New Resources for Childbirth Educators and Parents

Coordinated by Teri Shilling, MS, CD(DONA), IBCLC, LCCE, FACCE

ABSTRACT

In this column, reviewers offer perspectives and comments on a variety of new media resources for childbirth educators and expectant and new parents. The books, CDs, DVDs, and kits reviewed in this issue's column include the following topics: the birth experiences of mothers who survived childhood sexual abuse; lively teaching techniques and ideas to help energize and enhance childbirth education classes; breastfeeding in the workplace; expectant fathers; perspectives on motherhood; unique, helpful tools for childbirth educators to use in designing their class content, addressing the stages of labor, and discussing planned cesarean birth; exercises for pregnant women on bedrest; and a compilation of presentations featured at Birthing the Future's international symposiums.

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Keywords: childhood sexual abuse survivors, breastfeeding in the workplace, expectant fathers, motherhood, labor and birth, cesarean birth, bedrest exercises, childbirth education

For more information on a variety of current media titles, visit the Lamaze International Bookstore and Media Center at www.lamaze.org or call toll-free at 877-952-6293.

Survivor Moms: Women's Stories of Birthing, Mothering and Healing after Sexual Abuse

Authors: Mickey Sperlich, MA, CPM, and Julia S. Seng, PhD, CNM

Publisher: Motherbaby Press (2008)

Softcover: 245 pages

Cost: \$34.95

Where to order: Online at www.midwiferytoday.com

Mickey Sperlich and Julia Seng have created a remarkable resource for women and their care providers. *Survivor Moms* links firsthand accounts of birth from many women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse with general research. The balancing act required to be simultaneously evidence-based and easy-to-absorb on such a serious subject is not a simple feat. This book, however,

is certainly both. The studies cited are current, high quality, and well summarized in a creative format within the text. A comprehensive bibliography is included.

The real power of *Survivor Moms*, however, comes in honoring the voices of women who are survivors. Some of the narratives may be emotionally difficult to read. In the words of one mother, "Our story is not only of horror, but ultimately of the sacredness of life. . . . We have over and over again proved ourselves courageous, persevering and trustworthy." The irreplaceable power of these narratives is well worth the challenge of the reading.

Sperlich and Seng present their material within the context of today's maternity environment. As a result, suggestions are consistently concrete and applicable. For example:

[A survivor] may experience strong distress and need reassurance. A useful step is to validate that the survivor feels like the old trauma is recurring—that is what the re-experiencing of PTSD is like. She needs to be reminded that she is not powerless now, and that help is available to help her feel safer. . . .

An excellent discussion on birth plans for individualizing care is included.

The Lamaze philosophies of birth and attachment are supported by *Survivor Moms*. Breaking the intergenerational nature of abuse is addressed well and head-on. Normal birth is supported, with the expected caveats. Childbirth educators will learn more of the important and yet subtle concerns involved with supporting this population that includes at least one fourth of birthing women.

Is *Survivor Moms* perfect? Not entirely. For example, an index would greatly facilitate the book's use. Are the minor irritations worth overlooking to own a copy? Absolutely! In fact, I suggest that you purchase multiple copies because you will be loaning them out and giving them away.

Reviewer:

Sharon Storton, MA, LMFT, CLE
Sunnyvale, CA

Trainer's Warehouse Book of Games: Fun and Energizing Ways to Enhance Learning

Editor: Elaine Biech

Publisher: Pfeiffer (2008)

Softcover: 440 pages

Cost: \$40

Where to order: Online at www.pfeiffer.com

The *Trainer's Warehouse Book of Games: Fun and Energizing Ways to Enhance Learning* is divided into three sections:

- Section One: What's Ahead (which helps the reader understand the purpose of the book);
- Section Two: Training Tools and Techniques
- Section Three: Training and Consulting Topics.

Each section is divided into chapters that include information on icebreakers, openings, energizers, participation encouragement, comprehension and retention, time and people management, training techniques, rewards and recognition, review of knowledge and skills, and closings. A large variety of trainers have contributed ideas, and Trainer's Warehouse (www.trainerswarehouse.com) sells the products and training supplies that are men-

tioned in suggested ideas. However, I find many of my training supplies at the local Family Dollar store.

