Happy Birth Day: Birth Strategies and Birth Stories (Video for download or streaming)

Run Time: 17 minutes/31 minutes

Kajsa Brimdyr and Judy Blatchford © 2016

<http://www.birthingday.org/index.php/resources>

Happy Birth Day: Birth Strategies and Birth Stories are powerful informational videos about women experiencing the miracle of life while using various approaches to help progress through a safe and successful natural labor and delivery. *Birth Strategies* focuses on labor strategies, the importance of continuous support, the power of movement, and skin-to-skin contact—all of which demonstrate how women and their families enter into this life-changing event while making informed decisions with power and control. *Birth Stories* are beautiful heartwarming videos about women sharing their stories and experiences of labor and delivery while integrating the birth strategies.

These videos help to ameliorate the fear of labor, which is often depicted as a traumatic experience with medical intervention and minimal to low maternal control. *Labor Strategies* illustrates using birth balls, body massages, warm water, tubs, and breathing techniques to minimize physical discomfort during labor. Continuous support from family, friends, and the medical team provides guidance and reassurance throughout the labor process. Thinking about positions and movements helps the mother mentally and physically progress through labor, whereas skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby initiates bonding and ultimately begins the process of breastfeeding. These strategies played a pivotal role in each family's birth story. The experiences of the women in the videos demonstrate that one can be in control of their body, collaborative decisions can be made, and the journey into motherhood can be healthy and rewarding.

Although these films are empowering and demystify the trauma sometimes associated with labor and delivery,

they are not representative of most of the population in the United States given the current state of maternal infant health practices in hospital settings. According to the *Journal of Midwifery*, birth centers provide first-rate care to healthy pregnant women in the United States (Stapleton, Osborne, & Illuzzi, 2013). Nonetheless, almost 99% of births take place in hospital settings (Martin et al., 2012), and only about 18.27% of annual births occur in Baby-Friendly hospitals (Baby-Friendly USA, 2016). Although all the strategies shown were implemented in a Baby-Friendly hospital, it would be more helpful to a greater audience if the strategies shown were implemented in an urban, inner-city setting because most women in the United States do not have access to Baby-Friendly hospitals.

The strategies used in the videos reflect well-informed, traditional history for the birthing community. The importance of laboring at home was not discussed in either film. Labor strategies shown in the film can also be done at home before arriving at a birth center or hospital and may greatly reduce the risk of unnecessary interventions. Lastly, the lack of diverse representation was notable in the videos because the films primarily depicted mostly White, married, seemingly middle-class, heterosexual couples. The individuals shown in each video were not representative of diverse communities throughout the United States. This representation is significant in helping members of marginalized groups gain more agency in the labor and birthing process.

Happy Birth Day: Birth Strategies and Birth Stories demonstrate how women and their families experience labor and delivery with power and control while making informed decisions. Although all birthing experiences

are unique and hold significant value, they should also share a common theme of a healthy, safe, and successful delivery with physical, mental, and emotional support.

References

Baby-Friendly USA. (2016). *Find facilities*. Retrieved from <https://www.babyfriendlyusa.org/find-facilities>

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Stapleton, S. R., Osborne, C., & Illuzzi, J. (2013). Outcomes of care in birth centers: Demonstration of a durable model. *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health*, 58, 3–14. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jmwh.12003/full>

Jabina Coleman, a mother of two, Licensed Social Worker and, Certified Lactation Counselor has been working in the field of children youth and families for the past decade. Jabina graduated from Penn State University with her bachelors in Biobehavioral Health in 2004 right after the birth of her now 12-year-old son. It was during her pregnancy that Jabina's passion for supporting and promoting breastfeeding began. After graduating and working for several years as a case manager for foster care agencies, and mother-baby home visiting programs, Jabina saw it fit to pursue becoming a Certified Lactation Counselor to better support the women and families she encountered who were disproportionately breastfeeding at lower rates than their counterparts. Shortly thereafter, she attended the University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy & Practice, graduating with her Masters in Social Work in 2011. Jabina is currently a Licensed Social Worker at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, working in an outpatient OB/GYN clinic serving primarily low income, uninsured, women of color. Jabina's clinical area of expertise is Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders, she teaches biweekly breastfeeding classes, is a team leader for the Baby-Friendly hospital steering committee and devotes a lot of her time supporting, promoting and protecting breastfeeding in the communities of Philadelphia. Jabina also facilitated the opening of the second breastfeeding room at her place of employment, she has also been an active participant in International Breastfeeding Month and Black Breastfeeding Week. Jabina also volunteers for Postpartum Support International Warmline connecting women with Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders to appropriate resources. In 2014, Jabina gave birth to her daughter and was eager to embark on her breastfeeding journey, with more knowledge, experience and support, Jabina has been happily nursing for the past 2.5 years.

Family-Friendly Workplace Measures Taking Effect

The National Partnership for Women & Families has released a memo on family-friendly workplace measures that will take effect in 2017. The new year will bring significant increases in access to paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, fair pay, and protections for pregnant workers. Highlights include two new statewide paid sick days laws and a federal rule that will guarantee paid sick time for more than one million people who work on federal contracts. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/news-room/press-releases/family-friendly-workplace-measures-taking-effect-in-2017-1.html>

Source: USBC