

## MODULE 9

# A Cesarean Can Be Traumatic For Both Parents: A VBAC Can Be a Healing Experience





Childbirth is a transformative experience that impacts a mother's mental well-being and her relationship with her newborn. Despite healthy physical outcomes, how someone experiences childbirth has a significant impact on their psychological well-being.



We are learning more and more that postpartum, women who had a cesarean—particularly one that was not anticipated—are more likely to experience distress, anxiety, depression, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than mothers who had an uncomplicated vaginal birth.

Dekel, S., Stuebe, C., & Dishy, G. (2017, April 11). Childbirth induced posttraumatic stress syndrome: A systematic review of prevalence and risk factors. *Frontiers In Psychology*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00560/full>



# Mothers' **Feelings** About Cesarean Birth Vary Widely:

- ☪ Some mothers recover quickly from a cesarean section and resolve and integrate their birth experience as a step towards becoming a mother.
- ☪ Some mothers, who had an unexpected cesarean after a long and painful labor, may experience sadness, grief, guilt, or anger.
- ☪ Some mothers experience their cesarean as a physical assault and form of institutional violence. For some the surgical birth was experienced as a rape.

Jukelevics, N. (2008). Breaking the silence: Birth trauma, cesareans, and post-traumatic stress. In *Understanding the dangers of cesarean birth: Making informed decisions* (pp. 60-68). Praeger.





# Some Mothers Experience Their Cesarean Birth as **Traumatic**:

- ☛ Although the majority of birthing families cope well with unexpected complications during childbirth, some mothers experience their cesarean birth as a distressing and traumatic event.
- ☛ A negative experience of birth, and specifically an unexpected cesarean, is a maternal risk factor for post-traumatic stress.
- ☛ Birth trauma is defined as an event, occurring during childbirth, that involves actual, threatened, or perceived serious injury or death to the birthing person or the infant.
- ☛ The birthing person experiences intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and horror.



# Some Mothers Experience Their Cesarean Birth as **Traumatic**:

- ☛ Despite a full-term birth with healthy outcomes, a mother may experience a cesarean as a fearful event, a threat to her bodily integrity, and the source of an overwhelming loss of control.
- ☛ Some mothers develop PTSD symptoms for the first time in the immediate postpartum period.

Dekel, S., Stuebe, C., & Dishy, G. (2017, April 11). Childbirth induced posttraumatic stress syndrome: A systematic review of prevalence and risk factors. *Frontiers In Psychology*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00560/full>





# Cesarean Birth and PTSD:

---

- ☛ Mothers experience the same physical and psychological symptoms as those experienced by combat veterans, major disaster victims, or plane crash survivors.
- ☛ The symptoms of birth-related PTSD may emerge weeks, months, or even years after the birth.



## Memories of a Traumatic Cesarean Birth:

---

*“When my son was three years old I was nine weeks pregnant. I became terrified. Terrified of doctors, hospitals, everything. I hadn’t seen a doctor; I was too scared to get shafted again. The terror and pain came back to me. I began to relive the experience again.”*



Evidence suggests that about 4.0 percent of mothers experience PTSD after a normal birth (birth trauma) but as many as 18.5 percent are affected after a cesarean birth.

Yildiz, P. D., Ayers, S., & Phillips, L. (2017). The prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder in pregnancy and after birth: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 208, 634-645. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165032716306814>



# What Are the Symptoms of a Traumatic Experience?

---

- ☛ Intrusive thoughts and re-experiencing the birth in flashbacks or nightmares.
- ☛ Avoidance of people or places that may trigger memories of the birth and bring out intense feelings of distress.
- ☛ Numbing of emotions and general unresponsiveness.
- ☛ Hypervigilance, disturbed sleep, anxiety, lack of concentration, feeling irritable or angry



# Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:

---

- ☞ When symptoms occur in the first 30 days after a traumatic experience, it is called an acute stress response.
- ☞ The diagnosis of PTSD is made when the clinical symptoms persist.