As a longtime childbirth educator and birth doula trainer, I was hoping *Trainer's Warehouse Book of Games* would offer lots of ideas to energize my classes and me. I did find a few ideas that would work for my classes and trainings, but not enough to warrant the cost. In the "Members Only" section of Lamaze International's Web site (www.lamaze.org), there are wonderful teaching strategies developed especially for childbirth educators that I think would be more helpful to those of us who are looking for new ways to present material for our specialized classes.

I found a strength of *Trainer's Warehouse Book of Games* in Section Three, which suggests ways to help with people management. A large variety of strategies are provided to enhance staff cohesiveness and communication, increase trust between staff members, improve customer service, and encourage problem solving, teamwork, and team building. I would recommend this book for managers and leaders working with staff. I was impressed by the variety of ideas that could help develop more unified connections within a department.

Reviewer:

Ann Tumblin, CD(DONA), LCCE, FACCE
Apex, NC

The Milk Memos: How Real Moms Learned to Mix Business with Babies – And How You Can, Too

Authors: Cate Colburn-Smith and Andrea Serrette
Publisher: The Penguin Group / Jeremy P. Tarcher (2007)

Softcover: 384 pages

Cost: \$13.50

Where to order: Online at www.milkmemos.com

The Milk Memos was written with a different spin on breastfeeding—that of actual journals kept by a group of IBM-employed women during their visits to the company's employee lactation room. Following is one of the most poignant quotations: "I believe that breastfeeding and the act of breastfeeding are the most fundamental and life-sustaining gifts you can offer your baby; finding a way to keep this connection even at work is one of the best things you can do." As a working mother of two breastfed children, I cried when I read some of the entries about angst and guilt over time away from baby and the competing career opportunities.

To view Lamaze International's philosophies of pregnancy, birth, and parenting, visit the Lamaze Web site (www.lamaze.org), click on "About Lamaze," and click on "Mission and Vision."

The Milk Memos developed from interesting beginnings. On her first day back at work after giving birth, coauthor Cate Colburn-Smith found herself in the company lactation room and wrote on a paper towel, "I'm a new mom and today is my first day back at work. Is anyone else using this room?" Other women responded, and the paper towel was replaced by notebooks in which moms offered each other advice, resources, and references for everything from work conditions and getting sleep to life with a new baby. Photos of babies appeared on the walls of the little room, and friendships flourished. The group "Milk Mothers in Lactation Kinship" was formed. The notebooks became sounding boards, a source for facts about pumping, and a cheering squad. A diverse group of women came together through a common dedication to breastfeeding their babies.

The Milk Memos is a great book for individuals seeking practical information on topics such as the first day back at work, negotiating times to pump, feelings of being out of balance, lists of supplies for lactation rooms (is a chair with two arms too much to ask?), setting goal dates to keep breastfeeding and pumping, tips on making more milk, and the transitions after having a baby and returning to work. There is even a section in the book that addresses how a lactation program can benefit employers, too.

The Milk Memos is a "must read" for working mothers (put it in your pumping rooms), for childbirth (especially postpartum) educators, and for employers. Most women give up breastfeeding within the first 3 months, and returning to work is the number one reason that women quit breastfeeding. With breastfeeding in the United States at a high level (at the time the book came out) and with one half of the nation's mothers returning to work during their child's first year, more attention is needed on supporting breastfeeding in the workplace.

Reviewer:

Sharon Dalrymple RN, MEd, LCCE
High River, Alberta, Canada

The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite: Bottom Line Benefits [Kit]

Authors: Every Mother, Inc., and Rich Winter Design and Multimedia

Publisher: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (2008)

Hard-Board Case of Files: Contains booklets and guides to assist businesses of all sizes in creating a breastfeeding-friendly worksite

Cost: Free

Where to order: Online at <http://ask.hrsa.gov/detail.cfm?PubID=MCH00254> or call 1-888-Ask-HRSA

The Business Case for Breastfeeding includes a hard-board case of five files, each containing booklets and guides assembled to assist businesses of all sizes in creating a breastfeeding-friendly worksite.

The first file, "The Business Case for Breastfeeding," contains a trifold guide aimed at company managers reviewing cost benefits of a basic lactation support program. The guide explains how supporting breastfeeding employees contributes to a company's return on investment. It also emphasizes minimal requirements for a cost-effective program and lists companies of all sizes that support breastfeeding employees. References are also provided.

