



A World of Confident Women Choosing Normal Birth

Teaching Strategies: Freedom of Movement and Non-Supine Positions for Birth

I. Nonpharmacologic Pain Management Strategies – Stations

Early or midway in your class series, set up stations with different nonpharmacologic pain management strategies to try. A sample worksheet with some possible stations is included in this workbook. You may want to provide frozen water balloons or baggies with ice as a pain stimulus so that students can evaluate how well a certain strategy works for them.

If you have a music station, be sure to have a wide variety of CDs or audiotapes. (You can ask students to bring the music they think would best help them.) Often students are surprised to find that fast, stimulating music helps them deal with pain better than quiet, relaxing music.

Once students have identified effective pain management strategies, you may want to provide them with a basin filled with ice water as suggested by Pam England, author of *Birthing from Within*. Students challenge themselves to see if they can hold their hands in ice water for 60 to 90 seconds. Usually they need several strategies to do this – perhaps bouncing on a birth ball, listening to music, and having a partner whisper encouragement. Once they accomplish this, their self confidence for coping with pain is often increased.

II. Labor Rehearsal with Labor Stations

Set up labor stations with posters illustrating different positions for students to try as they practice labor contractions. Include labor tools and equipment as recommended for each station. A sample set of posters is included in this manual. (If you use these posters, white out the page numbers.) Set a timer and have students spend 2 to 3 minutes at each station, then rotate to the next station. You may want to describe the labor contraction for each pair of students to practice. All students practice the same contraction at the same time, but in a different position. This is an effective way to emphasize that there is no “correct” position for any specific phase of labor. (An exception to this guideline is that if the baby’s head is high and asynclitic, it may be difficult for the baby’s head to turn if the mother is in a squatting position. The squatting position is most often used during second stage.) The rope mentioned on the “Squatting” poster is an aid for pushing during second stage.

This learning activity provides a nice rehearsal for the last class in the series.

A good source for massage tools and heat packs is BodyTime Wellness, <www.bodytimewellness.com>.

III. Endorphin Stars

Once all the students have rotated through all the stations, the childbirth educator asks the couple at the “Slow Dancing” station to demonstrate slow dancing to the entire class. The childbirth educator then asks

the rest of the students to name all the possible ways that endorphins are being stimulated. The instructor places a felt or paper star on the laboring woman for each way that endorphins are being stimulated (e.g. partner's touch, swaying, music, scent of partner, massage, etc.) The "laboring woman" will soon be covered with stars, emphasizing what an effective strategy slow dancing is for labor!

IV. Using "The Rope" to help with second stage

Janet Brooks, CNM was using a simple stretching device marketed as "The Rope" to help her stretch and exercise her upper back after back surgery. She also discovered that laboring women could use it to hang, squat and lunge, especially during second stage. Women in many cultures and throughout time have used poles and ropes to hang from while in labor or giving birth. The rope is light-weight, portable, and low cost. It can be used anywhere there is a door. Simply place the web strap over a door, lock the door in a shut position and help the laboring woman find a comfortable position to hang, squat and stretch in. (For increased safety make sure web strap is positioned on the far side of the door jamb.)

While hanging from the rope, women are able to squat at the level most comfortable for them, as well as to lunge side to side and find asymmetrical positions that can aid the rotation and descent of a posterior or asynclitic baby.

"The Rope" comes with a web strap, custom braided rope, and rubber molded handles providing a comfortable and effective grip. "The Rope" is not recommended for anyone weighing over 300 lbs.

"The Rope" is available from Passion for Birth, <www.passionforbirth.com>, or from Prepal Products, Inc, 800-544-7257 or <<http://www.prepakproducts.com/exro.html>>.

Nonpharmacologic Pain Management Strategies - Stations

<p align="center"><u>Body Scan & Paced Breathing</u></p> <p>Body Scan: Rate your level of relaxation from + 5 (most relaxed) to - 5 (tense): _____</p> <p>Practice a 60 second contraction with a pain stimulus (either water balloon or clothespin) using a paced breathing technique. Rate from +5 (helped a lot) to -5 (didn't help at all) how well the breathing helped you to cope: _____</p>		<p align="center"><u>Add Movement to Standing Positions</u></p> <p>_____ • Slow dancing</p> <p>_____ • Abdominal lifting</p> <p>_____ • The lunge</p>					
<p align="center"><u>Birth Ball</u></p> <p>Place a check mark next to each position you try:</p> <p>_____ • Sitting, swaying</p> <p>_____ • Sitting, leaning back into partner</p> <p>_____ • Hands & knees, leaning over ball</p> <p>_____ • Standing, leaning over ball</p> <p>_____ • Standing, with back pressing into ball</p> <p>_____ • Other: _____</p>		<p align="center"><u>Music</u></p> <p>Practice a 60 second contraction with a pain stimulus while listening to several different kinds of music. Which music helped you cope the best?</p>					
<p align="center"><u>Aromatherapy</u></p> <p>Which scent do you think would most help you to relax?</p> <p>Which scent might energize you?</p>		<p align="center"><u>Temperature</u></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>When do you think cold would be helpful?</td> <td>When do you think heat would be helpful?</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table>		When do you think cold would be helpful?	When do you think heat would be helpful?	_____	_____
When do you think cold would be helpful?	When do you think heat would be helpful?						
_____	_____						
<p align="center"><u>Pressure with Hands</u></p> <p>Place a check mark next to each strategy you try:</p> <p>_____ • Knee Press</p> <p>_____ • Counterpressure</p> <p>_____ • Double hip squeeze</p>	<p align="center"><u>Pressure with Tools</u></p> <p>Which tool felt the best to you?</p> <p>Are there any other items/tools that you would recommend?</p>	<p align="center"><u>Acupressure</u></p> <p>Place a check mark next to each point that you locate:</p> <p>_____ • Bladder 67</p> <p>_____ • Hoku point</p> <p>_____ • Kidney 3</p> <p>_____ • Spleen 6</p>					
<p align="center"><u>Rebozo</u></p> <p>Which position or technique felt the best to you?</p> <p>Do you have any other recommendations?</p>		<p align="center"><u>Putting it All Together</u></p> <p>What helped you the most to get through a 90 second practice contraction?</p> <p>Rate from +5 (coped well) to -5 (barely made it through) how well you coped with submerging your hands in the ice water: _____</p>					

Suggested by Debby Amis, RN, LCCE/Feb. 2004 • May be reproduced with attribution

Standing Position

Try lunge

Slow Dancing

Try music



Sitting in Chair with Pillows

- **Try knee press**
- **Try hip squeeze with rebozo**

Tailor Sitting

Add shoulder massage

Sitting on Birth Ball

Add movement

- **Swaying**
- **Bouncing gently**

Sitting Backwards on Chair

**Add
counterpressure**

Standing, Leaning Forward

Add back message

Hands & Knees

Try Pelvic Tilt

**Try
double
hip squeeze**

Kneeling over Birth Ball

**Partner use massage tool
on her back**

Squatting

Try rope or rebozo

Supported Dangle

Side-lying with Pillows

**Add hand or foot massage
with scented lotion**