# Mothers Who Experience Their Birth as Traumatic:

- ☪ Are more likely to feel numb, anxious, and unable to connect with their baby after birth.
- ☪ Instead of feeling joy and excitement when meeting their newborn, they feel distressed and angry.
- ☪ When interacting with their baby, they are more likely to feel sad and detached.

Beck, C. T., & Watson, S. (2019). Mothers' experiences interacting with infants after traumatic childbirth. *American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing*, 44(6), 338-344. doi: 10.1097/NMC.0000000000000565





Some mothers who had an unexpected cesarean felt they were disrespected, given no information to make an informed decision, or coerced into having a surgical birth.

Sega, A., Cozart, A., Ocasio Cruz, A., & Reyes-Foster, B. "I felt like I was left on my own": A mixed-methods analysis of maternal experiences of cesarean birth and mental distress in the United States. *Birth: Issues In Perinatal Care*, 48(3), 319-327. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/birt.12541>



# Memories of a Traumatic Cesarean Birth

---

*“They said, ‘You can either leave against AMA (Against Medical Advice), or whatever, or you can get a c-section.’”*

Sega, A., Cozart, A., Ocasio Cruz, A., & Reyes-Foster, B. “I felt like I was left on my own”: A mixed-methods analysis of maternal experiences of cesarean birth and mental distress in the United States. *Birth: Issues In Perinatal Care*, 48(3), 319-327. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/birt.12541>



# Interpersonal Birth Trauma:

- ☞ Some mothers feel traumatized by the way they were treated or ignored by their caregivers (physicians, midwives, nurses) during labor and birth.
- ☞ Some feel that they were exposed to unnecessary and unwanted interventions because it was more convenient for their caregiver.
- ☞ Some mothers were coerced with the “dead baby” threat if they did not comply with recommended procedures.

Reed, R., Sharman, R., & Inglis, C. (2017). Women's descriptions of childbirth trauma relating to care provider actions and interactions. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 17(21). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-016-1197-0>





# Memories of a Traumatic Cesarean Birth

---

*“... I was basically told that if I didn’t have a c-section on their timetable I would kill my baby, even though they couldn’t tell me what exactly was ‘wrong’ as to why I was not delivering vaginally ... They broke me down gradually until they declared my baby was ‘in distress’ (she wasn’t ... I could see the screens).”*

Reed, R., Sharman, R., & Inglis, C. (2017). Women’s descriptions of childbirth trauma relating to care provider actions and interactions. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 17(21). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-016-1197-0>



# Compared to Women Who Had a Vaginal Birth:

---

- ☛ One study found that women whose first birth was an unexpected cesarean had the least positive feelings overall about their birth, compared to mothers who gave birth on their own or those who had an instrumental delivery.
- ☛ Mothers were more likely to feel like a failure, disappointed, and traumatized.

Kjerulff, K. H., & Brubaker, L. H. (2018). New mothers' feelings of disappointment and failure after cesarean delivery. *Birth*, 45(1), 19-27. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29052265/>

# A Birth Experienced as Traumatic Can Make a Mother Feel:

---

- ☛ She has been stripped of her dignity, left alone, and abandoned.
- ☛ She was not cared for with respect and empathy.
- ☛ Her rights were not recognized and her wishes for birth not included in the care decisions made by staff.



# Memories of a Traumatic Cesarean Birth:

---

*“Many mothers go through tough times after giving birth, and I was one of them. I didn't have PPD, but I cried daily for three months over what had been done to me, and what had been taken away. My cesarean stripped me of my autonomy and humanity and left me angry, fearful, physically ill and shaking any time I was touched for almost a year. I had flashbacks of being strapped to a table, hearing my baby cry and not seeing him, not being able to touch him, crying out for him while I was ignored.”*



---

Mothers who give birth by cesarean—and specifically by emergency cesarean section— are more likely to experience post-partum depression.

Xu, H., Ding, Y., Ma, Y., Xina, X., & Zhang, D. (2017). Cesarean section and risk of postpartum depression: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 97, 118-126. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022399917300521>



# An **Unexpected** Cesarean Can Have a Significant Emotional Impact:

- ☞ Affect a mother's self-esteem.
- ☞ Delay mother-infant attachment.
- ☞ Affect a mother's ability to respond to her baby's needs.
- ☞ Affect her feelings about breastfeeding.
- ☞ Impact her relationship with her partner.
- ☞ Affect her desire for more children.

