

Snippets . . .

APPENDIX 1 NEW SYLLABUS DOCUMENT

Context and problem. As an acupuncturist/natural therapist who has worked in the infertility/ obstetric area for the past 25 years, I have observed the medically orientated preparation of prospective parents, and the standards of nursing care dwindle and hence the level of preventable post natal complications rise.

In my capacity of health care professional, I have previously coached couples to manage labour from a proactive stand, in private sessions. Armed with information on strategies, acupuncture points to be pressed, and when, they have usually found the rates of medical intervention have been less than would have been expected. Recently I have witnessed patients desperate for relief from post natal uterine infections, and haemorrhages several days after hospital discharge, and the resultant exhaustion, depression and insufficient lactation problems. In my professional opinion, these problems seemed less prevalent when new mothers were hospitalised for longer recuperative periods. I propose that the resultant stress on families may be minimised, were new dads able to proactively problem solve.

I have also been made aware of the apparent perceived redundancy birthing breathing techniques in ante natal information. This formed the bulk of the new parent training a decade ago, when women were expected to naturally birth. Women are instead finding themselves coached within the antenatal classes, in which pain relief to choose, and how to care for their post-Caesarean wounds. Natural childbirth and lactation seem to have been lost, especially in the private sector, in the apparent push for a standard of birthing care that may be considered "safe" for the medical professionals, but is creating ongoing medical and social complications, that are in my experience, with adequate information and training, totally preventable.

Purpose of the new course. I have designed a course aimed at the dads, as although this birthing arena is women's business, at present it is expected that they will be as interested and present in every aspect of the process as their partners are. It is easy to provide very practical, highly useful tips of information that can completely alter the birthing outcomes. I have watched men at births completely overwhelmed by their inability to practically assist, when they see their beloved struggling, and often losing the battle for dignity and sanity. I have been aware also of their need to 'be the protector' at such times, and the complicated tableau of hopelessness, resentment, and relationship issues that stem from the fracture of their interpersonal connectedness at this pivotal time on their lives.

The course is presented from the energy framework that underpins the acupuncture therapeutic model. Almost all of the information is foreign to Westerners, as it is not based in physical structure and the medical 'reality'. I thus have avoided the content that the standard "new parent" handbooks and the ante natal classes provide, as the energy framework stands separate from the medical model, and the participants will have been exposed to this already.

Objectives. (Please refer to Appendix 2)

The primary intention of this course is to empower the male participants to feel confident in their role as birth attendants/fathers and life partners, by giving practical tools and some trouble-shooting skills. The secondary intention is to give the pregnant woman the confidence that they have some 'at hand' assistance throughout this challenging period of their lives. The underlying objective is to raise the quality of life for the new arrival, as it is more likely to be raised by the intact birthing unit, if they (the parents) are able to relate in a sensitive and harmonious fashion. If the mother is handled well in this transitional time of her life, the ripples of this, I have observed in practice, carry on throughout life.

In attending births, and treating women in pregnant/post pregnant states, it has become apparent to me that the types of intimacy that women and men find appropriate and appealing differ widely. During the very vulnerable times of hormonally heightened and life changing transitions, it can be reasonably argued that men have no place within the birthing scene at all. As the current culture demands that the Dad is present, the course attempts to move the male into a more birth-friendly mode.

"A century ago, when most babies were born at home, everybody knew that childbirth was "women's business". The husband was given a practical task, such as spending hours boiling water, but he was not involved in the birth himself". Michael Odent in "Informed Choice" Vol 1 No 2 states further that "At the very time when a labouring woman needs to reduce the activity of her intellect (of her neocortex), and "to go onto another planet", many men cannot stop being rational".

It is expected at the end of the course that the participants will be able to confidently drift into the birthing and new parenting spheres, with less trauma than without this preparation. The general touching, relating and acupressure and moxabustion skills are expected to be employed appropriately to enable stress and pain relief, baby repositioning and gentle cervical ripening and induction, leading to all aspects of labour enhancement, uneventful post birth recovery, easy lactation and early parenting experiences.