The second file, "Easy Steps to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees," contains a 20-page booklet providing information on how employees can work with their company to implement a cost-effective lactation support program. The booklet targets individuals involved in implementing a lactation support program, laying out step-by-step details on how employees can tailor a program to their company. It includes four simple steps needed to support breastfeeding employees and provides suggestions on how to get started, how other company positions can contribute, and how to merge work requirements with employee needs. A variety of existing support programs are spotlighted along with great pictures of lactation rooms. Details and charts offer information on pump costs, lactation room options, flexible breaks and work options, education options, and workplace support models. The booklet also includes ideas on promoting the program and evaluating the company's return on investment.

The third file, "Tool Kit," is a folder containing resources for building a lactation support program. Reproducible templates that can be personalized to fit specific needs include a worksite breastfeeding support policy, a sample assessment form, a timeline for implementing a lactation support program, forms for collecting feedback on a lactation support program, promotional flyers, promotional table tents, drop-in newsletter communications, a poster, a resource guide, and employer spotlights. The file also includes a CD with reproducible template tools.

The fourth file contains a six-page employee's guide to breastfeeding and working. Topics include where to find support, getting started, returning to work, creating a pumping schedule, storing milk, how to approach your supervisor (includes a sample letter), how to deal with coworkers, and how to find other breastfeeding mothers.

Finally, the fifth file contains an outreach-marketing guide, a booklet/folder designed for health professionals to assist in conducting effective outreach with employers in the community. The folder includes research, strategies addressing barriers, a list of successful community-based worksite outreach programs, legislation, and a CD-ROM with reproducible resources, including a PowerPoint presentation, template promotional letters, and sample class outlines. Although primarily targeted at employers and employees, the outreach file is pertinent to childbirth educators assisting expectant mothers in preparation for their return to work while breastfeeding.

The illustrations throughout *The Business Case for Breastfeeding* cover human diversity, as well as diversity in company size and function. References are current and well documented.

Lamaze International's Philosophy of Parenting is incorporated throughout the materials included in *The Business Case for Breastfeeding*. The materials emphasize promoting an intimate connection between mother and child through breastfeeding and describe how supporting this connection is vital to society and worthy of employers' best efforts. The materials also recognize that breastfeeding is irreplaceable, that the support of the community is invaluable to breastfeeding mothers, and that this support enhances parents' confidence and ability to make informed decisions that meet the needs of their children and themselves.

Although the material in *The Business Case for Breastfeeding* may not have a direct function in a childbirth education class setting, the tool kit may give childbirth educators a reference to share with expectant mothers in their preparation of returning to work while breastfeeding. The mother may present her employer with the tool kit to assist her company with becoming a breastfeeding-friendly worksite.

The Business Case for Breastfeeding tool kit is extremely user-friendly, well conceived, has a neat and compact design, and simply contains anything you could think of for setting up a lactation support program. It walks you through every step, providing examples and materials along the way. As a free re-

source, it is definitely an excellent set of materials to keep on hand and to share with companies.

Reviewer:

Rebecca J. Metheny, CD(DONA), CLS, LCCE
Morgantown, WV

The Pregnant Guy: Journey to the Center of the Birth

Author: Simon Morse

Publisher: Parentlink Publishing (2007)

Softcover: 243 pages

Cost: \$14.95

Where to order: Available at most major bookstores

The Pregnant Guy tracks one man's journey through the conception, pregnancy, and birth of his first child. A self-proclaimed "tie-wearing member of the Vasectomy Club," Simon Morse opens the book with the admission that he was "a guy who knew he would never have children." Thus, the reader knows from the start that this author is not brimming with excitement, his journey is not likely to be easy, and the reader should not expect a collection of sentimental musings. When Morse's wife states, "We're going to have a baby," reopening a closed topic, Morse voices his objections and concerns, but quickly complies out of love for her. With the aid of reproductive technology, they soon conceive.

Conversational and often irreverent, *The Pregnant Guy* is an easy and mostly entertaining read as the author ponders the ramifications of conception. Starting with impending fatherhood, Morse reflects on his own relationship with his father and what he hopes to emulate and change when he adopts the role. He examines the immediate identity change and shift that occurs within his social circles. In particular, he notes the different ways in which men and women seek to prepare him for the journey to come. The women share every intimate detail of their birth experiences, while the men offer vague warnings with no helpful advice.