Jukelevics, N. (2008). Breaking the silence: Birth trauma, cesareans, and post-traumatic stress. In *Understanding the dangers of cesarean birth: Making informed decisions* (pp. 60-68). Praeger.





# An Unexpected Cesarean Can Have a Significant Emotional Impact:

---

- ☪ Often the emotional impact of a cesarean is misunderstood, dismissed, or overlooked.
- ☪ The overall outcome of the pregnancy—a healthy mother and baby—is validated, but not the birth process or the negative feelings the mother may have experienced.

Jukelevics, N. (2008). Breaking the silence: Birth trauma, cesareans, and post-traumatic stress. In *Understanding the dangers of cesarean birth: Making informed decisions* (pp. 60-68). Praeger.



# An Unexpected Cesarean Can Have a Significant Emotional Impact:

- ☞ Many mothers are reminded of their traumatic experience months or even years later.
- ☞ For some, the birth trauma is revisited yearly on the anniversary of their child's birth.

Beck, C. T. (2017). The anniversary of birth trauma: A metaphor analysis. *Journal of Perinatal Education*, 26(4). doi: 10.1891/1058-1243.26.4.219





# They Don't Understand

---

Friends, family, and even the partners of mothers who had an emotionally difficult cesarean often do not understand why mothers don't just “move on,” or why they “obsess” about their birth experience.

Jukelevics, N. (2008). Breaking the silence: Birth trauma, cesareans, and post-traumatic stress. In *Understanding the dangers of cesarean birth: Making informed decisions* (pp. 60-68). Praeger.

# From a Mother Who Had Two Cesareans Ten Years Apart:

---

*“What bothered me the most about my sections was the way they were acknowledged by the rest of the world I guess? I mean yes, I had a wonderful baby, and wasn’t I happy, and the answer was no. I actually felt assaulted and violated and out of control ... I didn’t feel there was anything out there really to help me deal with getting it together psychologically.”*



# A VBAC Can Be a Healing Experience:

A traumatic birth of any kind can leave a mother feeling disempowered, violated, or betrayed. For many mothers having a VBAC restores faith in their ability to give birth and care for their infant.

Beck, C. T., Driscoll, J., & Watson, S. (2013). *Traumatic childbirth* (pp. 8-10). Routledge.





# Healing from a Traumatic Birth





# Healing from a Traumatic Birth

---

- ☛ For many expectant people, planning a VBAC is challenging. The prior cesarean can make mothers feel insecure about their ability to give birth on their own.
- ☛ Lack of support and information from caregivers can make mothers question the value of “fighting” for their right to have a vaginal birth.
- ☛ There is often no opportunity to discuss feelings of anxiety or fear about possible complications due to the prior cesarean or guidance to help prepare a birth plan for the anticipated VBAC.

But many pregnant people who experience a traumatic cesarean birth and go on to have a VBAC regain their sense of control, **feel empowered**, self-confident, and proud of having accomplished the birth they hoped for.

Hadjigeorgiou, E., Katsie, C., Papadopoulou, M., et al. (2021). Women's experiences of VBAC in Cyprus: a qualitative study. BMC Pregnancy Childbirth, 21(766). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-021-04193-7>



---

Pregnant people have a unique response to a birth they experienced as traumatic. They will recognize and process it at their own pace—when they are ready and when they feel it is safe.

# Planning a VBAC is a Challenging Journey

If you are thinking about planning a VBAC, here are some suggestions that may provide insight into your prior cesarean birth and help you to plan a safe and empowering VBAC.





---

Healing from a traumatic birth means regaining your power and control, gaining knowledge, **developing trust** in your caregivers, and your ability to cope during your pregnancy and birth.

# Regaining Power and Control Means:

---

- ☞ Recognizing this is a new pregnancy.
- ☞ Making choices.
- ☞ Taking charge.
- ☞ Having the ability to make what you want happen.





