

Mindful Mama Sample Reflection

Course attended: 2-4th February 2017

DESCRIPTION

I have recently undertaken training to become a Mindful Mama practitioner with a view to teach combined hypnosis and mindfulness techniques for labour and birth. I have done the training to enhance and support my midwifery practice. As part of my role, I currently run antenatal education classes for late stages of pregnancy, labour, birth and cares of a new baby. I plan to facilitate hypnobirthing classes within the NHS trust where I am employed. I first came across hypnobirthing as a student midwife twelve years ago. I had the privilege of looking after a number of women who used the techniques. I was initially surprised and excited by how confident, calm, focused and positive the women were during childbirth. I noticed that the techniques would induce a gentle labour rhythm and most women had natural births with no need for pain relief drugs or intervention. This led to my own research and learning, often reading books, articles and inviting discussions at midwifery meetings and group reflection learning sessions. I became passionate about the techniques and the effects on the mind, body and physiological process of labour and birth. Since then I have supported and encouraged women to explore hypnobirthing as support tool for labour and birth.

I used self hypnosis and mindfulness techniques for the labour and birth of my two daughters five and two years ago. I gave birth at home in a pool. Both experiences were positive, natural, and relaxed. The techniques I used gave me an awareness of my body and I was able to surrender and let go without fear. My experience mirrored that which I had seen in other women, read about and believed in. With this new enhanced belief I knew I wanted to become a hypnobirthing practitioner, better equipped to support women and families to have positive birth experiences. I became aware of the Mindful Mama book and course eighteen months ago while at a midwifery conference and am grateful to have been able to attend the practitioner training course.

FEELINGS

I feel eager and hugely excited to become a practitioner. It has been a personal achievement to do the course giving me further insight into the techniques used and how to deliver classes myself. I feel I have a deeper understanding of the effects a relaxed mind can have on the physical body. I will enjoy sharing the techniques and will feel more confident with more practice. I have been practising the techniques regularly by myself, with family, friends and a couple of small groups. Following this course I feel more open and able to provide creative antenatal education. I feel the use of 'positive effects' descriptions/stories/examples communicates well the role of physiology and hormones for unique labour and birth experiences. I feel more confident and equipped with new tools to support the women I look after during child birth and when making decisions about labour and birth choices. I feel passionate and dedicated to deliver dynamic classes that will suit the needs of individuals and enable women to believe in their ability to birth.

I feel comfortable with combining the two seemingly opposing techniques (hypnosis as to let go and mindfulness as to connect) as I practice and notice that they both work together so effectively achieving the same relaxing results. I feel I have a lot of energy and enthusiasm to enable women's understanding of the techniques and how to use and apply them to individual situations and experience.

I feel apprehensive about the challenges of group dynamics in classes, however with practice and being proactive to gain advice and support this will become easier.

EVALUATION and ANALYSIS

The practitioners course I have attended has given me the tools and confidence to facilitate group learning of hypnosis techniques and how and when to apply them for labour and birth. During my training I noticed how group dynamics may effect the learning process, I realised this may be a challenge for me with my own classes. I recognise the need to create a safe and supportive learning environment. Having a space or providing invitation for people to seek further support/explanations will help people to feel relaxed and valued, able to get the best out of any session they attend. I have gained some insight in how to subtly notice individuals needs in a group and how best to address and facilitate for all, by using a variety of learning techniques and group activities e.g., ice breakers, listening, reading, writing, group, individual, movement and partnered exercises. Involving people to learn the techniques experientially with support worked well on my course and I will apply this to my classes. It is important to provide plenty of opportunity to practice within the classes and with a facilitator present as repetition is the key to understanding and this will develop the skills and confidence for women and partners to practice at home. An important aspect of the course was the opportunity to practice and receive feedback. At first I was apprehensive about my pacing, tone, phasing and volume but through the duration of the course I gained confidence. The opportunity to observe and listen to others, to practice and reflect alongside them and to receive feedback on what worked and what could be improved were instrumental in this. Consequently I was able to develop my own style of delivery. I am aware that this will continue to develop as I start to practice with groups of my own.

It is helpful that there are a wealth of information and learning resources available provided via MP3's, social media, story/information/feedback and sharing for practitioners. The course I attended ran with a simple structure with room for exploration yet always came back to the aims for the days learning. This fluidity allows more opportunities for learning. Creating and adapting to space, stillness, quiet, relating, shared stories, debate and group forming works well to help people feel relaxed and valued. This in turn will enhance my adaptability to execute an appropriate and enjoyable course. Stories shared with evidence based quantitative information aids a more tangible delivery of hypnosis theory. Keeping to a structure also helps people to have confidence in their teacher to deliver what is needed and helps to keep attendants focused on topic.

The environment impacts on how people take information in and also directly impacts on their ability to relax. The hypnosis techniques enable women to relax in any environment and situation when practised, however, initially when learning the techniques it is my role to help women and partners feel relaxed enough to do so. Getting the environment right is a vital part of this. Planning for appropriate space, natural light, noise, smells, equipment and potential interruption was obviously considered on the course I attended which I will take forward as a practitioner. This also provides an opportunity to show women and partners how environments may be chosen or adapted and familiarised for their labour and birth needs.

CONCLUSION

I have been a midwife for ten years and am passionate about supporting women to have positive experiences. Becoming a hypnobirthing practitioner is a personal achievement and will enhance my midwifery practice. I will enjoy running hypnobirthing classes and facilitating learning for women to become more confident about their birth choices and ability to birth. Having a deeper awareness and understanding of hypnobirthing techniques is encouraging when looking after women and gives me the ability to better understand the natural physiology of childbirth and how to support this process

with a more open and confident approach. The occurring effects of mindfulness and hypnosis mimics the 'labour zone' behaviours: calm, quiet, focused, relaxed, surrendering yet alert when needed to be. The techniques when practiced can eliminate fear and anxiety thus enhancing this experience and can be used for positive effects in any situation.

ACTION PLAN

Prior to running hypnobirthing classes, I will prepare myself by reading notes from practice sessions and my course attended. I will prepare to run a group day class on a monthly basis in my place of work and source an appropriate environment. The environment will include space for movement, rest, refreshments, use of large props such as birth balls, mats, cushions, and blankets etc. the room will be quiet with adaptable lighting options and easy to access. I will communicate with my colleagues detailed class plans with dates, times, content etc which can be shared with women during antenatal appointments offering an invitation to join the class. I will be available to discuss class content, aims and objectives with women on the telephone prior to booking so that families can be best prepared for and know what to expect on the day with a view to creating some familiarity.

During the class I will invite feedback and sharing if families are comfortable to do so in order to evaluate clients personal understanding and to aid my own development.

I will seek opportunities to develop techniques through self practice and continued study. I will use practitioner support, sharing and reflection resources available. Where possible I intend to refresh and update my skills.