

BREATHING AND BODYWORK

We all know how to breathe...or do we???

2½ hr Midwifery Workshop at your location.

Workshop Leader: Monika Boenigk, *CMS, CNS, Childbirth Educator, Dip. Couns.*

DESCRIPTION

For most of us, most of the time, breathing comes naturally — so naturally that we are barely aware of it. But in childbirth, awareness of breathing is crucial. ***Breathing gives a woman power over her labour.*** Knowledge of the range of breathing modalities available in the various phases of labour is essential for both woman and midwife. In the “Breathing” part of this workshop, participants learn to appreciate and control every nuance of breathing: timing, rhythm, depth, effort, and the production of *constructive* sounds. The focus is always on “relaxing and opening — down and out”.



In the “Bodywork” part of this workshop, we focus on the physical areas that matter most in childbirth: neck, shoulders, pelvis, soft birth passage, and thighs. A variety of exercises increase our awareness of these regions. We learn how to release tension and enhance overall relaxation. Special stretching exercises enable participants to appreciate the various internal resources they themselves employ in coping with uncomfortable sensations — just as a woman needs to do when she inevitably realizes that labour is “more painful than she thought”.



BirthRite

Binnenfeld 30, 27432 Ebersdorf, Germany

ph +49 4765 444 3622 email: hebamme@geburtsinsel.de www.thebirthriteway.com

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All exercises are suitable for pregnant women to practise in antenatal classes or in antenatal bodywork at home. This training is an **integral part** of the preparation for normal childbirth and provides a firm foundation for the relaxation component of holistic midwifery.

OBJECTIVES

After completion of this workshop

- You will have developed a deeper appreciation of the significance of modulated breathing in labour and birth.
- You will have learned how different breathing techniques affect sensation of various parts of the body.
- You will have practised breathing techniques that facilitate a gentle birth over the perineum and feel comfortable to convey the techniques to women in your care.
- You will appreciate the significance of sound in childbirth. You will be able to distinguish between productive and unproductive sounds, and be able to guide a woman towards making more productive sounds.
- You will have developed an awareness of the parts of the body which are susceptible to holding tension in childbirth and know how to guide women to relax these areas.
- You will have a greater appreciation of the effects of subtle changes in posture on the progress of birth.
- You will have developed skills that will help women in your care to use their bodies to best advantage during labour.
- You will have gained insight into the internal resources that enable you to “sit with” uncomfortable sensations for a prolonged period of time. You will be able to use this insight when working with women in labour.

Note: We require a large, quiet, well-ventilated room. The floor should ideally be carpeted for our practical exercises near floor level; alternatively, each participant should bring a blanket or small mat.

This workshop is suitable for approximately 14–20 participants.