# Gaining Knowledge Means

- ☞ Gathering information about your options for caregivers and place of birth.
- ☞ Finding a supportive caregiver who provides evidence-based care.
- ☞ Learning about the many ways to ease your pain, which will help you through labor.
- ☞ Reaching out to support groups to learn about the experiences of other mothers planning a VBAC.



# Coping Means:

---

Being prepared with tools, skills, and resources, including social support and knowing when and how to use them.



# Things to Think About Before and During Your Pregnancy:

---

- ☞ Take time to understand what happened during your prior cesarean. Obtain and review your medical records if you need to.
- ☞ Without imparting blame, share your feelings with your partner. Ask him/her to share his/her feelings. Your partner may have felt totally unprepared, powerless, distressed, or angry at how the birth evolved.
- ☞ Share your birth experience with others who would understand. Consider reaching out to a support group that could validate your feelings and share resources, including supportive VBAC providers.

# Things to Think About Before and During Your Pregnancy:

---

- ☞ Reconstruct your birth experience. Remembering your birth in detail can help reduce your feelings of anxiety and distress, change the way you see yourself—from a victim or failure to a strong and loving mother who did the best that she could to give birth to a healthy baby.
- ☞ Reach out to a mental health professional if you need to.
- ☞ Do you have a specific concerns or fears that you want to address?



# Things to Think About Before and During Your Pregnancy:

---

- ☞ Try to remember all the positive things that happened, the way your body worked for you, the positive decisions that you made.
- ☞ Think about what you would like for your birth this time. This can help you overcome your fears about experiencing another difficult labor and make you feel more in control.
- ☞ How important is it to you that you participate in all the decisions that need to be made during your pregnancy, labor, and birth? Being involved in your care and the care of your baby can help you feel safe and in control.



# Things to Think About Before and During Your Pregnancy:

- 👂 Where and with whom would you like to give birth? What options are available to you in your community?
- 👂 Have you thought of hiring a doula for additional support and guidance to help your labor progress and help cope with the pain of labor?
- 👂 Have you looked for a hospital with low cesarean rates and high VBAC rates? Does the hospital have midwives on staff?
- 👂 Is there an accredited birth center in your community?





# Things to Think About for Labor and Birth:

---

- 👂 How would you like your partner to support you?
- 👂 What would you like your caregivers to know?
- 👂 What help would you like your caregivers to give you?
- 👂 What would make your birth environment more comfortable and supportive?

# Things to Think About for Labor and Birth:

---

- ☞ What assistance would you like to help you cope with the pain of labor?
- ☞ How do you feel about common medical interventions? Sometimes they are used routinely—even if they are not recommended in national guidelines—for birthing people who want to labor for a VBAC.
- ☞ Do you have cultural childbirth rituals that you want your caregivers to honor?
- ☞ How would you like for your care providers to care for you and your baby after the birth?



# Checklist for Parents:

---

When you are ready:

- 👂 Find the right time.
- 👂 Find a safe place.
- 👂 Find someone you trust.
- 👂 Begin to share your cesarean experience.

# Checklist for Parents:

---

When you are ready:

- ☛ What are the positive things you can remember about your cesarean birth?
- ☛ Think about how you would like to give birth this time.
- ☛ Think about what you need to feel confident, empowered, and ready to labor for a VBAC.



# Resources For Birthing People



Get Help | Perinatal Mental Health  
Alliance for People of Color



Prevention and Treatment  
of Traumatic Childbirth



The Birth Trauma  
Association



Birth Is Wonderful



Support For Parents

Fathers / Partners Can  
Also Experience Birth as a  
Traumatic Event.





# Fathers / Partners Can Also Experience Birth as a Traumatic Event.

- ☛ Fathers/partners are often unprepared for potential complications of childbirth or how quickly a normal process can develop into a life-threatening event.
- ☛ Unexpected birth complications—including the need for a cesarean section—may lead to a high level of anxiety and stress.
- ☛ Some fathers have said that they feared that their partner or child might die and felt helpless as they witnessed complications unfold.

