

Background

The Prenatal Education Program is a teaching aid for face-to-face prenatal education sessions. It consists of a series of 11 independent modules which are created in PowerPoint and available in PDF format. Each module includes three PDF files, one with full size slides, one containing extensive speaker notes, and a Module Outline with objectives and specific teaching aids required. The content covers the stages of pregnancy and the transition to parenting. The audience for these modules includes the pregnant woman and her partner.

This project, first released in 2011, was guided by an Advisory Committee representative of the various sectors teaching prenatal education in Ontario. Content experts were asked to revise specific modules. Expert reviewers provided a final review of the product. The content of the modules is largely based on the books *Healthy Beginnings* and *A Healthy Start for Baby and Me* that have been reviewed by a large number of professional organizations. The modules follow the recommendations of the Prenatal Education in Ontario - Better Practices document published by the Best Start Resource Centre. In 2016, a review of the modules was initiated to ensure alignment with the Prenatal Education Key Messages and to incorporate suggestions provided by respondents of a user survey sent out earlier in 2016. Content of each module was updated and reviewed by a team of experts. Additional activities were integrated in 2018.

Throughout the prenatal education modules, the Best Start Resource Centre suggests a number of handouts and videos. Although we have tried to choose the most appropriate resources, these are provided without specific endorsement from Best Start Resource Centre.

Topics

The following modules have been developed. Although it is suggested to present the topics in the order listed, prenatal educators can organize the sequence of modules to meet their client and organizational needs.

1. Prenatal Care
2. Changes in Pregnancy
3. Healthy Eating
4. Physical & Emotional Fitness
5. Environmental Exposures
6. Labour and Birth
7. Comfort Measures
8. Medical Interventions & Caesarean Birth
9. Breastfeeding Basics
10. Postpartum Changes
11. Newborn Care & Safety

Methodology for use

- Each module and its associated Module Outline can be downloaded from the Best Start Resource Centre website in PDF form at www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health.
- Prenatal educators cannot modify the content of the existing slides. They can add their own information in a separate presentation at the end, should they wish to.

- Although the presentations are designed for use with PowerPoint technology, it is also possible for a prenatal educator to simply print the notes pages and use these as speaker notes without projecting the slide content. When using the presentation with PowerPoint, the instructor will likely want to have a printed copy of the notes on hand.
- The prenatal educator can print the slides as participant handouts, if desired.

Suggested Equipment

Each module provides a list of suggested equipment. The following is a list of minimal requirements for each module.

- Laptop, LCD projector, screen.
- DVD/ CD player and television or laptop with these capabilities.
- Name tags and markers.
- Flip chart and markers.
- Power sources, extension cords.
- Internet access recommended for some modules.

Additional equipment specific to each module will be listed on the Module Outline (i.e. birthing ball, mats, food models, videos, handouts, etc.).

Recommended Handouts

It is recommended that one of these two books be provided to all pregnant women taking prenatal classes:

- Healthy Beginnings, 5th Edition, 2017 (available from Wiley).
- A Healthy Start for Baby and Me, 2016 (available for download at www.beststart.org)

Additional handouts specific to each module are listed in the instructions provided with each module. Always ensure that you use the most recent version of any handout suggested.

Prenatal educators should also be familiar with the various local services available to pregnant women (healthcare providers, doulas, prenatal nutrition programs, social services, mental health services, etc.).

Terminology

- In these modules, the word “partner” is used to represent the significant other person in the woman's life. It may be the father of the baby to be born, the female partner, the grandmother, etc. We have used the word partner because it is inclusive of a range of support people. However, fathers sometimes feel excluded by the use of the word partner because it does not imply any recognition of a male perspective on pregnancy and expectant parenthood. Depending on your audience, look for opportunities to convey that men may have unique thoughts, feelings and questions about pregnancy and birth, as well as opportunities to be inclusive of the perspectives of partners who may not be male.
- The masculine and feminine have been used alternatively when referring to a baby or a child.

Project Philosophy

- Equipping a woman and her partner (or other support person) with the knowledge to make the choices that will help them experience a healthy pregnancy, birth outcome and transition to parenthood.
- Supporting informed choice empowers pregnant women and partners to take the actions necessary to give birth and begin parenthood in the way they believe to be best for themselves, their child and their family.
- Surrounding a woman and her partner with care and compassion encourages them and the people involved with them to respect her body and trust in her ability to give birth.
- Supporting the unique needs and experiences of fathers and other partners enhances their ability to support women during pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.
- Knowledgeable, supported parents will be able to embrace the power of parenthood with the confidence that supports family strength and positive parenting.

Suggested Activity for First Session

Title: What I need to know! A 5 minute Needs Assessment Activity.

Time: 5 minutes

Teaching Method: Large group activity.

Purpose: Needs assessment to help identify what information is most important to cover over the course of your weekend or weekly series. It can also be helpful to determine content for a specific topic, i.e. breastfeeding or baby care. Helps to prioritize the learning needs of the group.

Materials: White board or chart paper, markers.

Instructions:

On a whiteboard or chart paper, the prenatal educator draws three large circles (make them big enough so the prenatal educator can record what the group says INSIDE of the circles). Label the Circles:

- Need to Know
- Should Know
- Nice to Know

The prenatal educator then asks the group “What are some things that you absolutely need to come away with following your prenatal education classes? (or specific topic). I want you to share with me any topics or content needs you have coming into the course. What are the things you absolutely NEED to know, like ‘I can’t have this baby unless I know...’. Then I want you to think about things/topics you think you SHOULD know and what might be some topics or areas of knowledge that would be NICE to know if we have the time to cover them.”

The prenatal educator records the information under the appropriate heading as participants share their thoughts in free form.

This activity can be used as an Ice Breaker to identify learning outcomes for the series overall OR can be used to identify important content information for specific topics such as breastfeeding or newborn care.

**Source: Adapted from Teri Shilling Idea Box for the Creative and Interactive Childbirth Educator by the Institute of Childbirth Educators.*

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