APPENDIX 2 "HELPFUL DADS DO" CONTENT OUTLINE & OBJECTIVES

1 - "RIPENING"

At the end of this course, the participants will be able to follow the changes wrought on a woman's body and her relationships, using the energy model from acupuncture philosophy, to apply therapeutic intervention to alleviate minor physical discomforts.

THEORY COMPONENT

Energy concepts - the acupuncture model vs the orthodox medical one - how they overlap, and where they differ.

What is "health"?

What is 'wellness'? What are the factors that interfere with our equilibrium? (Influences of emotional and climatic factors).

The normal unfolding of pregnancy.

Pain and its management.

Late pregnancy self and medical management.

Personal management of changes. - Different situations, and each points and what to do with them.

Back ache, general aches and pains

Fluid retention, including carpal tunnel syndrome

Excessive weight gain

Poor maternal sleeping patterns

Baby repositioning

Gentle ripening

Enhancing birthing (pre induction)

The process of birthing.

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This is a partial copy

PRACTICAL COMPONENT

Sensitivity focus.

Interpersonal connectedness exercises.

Basic touching techniques - Light touch/ stroking

Deep pressure

Firm Strokes

Acupuncture point location, selection and usage.

Moxa What it is, does, how to use, extinguish, safety considerations.

Course objectives

Module 1 "Ripening"

By the end of the first half of this module, (six hour presentation)

- 1.1 The participants will be able to draw an energy continuum line, placing upon it the various types of therapeutic modalities.
- 1.2 Hold eye contact with partner, constantly and easily for 1 minute.
- 1.3 List the 3 main differences between the sickness and wellness models of medicine.
- 1.4 List the 3 major factors involved in disease creation, according to the acupuncture model, and name the 6 major climatic and 5 emotional components.
- 1.5 List the 5 key pregnancy energy changes and explain how these practically reflect in daily living.
- 1.6 Perform a calming centred connection exercise, holding the space within to allow total connection between self and partner.
- 1.7 Accurately locate key 8 acupuncture points, and know when and how to use them.
- 1.8 Use appropriate pressure and know when to move onto next phase in therapeutic intervention, in giving an invigorating sacral/pelvic area massage
- 1.9 Draw a pain line, explaining the different levels of interaction and intervention.
- 1.10 Safely ignite, use and extinguish a moxa stick.

1 - "RIPENING" MODULE

- 1.1 Introduction to energy concepts.
- 1.2 Sensitivity focus. (P)
- 1.3 Definition of 'health'
- 1.4 What influences a well body? Emotional and climatic influences.
- 1.5 Connectedness exercises. (P)
- 1.6 Unfolding of pregnancy.
- 1.7 Physical touching coaching, including BI 31, 32, GB 30 (P)

2nd session

- 1.8 Review of 1st session, including reports on homework, especially amelioration of small hassles.
- 1.9 Moxa - what it is and how and when to use it, safety considerations. (P)
- 1.10 What is pain, and how do we create it?
- 1.11 Birthing - how it is initiated.
- 1.12
- 1.13 Likely medical interfaces.
- 1.14 Case histories (presented to review at beginning, and each person's reaction to them), in small groups - how would they see them now, and what would they do in this circumstance?
- 1.15 Questions from the class.

2 - "BIRTHING"

THEORY

Birth - What it is, and when it starts, and the factors involved in its process.

What enhances easy birth.

What disrupts the normal flow.

Interventions we can initiate. Medical options.

Different stages, pre
 early
 mid
 late
 transition
 baby arrival
 post baby

PRACTICAL

Review of basic touching techniques

Deep pressure on sacrum

Deep pressure on acupuncture points

Acupressure spots for specific outcomes.

Connectedness techniques, for focus and centring.