*“... from what was going on, y’know, the amount of people in the room and what she was looking like and what they were doing and all that kind of thing, I was thinking ‘oh god, this is 50/50.’”*

Etheridge, J., & Slade, P. (2017). “Nothing’s actually happened to me”: The experiences of fathers who found childbirth traumatic. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 17(80). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-017-1259-y>



# Fathers / Partners Can Also Experience Birth as a Traumatic Event.

- ☞ For many fathers, witnessing the birth of their child can quickly change from an exciting, life-changing event to a distressing experience.
- ☞ When things go wrong, partners anticipate support, information, and inclusion by caregivers—but their concerns are not always recognized or addressed.
- ☞ Many partners are left with unexplained questions about what they experienced as a traumatic event.

Elmir, R., & Schmied, V. (2016). A meta-ethnographic synthesis of fathers' experiences of complicated births that are potentially traumatic. *Midwifery*, 32, 66-74. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0266613815002545>





# Birth Can Be Stressful for Fathers / Partners:

---

- ☪ Being witness to unexpected events such as maternal hemorrhage, an umbilical cord prolapse, or an unexpected cesarean can be terrifying.
- ☪ These feelings can impact their sense of self and identity, given that fathers/partners see themselves as protectors of their family.



A long and difficult birth that ends in a cesarean can make fathers feel helpless and alienated.

Beck, C. T., Driscoll, J., & Watson, S. (2013). *Traumatic childbirth* (pp. 8-10). Routledge.





# A long and difficult birth that ends in a cesarean can make fathers feel helpless and alienated.

---

- ☛ Many fathers/partners who experience an unexpected (emergency) cesarean have negative feelings about the birth of their child.<sup>1</sup>
- ☛ The partner who witnessed complications or potential life-threatening events can experience post-traumatic stress in the postpartum period.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nystedt, A., & Hildingsson, I. (2018). Women's and men's negative experience of child birth: A cross-sectional survey. *Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives*, 31(2), 103-109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2017.07.002>

<sup>2</sup> Schobinger, E., Stuijtzand, S., & Horsch, A. (2020, December 22). Acute and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in mothers and fathers following childbirth: A prospective cohort study. *Frontiers In Psychiatry*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.562054/full>



# From a father who experienced the traumatic birth of his child:

---

*“I had flashbacks that seemed so real it was like I was there again. I deal with it better now but going back to the maternity wing of that hospital caused great anxiety, walking past the theatre doors etc the sound of a heart rate monitor sets me off even when it’s on the TV, I can’t watch things like Call the Midwife or One Born Every Minute or anything involving childbirth on the TV either.”*

Daniels, E., Arden-Close, E., & Mayers, A. (2020). Be quiet and man up: A qualitative questionnaire study into fathers who witnessed their partner’s birth trauma. BMC Pregnancy Childbirth, 20(236). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-020-02902-2>

---

When complications develop and the staff needs to move quickly, fathers can feel like spectators and not participants in their child's birth.

Beck, C. T., Driscoll, J., & Watson, S. (2013). Traumatic childbirth (pp. 8-10). Routledge.





- ☞ Not having information during the birth and being left out of decision-making can make fathers feel that they lack control over events.
- ☞ Fathers' feelings of loss of control can contribute to their experience of birth trauma.

Daniels, E., Arden-Close, E., & Mayers, A. (2020). Be quiet and man up: A qualitative questionnaire study into fathers who witnessed their partner's birth trauma. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*, 20(236). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-020-02902-2>



# From a father who experienced the traumatic birth of his child:

---

*“I spend a lot of my life being in control of stuff and looking after stuff and managing stuff ... I was in a situation where I was, er, I felt like I was ... totally out of control.”*



- 
- ☞ Without information from caregivers, fathers can feel vulnerable, confused, and unable to lend support to their partner.
  - ☞ Partners can feel ignored or abandoned by the maternity care staff that must respond to the immediate needs of mother and baby.