In lighter chapters, Morse discusses the trials and joys of baby naming, maternity and baby shopping, the questionably innate phenomenon of nesting, and the paranoia-induced mania of child proofing. Each chapter is punctuated with a "Letter From Baby"—the humorous imaginings of the baby's perspective, concerns, and hopes during pregnancy.

In the chapter titled "Back To School," Morse reveals that his wife is a childbirth educator and a doula before he gives us a glimpse of childbirth education through the eyes of the uninitiated male.

Less than eager to attend, Morse relents and comes to view the classes as an opportunity to feel needed and to be involved. Unfortunately, the instructor's early proclamations of labor as intensely painful and exhaustingly long do not foster confidence. Furthermore, Morse considers many of her suggested coping strategies to be silly and ill advised and, needless to say, comes away less than impressed.

In his most inflammatory chapter, "Conspiracy Theory" (the introduction warns female readers to skip this section), Morse proceeds to proclaim that pain in labor is a myth. While there are schools of thought that feel women have been conditioned to feel pain, Morse goes one step further and insists women do not feel pain but rather fake it for attention and sympathy. A power-play conspiracy. I fear that some might put the book down at this point, which would be a shame, for they would miss out on the highlight of *The Pregnant Guy*, the birth story.

Though sometimes crass and controversial, Morse holds nothing but the deepest respect for the process of childbirth, which he believes to be a "completely and gloriously natural phenomenon." He supports his wife's choice to home birth because he himself was born at home and, though nervous, is excited by the prospect of receiving his child during those final pushes. When his wife goes into labor, Morse relates a funny, touching, and beautiful tale of their child's birth and his role in it.

The Pregnant Guy is a good book for individuals with thick skin, a sense of humor, and an open mind who are looking to read a personal account that is more reflective than instructive or applicable.

Reviewer:

Jessica Koester, CD(DONA), LCCE
Parlin, NJ

Even June Cleaver Would Forget the Juice Box

Author: Ann Dunnewold, PhD

Publisher: Health Communications, Inc. (2007)

Softcover: 269 pages

Cost: \$14.95

Where to order: Available at most major bookstores

Our lives as women and mothers are like a book written single-spaced, edge-to-edge, with no margin around the borders. In her book *Even June Cleaver Would Forget the Juice Box*, Ann Dunnewold encourages women to "cut yourself some slack (and still raise great kids) in the age of extreme parenting."

Through her extensive work helping women through their universal experiences, Dr. Dunnewold

has identified a core challenge among women: despite their tireless efforts, women hide the enduring "dirty little secret"—the belief that they fall short of the ideal. More than any other generation, today's mothers strive to give their children every opportunity. To achieve the idealistic goal of perfection, mothers grapple with the typical behaviors of children as if normal behaviors are somehow a reflection of the mother's inadequate parenting. It is as if today's mother has embraced the romanticized image of the perfect 1950s homemaker, à la June Cleaver from the popular *Leave It to Beaver* television show.

After identifying the extreme parenting messages in the media, popular literature, and our culture at large, Dr. Dunnewold offers a practical, effective key to discovering authentic motherhood. The second half of her book explains how women can live a more satisfying life by rejecting the "extreme parenting model" and adopting "The Perfectly Good Mother Manifesto." This simple yet radical approach helps mothers parent from a place of internal authenticity rather than external formulas. More than a book, the second section of *Even June Cleaver Would Forget the Juice Box* serves as a tool, incorporating questions for reflection, inspirational quotations, and practical solutions for realistically being a "good enough" mother. This book extends the Lamaze philosophy of trusting a woman's inner wisdom through birth into motherhood. Although the book is written for mothers, childbirth educators would do a great service to their expectant mothers by incorporating this philosophy of "normal motherhood" in their classes.

In addition to a wonderfully warm read, coupled with inspiring and introspective assignments, *Even June Cleaver Would Forget the Juice Box* finishes with 11 pages of references, an in-depth index, and appendices. Dr. Dunnewold's work is a gift to mothers on the journey to discovering who they are, and a reminder that women in any phase of life can trust their inner wisdom.

