



**bringing home an
ancestor**

our nest

during pregnancy

who are the parents? what are our communities' ancestor stories?

think about extractive and cultivating stories - what ancestor actions are we proud of, and which do we wish to change? how are we planning to model ancestral expectations for this child?

things to ponder during pregnancy

- breaking cycles: focus on treating trauma and other harms
- focus on nourishment, free of judgment
- accept gifts of pre-loved items
- take time to focus on movement in whatever natural spaces are available
- accept physical relief and care from partner and professional supports
- accept support of your village
- ask for advice and help when needed
- set boundaries regarding unwanted or unhelpful advice
- focus on safety of self and child
- be gentle - your body is changing daily and is not your own
- be kind - you do not need to be happy or glowing at all moments
- be strong and find strength in your community



our nest

preparing for the birth

childbirth is dangerous and scary, as well as potentially beautiful and wonderful. all these emotions can be challenging for trauma survivors - and can cause new trauma. in bringing a healthy, resilient and strong generation forward, it is important to stay mindful of these realities

things to ponder about the birthing environment

- is it supportive? do the people listen?
- is all care trauma-informed?
- is all care culturally appropriate?
- am i able to include my support person and any other members of my community in my care
- is there access to privacy and resources to practice self care? (including hygiene, spiritual exercises, meditation, private conversations with my partner or support person)
- the birth process can be scary and dangerous - is the birthing environment creating calm and recognizing my fears and helping me address them?
- communicate - in writing and in conversation - with those involved in my care how to support me: what information, communicated in what way is helpful?



our nest

during the childbirth process

cycling through pain and discomfort, anxiety and anticipation, joy and fear -
communication and care are essential

there is no time to ponder: birthing time

- **clinical communication**
use trauma-informed care in providing updates, when there are options for choice, and realities regarding any difficult developments (C-section needed, health indicators becoming troubling, etc.)
- **care**
allow the partner to express care in advocating for the birthing parent and providing emotional and physical support and encouragement
- **family communication**
these new ancestors are entering all kinds of evolved nests that may look many different ways. the birthing parent (and their partner or other support person) get to determine what the baby's introduction to family looks like. plans that were made before the birth might change
- **care**
at every point in the labor and birthing process, care of the birthing parent, encouragement for the support person and attention to the evolving needs of the baby should be centered
- **environment**
what can be controlled about the birthing environment? what comfort and relief can be provided? blankets, pillows, funny stories, heat/cooling, hydration, affirmations, privacy
- **care**
what food does the birthing person want after the baby is born? what people do they want to meet the baby first? attending to such questions big and small is a continued form of care
also, emotion check-ins are important. prolonged pain and uncertainty are hard to sustain - how can distraction and encouragement be incorporated?



our nest

welcoming the baby

care of the birthing parent and baby look different now that childbirth is over. continuing to tend to the needs of the birthing parent, while also establishing the first moments as a new family, care continues to be essential

things to ponder: care

for the birthing parent

- make sure the birthing parent is fed and hydrated and cleaned when and how they wish
- give privacy for bonding and continue to communicate during post-birth medical activities for birthing parent and baby

for the baby

- allow for physical bonding to birthing parent and other parent, along with feeding on demand

for the family

- ensure a calm environment for the family to learn what is like to have gained a new member with appropriate privacy
- allow space for conversations about naming and any cultural practices
- communicate needs and recognize all members of the family need care from each other as well as from their larger community



our nest

the home and family we bring our babies into are the nests built from generations before us. the goal of this plan is to reflect on and tend to the nest we have inherited and build an environment that nourishes and supports the next generation

things to ponder: preparing the home

- what is the environment the baby is coming home to? (or, in the case of home birth, how is the space being transformed?)
- who will be there?

things to ponder: continued care

- the fourth trimester is real for both the birthing parent and the baby. from baby blues to postpartum depression and anxiety, as well as the significant physical recovery required after any kind of birth, care includes: allowing time to sleep, assisting with household tasks and even bathroom use, giving privacy, encouraging breastfeeding (if that is part/all of the feeding plan) through pain relief and keeping company, etc. - as always, communication and open-ended, judgment-free adaptability is necessary
- the baby's needs are fairly simple but they need help with everything - learning how to eat, how to sleep, how to soothe. welcoming the baby into a safe and nurturing environment includes a tremendous amount of touch and care, which can be difficult for the birthing parent who may feel little control over their body - balancing the baby and the birthing parent's needs establishes the family and supporting community that helps sustain and attend to all these needs