Elmir, R., & Schmied, V. (2021). A qualitative study of the impact of adverse birth experiences on fathers. *Women Birth* S1871-5192. doi: 10.1016/j.wombi.2021.01.005

# How Do Most Fathers Cope After Experiencing a Traumatic Cesarean?

- ☞ Some fathers recognize the need for support and guidance after they have experienced a traumatic birth, but are reluctant to reach out for it.
- ☞ Many fathers feel that their stress and anxiety are not as traumatic as their partner's birth experience.
- ☞ Fathers are the primary source of support of their partner after childbirth.
- ☞ Most tend to keep their emotions to themselves because they need “to be strong” for their family.

Etheridge, J., & Slade, P. (2017). “Nothing’s actually happened to me”: The experiences of fathers who found childbirth traumatic. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 17(80). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-017-1259-y>



# From a father who experienced the traumatic birth of his child:

---

*“I felt guilt ... that I was feeling traumatized when, you know, obviously I hadn’t really gone through anything.”*

Etheridge, J., & Slade, P. (2017). “Nothing’s actually happened to me”: The experiences of fathers who found childbirth traumatic. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 17(80). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-017-1259-y>

# Fathers / Partners Can Feel Differently About Planning a VBAC:

---

- ☞ Some fathers are ready to provide the support a mother needs to prepare for a VBAC.
- ☞ Some partners fear another complicated birth and prefer the “safety” and predictability of a repeat cesarean.
- ☞ Some partners are not sure they can meet the challenge of another possibly long birth.



# If, *As a Partner*, You Have Experienced a Traumatic Birth:

- ☛ You will need time and opportunity to make sense of the events you witnessed.
- ☛ Healing from a traumatic birth means regaining your power and control, gaining knowledge, developing trust in your partner's caregivers, and becoming confident in your ability to cope during another labor and birth.
- ☛ To fully support your partner's wish to plan a VBAC, you need to feel confident.



- 
- ☞ Childbirth can be emotionally difficult or traumatic for partners.
  - ☞ When it comes to dealing with a traumatic birth experience, birth partners very often do not get the support and guidance they need from maternity care professionals.
  - ☞ It helps if you can talk with your partner about any negative impact the prior labor or cesarean may have had on you. Define how you can best be involved and supportive when planning a VBAC.
  - ☞ Some partners do not want to “risk” another labor that ends up in a cesarean again, and thus want their partner to proceed with a scheduled cesarean. Talk to your partner and care giver about these feelings. Partnering with your loved one to regain power, control, and knowledge often helps partners cope with labor in a healthy way, regardless of the outcome.



# Fathers / Partners Healing from a Traumatic Birth

If you are thinking about supporting your partner in her desire to have a VBAC, here are some suggestions to help you feel confident and ready to provide the care and assistance she will need.





---

Some fathers need time to recognize and grieve the loss of their expectations for a healthy birth. Give yourself a break. Take the time you need to understand and work through your experience.



# When You Think About Planning a VBAC:

---

- ☞ What advantages do you see for your partner, yourself, and your family if you plan a VBAC?
- ☞ What are the disadvantages?
- ☞ What issues do both of you agree and disagree on?
- ☞ Can you think of ways of working through these issues?



# When You Think About Planning a VBAC:



- ☞ Have you thought about accompanying your partner to a prenatal appointment?
- ☞ Do you need to review the cesarean birth record to help you understand what happened?
- ☞ Would you consider going to a VBAC support group?
- ☞ Supporting a person in childbirth is hard work. Are you worried you won't be able to provide what is needed?



# When You Think About Planning a VBAC:

---

- ☞ Have you thought about hiring a doula that can guide and support you both during labor and birth?
- ☞ What information or reassurances do you need to make you feel comfortable about planning a VBAC?
- ☞ You may feel strongly that a scheduled repeat cesarean is the safest and easiest way to have this baby. Can you understand why your partner feels strongly about planning a VBAC?





It's OK if you feel you can't provide for all your partner's needs. Together, choose a **team of birth professionals** that you know you can trust to support you and your partner no matter how your baby will be born.

