

HOW CAN I USE THE MODEL?

Professionals are welcome to use the model to consider their own practice, or can attend a Make Birth Better training day to learn more.

Individuals and Services are welcome to speak to us about consultation and reflective practice using the model to promote trauma-informed service development.

Parents can use the model to think about the care they would like, and are welcome to share it with care providers to help them think together about birth planning. It may also be used to think about what may have influenced a difficult birth experience, and highlight areas which you may wish to explore with a trusted supporter.

IF YOU USE THE MODEL IN YOUR AREA, OR USE IT FOR RESEARCH, WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR HOW YOU ARE USING IT!

Our goal is that birth can become a collaborative experience between families and professionals, who all feel held in a system that values its parents, children and those who care for them.

Although many parents would like to have another child, experiencing a previous birth trauma can prevent this from happening as anything that reminds them of their past traumatic experience can result in intrusive, distressing memories of the birth. They may feel too physically damaged to consider another pregnancy or labour, and/or they may be worried about experiencing the same thing again or something worse.

However, with the right support there are number of things that health care professionals and maternity services can do to support you:

Psychological therapy: This may be what you need to do first so that you can process the memories of your traumatic birth which would help reduce the feelings of distress, fear and anxiety related to childbirth and increase your sense of empowerment and confidence to handle the pregnancy and birth next time. You would also be able to explore with a therapist what to put in place in relation to your next pregnancy and birth so that you feel more safe and secure. Therapy could also help you to communicate more clearly with maternity staff so that they understand your needs during labour. There are specialist talking therapy approaches known to help those who have experienced a birth trauma, such as EMDR or trauma-focused CBT.

Once you feel less frightened about what you have experienced you may feel more able to tell those involved in your care that you have experienced a previous birth trauma. There are a number of things that can be put into place with your permission that will hopefully help you to have a more positive experience and to feel less frightened and more empowered about what might happen the next time.

It can be really helpful to get a support team in place. This might include your GP, specialist mental health midwives, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, and others. Speak to your GP or midwife about what is available in your area. Depending on your financial circumstances, you might also contact a doula, hypnobirthing teacher, independent midwife and other independent practitioners. While this is not accessible to everyone, many offer reduced fees or payment plans.