

# Guide to Labor Support

**First, assess: are they coping well / working with labor pain?**

## Signs someone is coping well

- They say they are doing fine.
- Relaxed between contractions.
- During contractions, has Rhythm, is as Relaxed as possible (no extra tension).
- Calm breathing. Low, relaxed voice.

## Signs they need more support

- Say labor is too hard and they need help.
- Can't Relax during contraction—tensed up.
- Having a hard time keeping a Rhythm.
- High-pitched voice.
- Breathing rapid or uneven.

## Signs they are not coping

- Say they are suffering.
- No Relaxation—wincing, writhing.
- No Rhythm. Panicky. Can't focus.
- Crying. Whimpering. Screaming.
- Holding breath, or gasping.

## Maintain the Ritual

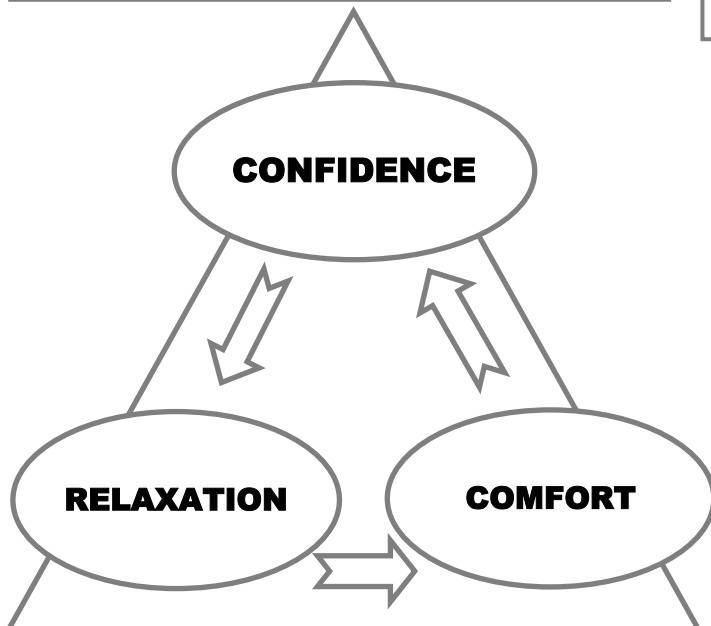
- What you're doing is working. Keep it up!
- Reinforce their Rhythm.
- Increase oxytocin / reduce adrenaline.
- Avoid Fear-Tension-Pain triangle: Focus on Confidence-Relaxation-Comfort.

## Use Comfort Tools as Planned

- If they planned to use pain meds: ask care provider if those are an option at this time.
- If wanted to delay meds: try new coping technique for 5 contractions, re-assess.
- If hoped to avoid meds: Try new coping tools to improve Rhythm and Relaxation.

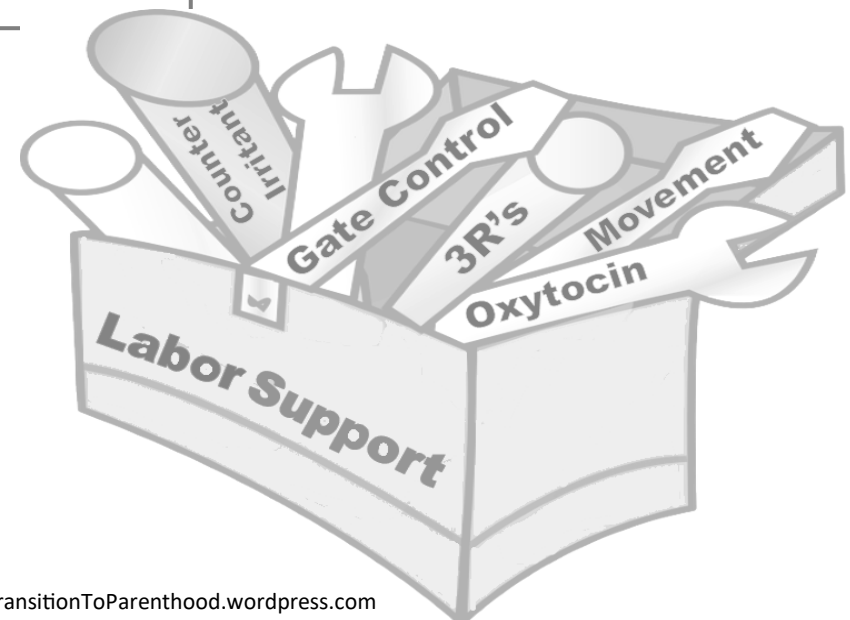
## Need a New Plan

- If they were at all open to pain meds, now may be the time.
- Try new coping techniques: the Take Charge Routine, intensive physical and emotional support.



Learn how to use ALL these tools on the

**Transition to Parenthood Podcast**



# Tools for Coping with Labor Pain (and Enhancing Labor Progress)

## CONFIDENCE



- Ask questions so you understand what is happening and what to expect.
- Reframe the P.A.I.N.
- Counting, Affirmations. Prayer.
- Visualizations: Visualize a safe place, or visualize breathing in what would help, and breathing out what's not helpful.

## RELAXATION



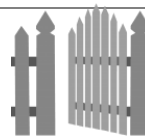
- Tense then relax muscles
- Relaxation scripts / hypnobirthing
- Breathe: Cleansing Breath, Slow Deep Breathing, Light and Slide Breathing

## COMFORT



- Offer water or other fluids. Food?
- Bathroom breaks
- Shower or bath
- Ice pack or heating pad
- Environment:
  - Music or quiet?
  - Bright lights or dim lights?
  - Preferred temperature?
  - Out & about, or retreat to privacy?

## Gate Control: Pleasant Sensations



- Focus on soothing sounds, smells, sights, touch and distractions like movies, music, going for a walk to distract from pain

## Counter-Irritants: Minor Discomforts to Distract from Pain



- Birth Combs
- Acupressure, TENS, Sterile Water Blocks
- She may choose to bite lip, squeeze bed rails, or other spontaneous methods

## Positions & Movement

Choose U.F.O. positions: Upright, Forward leaning, and moving in ways that Open the pelvis.



- Stand and lean on a chair or table, sway
- Slow dancing
- Walking, climbing stairs, lunging
- Sitting on a birth ball and rolling back and forth, or rocking in a rocking chair
- Hands and knees, rocking back and forth or swaying hips side to side
- Sit backwards on a chair, lie semi-prone
- Counterpressure, knee press, or double hip squeeze massage for back pain

## Reduce Adrenaline, Increase Oxytocin and Endorphins



- Ensure they don't feel watched / judged
- Comfy temperature, cozy environment
- Eye contact, undivided attention
- Touch, kissing, massage, skin to skin
- Address any fears or anxieties
- ANYTHING that helps them feel safe, loved, and protected

## Labor Support after an Epidural



- Offer warm blankets, cool cloth for back of neck or forehead, ice chips to suck on
- Change positions every 20 minutes from lying on left side, semi prone, hands and knees, semi prone on right, lying on right side, semi-sitting with a peanut ball
- Companionship & reassurance

## Second Stage



- Support positions such as squatting, hands and knees, side-lying
- Cool cloth on back of neck or forehead
- Ask about warm compresses
- Encouraging words, praise, support