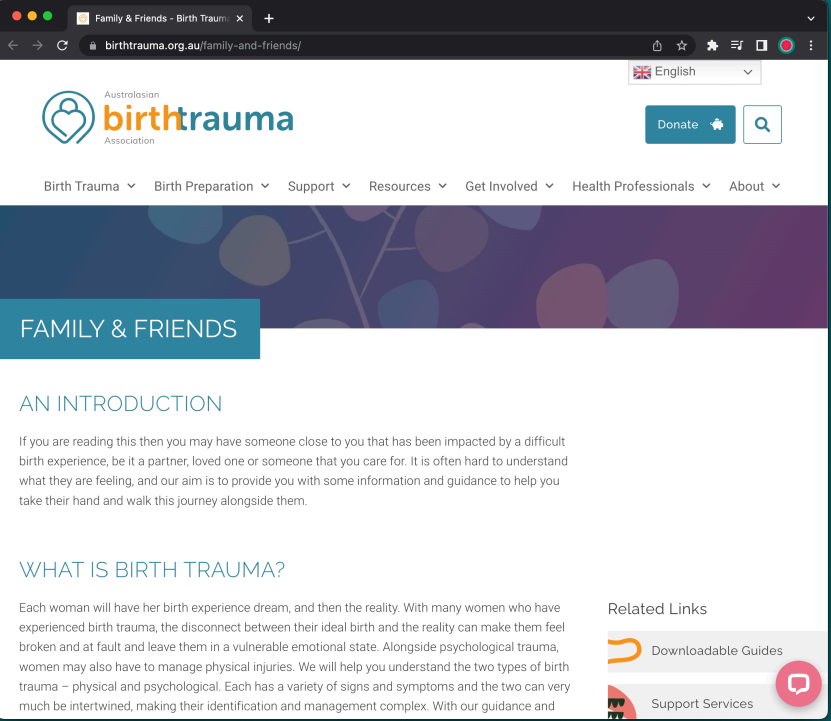


## Key Points to Review:

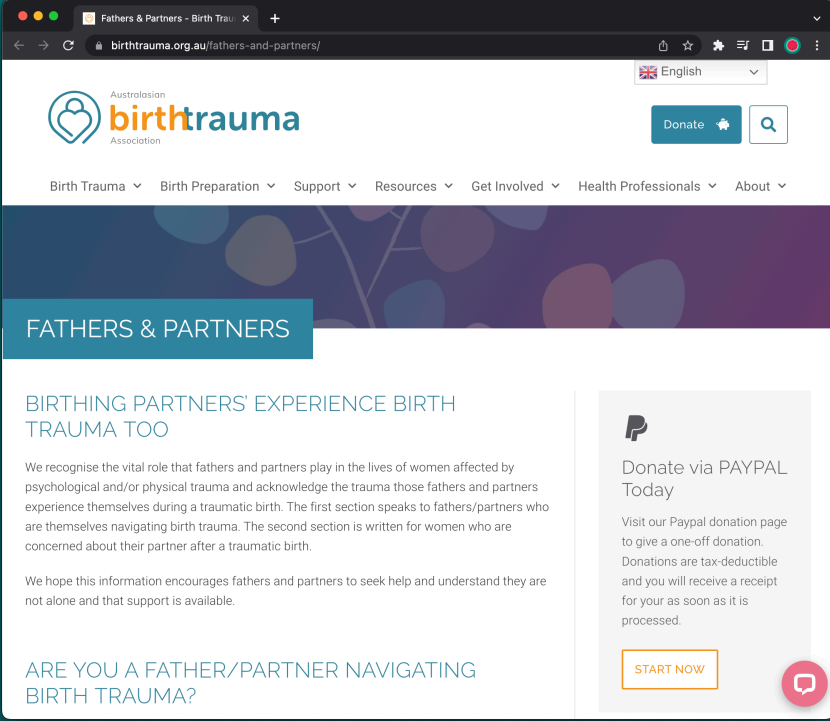
---

- ☞ Childbirth can also be emotionally difficult or traumatic for fathers/partners.
- ☞ Take the time you need to gather information and talk about how the cesarean birth has impacted you.
- ☞ You may have a different point of view about the best way to give birth after a prior cesarean.
- ☞ Define for yourself how you can best support your partner.