Reviewer:

Margaret (Margie) Wallis, BSS, LCCE, FACCE
Frisco, TX

A Dozen Invisible Pieces and Other Confessions of Motherhood

Author: Kimmelin Hull

Publisher: Cold Tree Press (2008)

Softcover: 256 pages

Cost: \$14.95

Where to order: Available at most major bookstores

In this autobiography of the early years of her marriage and mothering, Kimmelin Hull invites readers to witness her transformation from a physician's assistant to a married, stay-at-home mother of three children and a childbirth educator. Her honest look at the challenges many women face as they move through their young adult lives speaks strongly not only to other mothers with young children, but to women in general and to the men who love and strive to understand them.

Hull speaks frankly and with humor of the multitude of physical and mental challenges that her pregnancies brought her, but her emotional journey is the most significant aspect. The openness with which she shares her darkest thoughts and feelings is startling and refreshing. Hull's battles with postpartum depression and, later, with depression in pregnancy are not uncommon, but they are rarely discussed so freely.

On the one hand, the portions of the chapters in which Hull discloses her immense struggles with depression and coping seem frustratingly short. The topic could fill an entire book on its own. Hull puts forth a glimpse into her personal torture and shares what helped her through those times. There is no lecturing, judging, or offering of suggestions to others; merely one woman sharing an intensely private anguish from which the reader can learn.

On the other hand, it is helpful for families to understand that, although the depression and trials of pregnancy and parenting may seem insurmountable, they are actually a small part of the larger picture. Much of *A Dozen Invisible Pieces* is written with humor and wit and is a lighthearted account of a family having three children in just over 3 years. Hull hides nothing from the reader—the good, the bad, and the ugly. One comes away from the book with the realization that there is no such thing as a perfect mother, just gently flawed women with good intentions and lots of love for their families.

Reviewer:

Janet Regts, RN, BN, IBCLC, LCCE
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Complete Childbirth Class: PowerPoint Presentation

Producer: InJoy Birth and Parenting Videos (2006)

Format: Set of four CDs – PowerPoint

Cost: \$549.95 (licensing fee for password to customize: \$159.95)

Where to order: Online at InJoy Videos (www.injoyvideos.com) or call 800-326-2082

The overall purpose of the *Complete Childbirth Class* presentation is to provide an outline of an entire childbirth education class. The four CDs cover standard childbirth class topics and are divided into subjects related to pregnancy topics and anatomy, stages of labor and comfort measures, interventions and cesarean birth, and postpartum and newborn. The information is presented with slides, video clips, inspirational quotations, and photos. The four programs are targeted to childbearing couples and provide pertinent information and even incorporate some humor with occasional cartoons in the slides.

InJoy Videos has done a great job including short video clips in the PowerPoint outline that reinforce the material being taught. Some video clips from other InJoy productions will be familiar to educators. The video clips incorporate wonderful graphic simulation for anatomy and physiology and for the birth process. In addition, the video clips represent a variety of cultures in various stages of labor and parenting.

This set of four CDs is a good resource for educators. It would be important, though, to spend the extra money on customizing the PowerPoint presentation. Customization will work for a group of educators and will allow for flexibility in how you organize your classes. The danger of the PowerPoint is that you get “locked into” one way of organizing your content and do not change with new research and with new approaches to teaching the information. For example, the *Complete Childbirth Class* CD set does not incorporate Lamaze International's Six Healthy Birth Practices, and it does not provide much discussion on natural endorphins and mechanoreceptors. Although some of the video clips approach these topics in a general way, an educator would need to incorporate more detail into her class outline. Customizing the PowerPoint presentation will allow you to do this. Although the slide presentation does not include narration, the video clips feature narration and actual couples talking about topics that embrace Lamaze International's Philosophy of Birth.

With the customization option, I think InJoy has put together a great tool for use in childbirth education classes. *Complete Childbirth Class* provides educators with a variety of videos and excellent slides to highlight important information in class. This set of four CDs may be used to help organize your classes, but the PowerPoint should not be used

Lamaze International's "Six Healthy Birth Practices" is the new phrase to describe the organization's well-known "Six Care Practices That Support Normal Birth." The modified phrase is part of Lamaze's recent new message-branding project. To view the Six Healthy Birth Practices and to read about the evidence that supports these practices, visit the Lamaze Web site (www.lamaze.org).

exclusively without activities and other teaching strategies.

