

# UNDERSTANDING BIRTH TRAUMA



## What is Birth Trauma?

When the intense experience of childbirth overwhelms your ability to cope, physically and emotionally, triggering a profound emotional response.

You may have felt completely overwhelmed, out of control, afraid for your (or your baby's or partner's) safety, or trapped with no way out.

This trauma can make a lasting impact, leaving you feeling defeated or broken long after the birth.

## Common Causes of Birth Trauma

- Poor pain control
- Feeling unsupported, pressured, disrespected, or mistreated
- You expected a very different experience
- Old traumas are triggered
- Your baby spends time in the NICU
- You experience a loss



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## SIGNS YOU MAY BE HOLDING BIRTH TRAUMA

### Reliving the Birth

Constant flashbacks or thoughts about the birth.

### Emotional Turmoil

Feelings of disappointment, grief, or unmet expectations.

### Disconnection

Detachment from yourself, your baby, or others.

### Unexplained Anxiety/Depression

Intense emotions without clear reasons.

### Guilt/Shame

Negative feelings about how the birth unfolded.

### Confusion

Difficulty understanding or processing the birth experience.

### Difficulty Sharing

Struggling to articulate or think about the birth.

### Emotional Extremes

Experiencing anger, sadness, or numbness.

## BIRTH TRAUMA HEALING

DEBRIEF AND PROCESSING SESSIONS  
IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL

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## 5 STEPS TO

# RECOVER YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM AFTER A DIFFICULT BIRTH

1

## Shake it Out

The first step after any intense experience is to burn off those stress hormones. Dance, shake, jump, wiggle—whatever helps you release that pent-up energy. It's crucial for calming down. Keep going until you start to feel that wave of tiredness – that's your cue that you've done enough.

2

## Snuggle Up

After you've shaken out the stress, it's time to get cozy. Wrap yourself in a warm blanket, slip into comfy clothes, and maybe sip some herbal tea. Soft lighting, gentle music, and snuggling up with your partner or a loved one can help you settle in and transition to a state of relaxation.

3

## Get Some Sleep

Sleep is your top biological need after a difficult experience. Prioritize at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted sleep within 24 hours (or as soon as possible) after the birth. If this feels logistically tricky, have someone you trust watch over your baby so you can rest. This rest helps your brain process the event more positively and aids in emotional healing.

4

## Share Your Story

There's power in storytelling. Within the first 72 hours, share your birth story with a neutral audience—someone who can listen (without overly reacting) and validate your experience. This helps your brain and body let go of the intensity. If talking is hard, writing down the full, unfiltered version can achieve the same effect.

5

## Seek Help

If you are more than six weeks post-birth, or you've tried these steps and still feel the weight of birth trauma, it may be time to talk to a professional. A therapist, coach, or a support group specializing in birth trauma can offer invaluable help. Sometimes, just a few sessions can bring significant relief and clarity while helping you feel seen and held.

Trauma from birth, whether from a difficult or 'easy' experience, is not your fault, and help is available. With support, you can feel better. You deserve to feel whole and well.

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