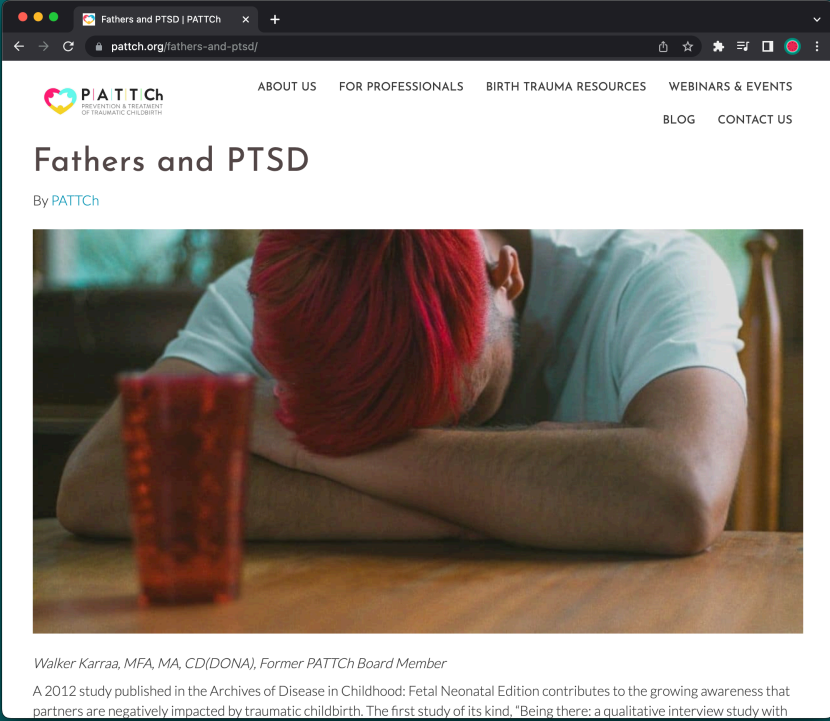
# Resources



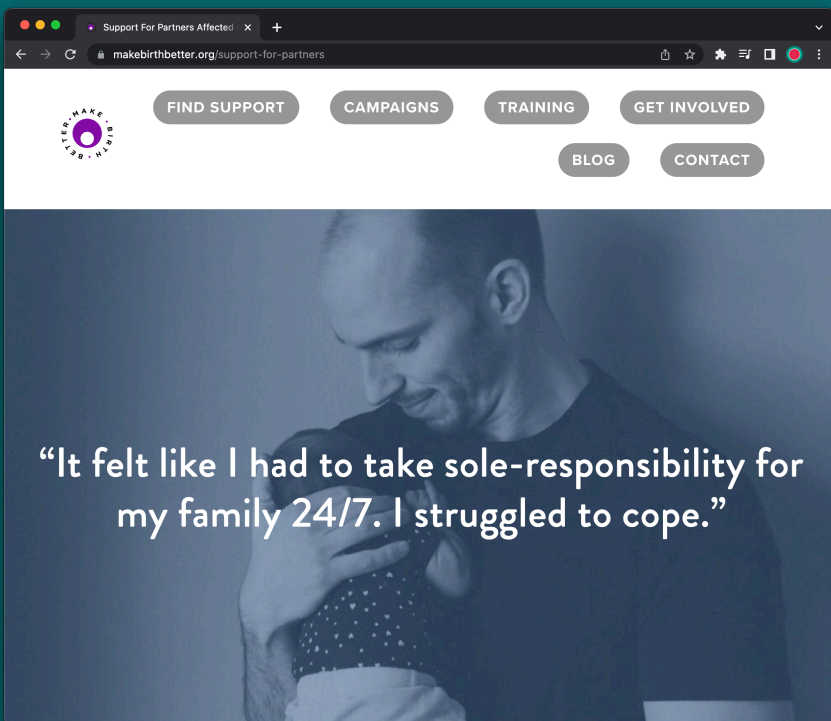
Family & Friends



Fathers/Partners



Fathers and PTSD



Support for Partners