Reviewer:
Jan Madsen, RN, LCCE, FACCE
Lincoln, NE

The Stages of Labor 2nd Edition: A PowerPoint Guide

Producer: InJoy Birth and Parenting Videos (2008)

Format: CD – PowerPoint (30 minutes)

Cost: \$379.95 (licensing fee for password to customize: \$159.95)

Where to order: Online at InJoy Videos (www.injoyvideos.com) or call 800-326-2082

The Stages of Labor 2nd Edition is a PowerPoint presentation focusing on anatomy, prelabor, onset of labor, and the first three stages of labor. It includes 36 colorful slides, 18 video clips, and discussion questions. The presentation is mainly an overview of labor and birth; interventions are not included. All of the births depicted in the presentation take place in hospital settings.

On several slides, a video clip is available for use. Some of these clips are animated, but most show women and their partners laboring, using a variety of techniques and positions. The video clips also include discussions by the laboring women and their partners. The diversity of the families includes Caucasian, African American, and Asian American individuals, but no Hispanic families.

Although the PowerPoint presentation of *The Stages of Labor 2nd Edition* lasts 30 minutes, an educator does not need to, nor should she, just click through the presentation. She can stop and add interactive teaching strategies at various points, whenever she pleases. Thirty minutes is beyond an adult's attention span. Also, through an additional licensing fee, the educator can modify the slides as she chooses.

It is important to read through the facilitator's guide designed for *The Stages of Labor 2nd Edition*. In fact, if you are considering purchasing the CD, I suggest you go to the InJoy Web site and download the free guide for this presentation. You will need to register on the site, but you can download the entire guide, read about using this presentation, and view thumbnails of the slides. The facilitator's guide also provides some suggested discussion questions and follow-up activities.

The Stages of Labor 2nd Edition presentation would work for childbirth classes and for other ed-

ucational opportunities, such as high school and college instruction.

Reviewer:
Ann Tumblin, CD(DONA), LCCE, FACCE
Apex, NC

Planned Cesarean: Your Guide to a Positive Birth Experience

Producer: InJoy Birth and Parenting Videos (2007)

Format: DVD and VHS (35 minutes); English and Spanish versions; preview available online (www.injoyvideos.com)

Cost: \$249.95

Where to order: Online at InJoy Videos (www.injoyvideos.com) or call 800-326-2082

The *Planned Cesarean* video shows expectant parents who have planned a cesarean how to prepare for and participate in their child's birth. Viewers follow two couples as they get ready for their cesarean births, undergo surgery, and begin the recovery process.

Lamaze educators with a desire to keep birth normal will understandably be cautious about using a planned cesarean film in their classes. The first-time parents featured in *Planned Cesarean* have a child who is transverse, "a condition not safe for a vaginal delivery," as the narrator explains in the film. Due to additional complications, the baby cannot be turned into a head-down position. The other couple experienced their first cesarean "after hours of induced labor failed to cause sufficient contractions. Taking the advice of their doctor for the birth of their second child, they planned a cesarean, and are now planning a cesarean for the birth of their third." While showing a film about births that are planned as cesareans due to understandable medical reasons, it will be helpful for educators to explain the *possibilities* that would or would not be available to these families.

Planned Cesarean includes program segments on the signs of labor; preparing for surgery; preparing the home for baby; practicing relaxation techniques; surgical restrictions; admissions procedures; anesthesia options; surgical procedure, the mother's emotional and physical experience, and personalizing the procedure; recovery at the hospital and home; and emotional recovery. Efforts are made to show some ethnic diversity.

The *Planned Cesarean* video could be used in childbirth class. The entire video need not be shown. Segments can be selected to enhance the discussion

of cesarean birth in a typical childbirth class. For example, the animation segment of the surgery could be viewed, or the segment that discusses recovery at home could be used after cesareans were taught in class. There is animation of an epidural and a spinal being placed, followed by video portions that could be used to cover those topics separately from cesareans. Of course, the video would also be helpful for families who have planned a cesarean. Families who are unable to attend classes would also benefit by watching *Planned Cesarean* at home. For the family who is able to watch it several times, it packs in a lot of information.

I was disappointed that *Planned Cesarean* did not mention birth or postpartum doulas. Personally, I was also not impressed that one of the couples depicted in the film was reading *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, especially since the book is not consistent with Lamaze International's Philosophy of Birth.

