

BIRTHING NATURALLY
Understanding Your Body

This worksheet is designed to help you prepare for the upcoming birth by identifying the way your body handles stress and pain. You should think about all sources of stress or discomfort, physical and emotional. Think of recent situations you have been in and consider how you responded to those situations.

I know I am feeling tense or stressed because my body...

My body reacts to tension by...

When I feel stressed, I can remain calm if I...

To cope with pain, I prefer...

Be Alone	or	Be with People
Keep Myself Busy	or	Tune Into Myself
Distract my Thoughts	or	Explore my Thoughts
Be Quiet	or	Talk with Someone
To be Touched	or	To not be Touched
Have Someone Help	or	Work it out Alone

What has been your experience with using the following stress and pain coping techniques?

Slow Deep Breathing
Massage
Visualization or Meditation
Vocalization
Progressive Relaxation
Using a Focus Point
Prayer

COMMON STRESS RESPONSES

Head

Tension Headache
Tired Eyes
Grinding Teeth
Clenching Jaw
Ringing in Ears

Neck

Muscle Tightness
Decreased Range of Motion

Shoulders/Arms

Muscle Tightness
Trembling Hands
Gripping Fists
Biting Nails

Chest

Heart rate increasing
Heart pounding
Difficulty catching breath

Stomach

"Butterflies" in stomach
Nausea

Back

Muscle Tightness
Sore Back
Bad Posture

Skin

Sweating
Clammy skin
Itching/Scratching

Legs/Feet

Bouncing Legs
Trembling Feet
Sore or Achy Feet
Muscle Tension

Mental Processes

Speech Difficulties
Inability to Focus
Negative Thoughts
Fear