

Resource Document

Prenatal Visits

Generally speaking, at least two prenatal visits are ideal for BfW-guided preparation. The first visit might be around 26-32 weeks, and the second around 36 weeks, but it will vary according to your clients' needs and schedule, as well as when they hired you. There are a variety of reasons that you might have only one prenatal meeting, or more than two, or even none at all, so, as always, be ready to adjust to the situation at hand.

It's helpful if at least one of the meetings is at the client's home, so you know how to get there and can familiarize yourself with the surroundings. It's not ideal to have prenatal visits in public places, as the distractions and lack of privacy may limit your discussion. It's important to note, though, that different clients will have different situations, needs, and preferences; sometimes meeting in a public place is necessary.

The general expectation is that if there is a birth partner or support person, they will be present at the prenatal visits along with the birthing person. You'll want to learn about their preferences and perspectives, and you'll also want them to participate in preparation, because they too will be undergoing initiation. Siblings (and other family members) can be distracting, but if they have to be there, roll with it -- and consider how you might support them through this transition as well.

Prenatal visits are generally about two hours each. Less than that and you may not have enough time to discuss, explore, and practice. More than that tends to get tiring!

As for what you will talk about or do, let yourself be guided by the [Tasks of Preparation](#). Spend some time ahead of your session to think about what topics might come up and what might be important to bring up yourself.

Consider:

- *Birth Pie*. What you might be instinctively including or avoiding? How can you be flexible and brave as you navigate topic choices and responses to parents?
- *Three Ways of Knowing*. How can you bring balance to the session by offering a blend of processes that allow for all three ways?
- *Five Words for Mentoring*. Which parts of your session might need which of these elements? How can you weave all of them into the session as a whole?

Here is a list of things to do/consider in your prenatal sessions. There might not be time for all of the specific activities listed here, but the bolded concepts are all important, and you should spend some time thinking about how you might be able to work them into however much time you have with your clients.

- **Empty Your Cup**. Take a moment to center yourself with a mindfulness/spiritual practice (such as breath awareness) before each session. The document [*Ritual and Self Care for Birth Workers*](#) has more on this. Check any assumptions you may be carrying and commit to beginning with curiosity about your client and this new relationship that you are building together.
- **Build Rapport**. This is of course especially important at your first meeting, but with any meeting, it's important to begin with the relationship. This can include...
 - General social small talk and personal introductions.
 - Pregnancy/preparation-related chat. How they've been feeling, how things are going in their prenatal appointments, what they are reading/learning about, what kind of preparations they've been making, etc.
 - Ideas for your time together. Specific questions they are hoping to address, and what, if anything, they'd like to accomplish in the session.

- Casual baseline knowledge assessment. Getting a sense of what knowledge they already have about topics like stages of labor, pain coping, labor support, or postpartum.
- Note that for these first several minutes of conversation, you don't need to focus a lot on working to invite change, expansion, etc. – you'll do that as you continue to work. Just remember to respond with validation, interest, and curiosity.
- **Listen with Five Ears.** From your first moments together, and throughout the session, notice where – which archetypes – your clients may be speaking from. Listen for how they may be motivated to avoid or seek out certain things. Listen within for these things in yourself as well! Take a mental inventory of any details or topics that you may want to circle back to later in the session, or in another meeting. Consider too how what you're hearing may appear in the birth setting, for you and for them.
- **Explore Unconscious Preparation.** Some possible methods include...
 - First Birth Story
 - Birth Art: Birth in Your Culture
 - Journal prompts: Birth is...; Parenting is...; Pain is...
- **Cover the Logistics.**
 - Details of your contract, if you have one.
 - Protocols and expectations.
 - How to reach you
 - When to contact you in labor
 - Back up
 - Next check in/meeting
- **Practice Pain Coping.** Most BfW sessions include at least one pain coping practice with ice to begin exploring the clients' relationship with pain and

sensation and building a coping mindset. We most frequently begin with Scaling, Baseline, and Breath Awareness in the first session, and then add additional practices such as Non-Focused Awareness, Finding the Center, or vocalization in further sessions.

- **Prepare for the Birth Experience.** Offer inner and modern knowing as well as practical tips and techniques. Make sure your modern knowing processes are keyed to what your particular clients already know and what they want/need to know. Some possible activities include...
 - [Labyrinth](#). This can be used to explore the inner landscape of labor, as well as a tool for talking about the stages of labor.
 - Labor positions, tools, and hands-on support techniques.
 - [Opening with a Frame](#). This can be used to explore creating a Birth Plan of a Warrior.
 - [Mindful Cesarean](#)
- **Postpartum Preparation.**
 - [Postpartum Scaling](#) to assess expectations.
 - [Postpartum Intentions](#) workbook to discuss support and recovery needs, family dynamics, infant feeding, resources, etc.
 - [Good Enough Parent](#) to plant seeds of self compassion.
- **Celebration.** Think about a sweet, connecting activity to close with. This might be...
 - Poem or a song
 - Sharing of [Birth Bundles](#)
 - Mindfulness/meditation practice
 - [Foot bath Massage Ritual](#)