Reviewer:

Connie Sultana, CD(DONA), ICCE, LCCE
Rohnert Park, CA

Bedrest Fitness

Producer: Darline Turner-Lee / Next Step Fitness, Inc. (2006)

Format: DVD (51 minutes); English and Spanish versions

Cost: \$24.95 (includes rubber exercise band)

Where to order: Online at www.nextstepfitness.com

The *Bedrest Fitness* DVD by Darline Turner-Lee is designed for pregnant women on bedrest. The exercises are also appropriate for others who want a gentle, but effective, workout. This program offers a full-body workout, using pillows for support and a rubber exercise band to offer resistance. The video is designed for the viewer to participate with the instructor and is divided into chapters for exercising various muscle groups and for cooling down. I consider it an excellent resource for childbirth educators and care providers to offer their clients for the exercise benefits. The video content does not address birth philosophy.

On her Web site, Turner-Lee states, "Although there is no evidence that bedrest prevents preterm births, most obstetricians continue to prescribe bedrest for women with 'high risk' pregnancies." Because of this common practice, she developed a program to help women who are on bedrest to minimize the muscle weakness that occurs when movement is limited.

In the preface of the *Bedrest Fitness* DVD, an obstetrician explains that she has prescribed bedrest for preterm labor, preeclampsia, chronic hypertension, and multiple gestation for hundreds of women in her 21 years of practice. She states that "even up to a week of bedrest will result in a woman getting weaker and less conditioned and having more trouble regaining her stability after the birth of the baby." The obstetrician recommends the *Bedrest Fitness* program as a simple, yet effective, set of exercises that women can do from the comfort of their own beds.

Turner-Lee stresses the importance of women consulting their doctor or midwife about the exercises as they relate to their personal conditions. The program follows the guidelines set by the American College of Sports Medicine and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for exercise during pregnancy. Turner-Lee is a certified physician's assistant, an American College of Sports Medicine Exercise Specialist®, and a certified perinatal fitness instructor.

It is appropriate that the instructor in the video is 32 weeks pregnant as she teaches the exercises from a bed. Occasionally, her breathing is not consistent with her movements, but it could be said that she models what can happen when a pregnant woman is exercising. I would caution that the "froggie position" demonstrated in the cool down could put too much pressure on the knees, and I would prefer that it be more in line with a "child's pose." Another comment on positioning would be to avoid "sagging down" in the "cat stretches." Otherwise, I think Turner-Lee's *Bedrest Fitness* does an excellent job of teaching proper body mechanics with the exercises.

Reviewer:

Jeanne Green, CD(DONA), LCCE, FACCE
Dallas, TX

Labor Simulator: Bringing Childbirth Theory to Life

Producer: Liz Chalmers / Birth Zone, LLC (2006)

Format: Audio-only DVD or set of MP3 downloads (120 minutes)

Cost: Audio-only DVD, \$35; set of MP3 downloads, \$30

Where to order: Online at www.birthzone.com

Labor Simulator presents the soundtrack of a mock labor, serving as an extremely useful tool for teaching the rhythm and progression of labor in a realistic exercise suitable for both a childbirth education class or doula/client prenatal meeting. Through

the use of a cacophony of tones and sounds that become longer, louder, and closer together, expectant women and their support teams can truly get a sense of the pace and timing of contractions, as labor progresses from early labor through to the end of pushing, during a complete practice labor session.

Childbirth educators and doulas will find *Labor Simulator* a very effective and flexible teaching aid to add to their toolbox, allowing class participants and clients to practice labor positions and coping techniques during a condensed labor-simulation exercise. The audio is conveniently divided into sections (early, active, transition, rest and be thankful, and pushing), allowing the educator or doula to cover each section separately, if desired. Just as during a real-life labor, there are breaks between contractions, allowing you to cover teaching points, discuss how mom might be feeling, and demonstrate useful positions and things partners can do to help before the next contraction comes, providing another opportunity for labor practice.

The *Labor Simulator* soundtrack comes with a scripted guide that follows along with each contraction and offers suggestions for topics to cover at each point. The guide also includes a blank script so educators can customize topics and talking points to suit their own style and the situation.

The “Childbirth Educator’s Guide” that accompanies the *Labor Simulator* DVD or MP3 downloads is full of teaching tips, as well as ideas to adapt the simulation exercise to fit your style and class length. The guide will be very useful as you start using this exercise in class. As educators continue to use the *Labor Simulator*, they most likely will adapt and modify the simulation to meet the needs of their classes in a way that works best for each situation.

