically, socially and somatically. Trauma is a response from the brain and the nervous system when there is an overload of information that goes beyond the brain's capacity to cope. Unlike the medicalised definition of trauma, birth trauma is not defined by physical harm or injury. Birth trauma is a result of how a woman felt during her birthing experience, and not, a result of what happened during their birthing experience. Interpersonal experiences during a birth experience can be the element of ongoing distress.
- The physiology of birth produces hormones such as oxytocin, that prime a women's brain and body for trust, openness and connection, and safety through connection. The women birthing is primed for safety, scanning her environment for information as to whether her baby and herself are safe. This increases a women's need for environmental, relational and interpersonal safety.

WHAT IS BIRTH TRAUMA?

- Birth trauma does not discriminate based on culture, level of education, race, birthing experience.
- It is known that women who have experienced trauma (not only birth trauma) previously may be at a higher risk of experiencing birth trauma.
- Non birthing partners can also experience trauma during birth.
- Birth workers can experience birth trauma.
- Birth is subjective in that a similar version of events during a birth, may be traumatic for one women, but, not another.
- 1 in 5 of women who give birth, experience birthing trauma..



HELPFUL THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Relationship based care
- Empowerment of choice through education around birthing
- Awareness of Birth Trauma
- Opportunity to speak your truth, share your story and in doing so feel heard, validated, and held
- Seek support
- Know your rights, and your options
- If you have experienced birth trauma, speak with a trusted mental health professional, birth worker with experience in traumatic birth may be helpful

Just like a child needs to feel safe, soothed, secure and seen during the vulnerable transition's and experiences of growth during childhood. A mother too, needs to feel safe, seen, soothed and secure during her transition into and through motherhood.

RESOURCES

BIRTHTALK.ORG & THE GIDGET FOUNDATION

BOOK – HOW TO HEAL FROM A BAD BIRTH, WRITTEN BY –MELISSA BRUJIN & DEBBY GOULD