Educators and doulas who choose to purchase the MP3 version will find the download process easy to follow. Soundtrack files are simple to transfer to an MP3 player or iPod for portability.

One drawback to the audio-only DVD version of the *Labor Simulator* is that there is no “clock” visible when the DVD is playing, so a timer or stopwatch is necessary to determine progress throughout the simulation. When using the MP3 version, the elapsed time is visible, which makes it a bit easier.

The *Labor Simulator* has allowed me to offer realistic labor-simulation experience to my students and clients. Through hands-on practice and experiential learning, they gain a deeper understanding of the pace and timing of labor, along with effective coping skills for each phase and stage. This child-

birth education tool is a “must have” for educators wanting to offer their students a solid foundation of practice for their upcoming labors and births.

Reviewer:

Sharon Muza, BS, CD(DONA), LCCE
Seattle, WA

***Birthing the Future’s International Symposium #1:
The Roots of Love & Violence: Birth and the Primal
Period***

***Birthing the Future’s International Symposium #2:
The Roots of Love & Violence: Birth and the Primal
Period***

Editors: Suzanne Arms and Alex Oliszewski

Producers: Suzanne Arms Presents and Birthing the Future

Format: DVD (*Symposium #1* – set of three discs, 3 hours; *Symposium #2* – set of five discs, 5 hours)

Cost: *Symposium #1* – \$59.99 for home use, \$99.99 for institutional use; *Symposium #2* – \$79.99 for home use, \$149.99 for institutional use

Where to order: Online at www.suzannearms.com

Birthing the Future is a nonprofit organization formed in 2003 by Suzanne Arms (author of the acclaimed book, *Immaculate Deception*). According to its Web site (www.birthingthefuture.com), the purpose of the organization is “to gather, synthesize, and disseminate the finest world wisdom about birthing and the care of mothers and babies from pre-conception to the first birthday,” a time called the “primal period.” Birthing the Future also works with other organizations and health professionals to promote the concepts of normal birth and optimize healthy practices during the primal period. The organization’s international symposiums are held annually or biannually, and the DVDs reviewed here are a record of the presentations made at the symposiums held in Durango, Colorado, in 2004 and in Taos, New Mexico, in 2005.

The symposium DVDs present an eclectic mix of excerpts from video clips, verbal presentations, and slideshows presented at the conferences. Individuals with alternative and cutting-edge thinking about issues in the primal period present studies and personal experiences, and speakers from countries other than the United States describe birth and parenting in their own cultures. Some of the more fascinating presentations are by individuals who have worked to heal their own birth traumas. For example, an American emergency medical technician describes how his frightening dreams of being cut

were eventually understood to have resulted from his mother's experience of surgery during her pregnancy, when his twin sister died in utero and was surgically removed from their mother's uterus. Other interesting segments are narrated by speakers such as a woman from the African country of Burkina Faso. She describes her tribe's joyous and supportive communal culture in which children are valued and believed to be the "gateways of spirit." Other topics include kangaroo mother care, the issue of risks and fear versus trust and confidence during birth, breastmilk as a "living material," differing paradigms of birth, home birth, and circumcision.

Each DVD is divided into chapters for easy navigation. The DVDs (less so in the discs in the second set) are sometimes choppy edited, with narrative gaps, unexplained transitions, and inadequate introductions of speakers, resulting in some difficulty understanding the links among the presentations. Some filmed slide presentations are not easily readable, and some speakers' distracting behaviors are not edited out.

Prior to making the decision to purchase both sets of discs, individuals interested in viewing Birthing the Future's symposium DVDs may want

to consider purchasing the sampler DVD provided for each symposium (a 45- to 60-minute disc for \$7).

Reviewer:

Anne B. Broussard, CNM, DNS, LCCE, FACCE
Lafayette, LA

NOTE TO READERS

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TERI SHILLING is the program director for Passion for Birth, a Lamaze-accredited childbirth education program. She is also the creator of The Idea Box for the Creative and Interactive Childbirth Educator.

Interested in writing brief reviews of books or DVDs hot off the press? Have a new resource you think deserves to be reviewed? Contact Teri Shilling at her e-mail address (teri@passionforbirth.com).

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