

Coaching Challenges:

A women in labor may not be communicating very well during active labor. What might a mother think in labor but not be able to say:

- “I wish they would turn the lights down.”
- “Shh. The noise is so distracting.”
- “I wish my coach would keep talking.”
- “Do I have to thrash around to get his attention?”
- “Don’t shut up when the nurse walks in the room.”
- “Please keep rubbing my back.”
- “Forgive me for being abrupt. I don’t have time to be polite.”
- “I don’t think I’m doing very well.”
- “I think I’m going to be in labor forever.”
- “What baby?”
- “Don’t give up on me now that we’ve come so far.”
- “I’m so thirsty.”
- “I’m so hot.”
- “Don’t joke at a time like this.”
- “This is very hard work.”
- “It really hurts.”
- “I know everything is fine.”
- “I’m scared.”
- “I don’t care, I just want it over with.”
- “I give up.”

Relating Pain with Progress-What is positive about this pain?

1. “I feel disjointed. My wrists are sore, my pelvis is wobbly and I’m very uncomfortable.”
2. “I feel like I have to go to the bathroom all the time, with every contraction. What a pain!”
3. “My back hurts! Pain is moving lower and lower down my back.”
4. “I hurt in the front, my pubic bone is so sore!”
5. “I feel a tremendous pressure very low!”
6. “The contractions are so much stronger now. I don’t know how much more I can take!”
7. “I feel an overwhelming sensation! It hurts so bad! (grunt) What should I do now?”
8. “I can’t do this any more! I give up!”
9. “Help me! I’m going to have a bowel movement right here on the bed.”
10. “I feel a tingling and burning sensation on my bottom.”

When She Begs for Some Relief or Drugs:

This woman needs some help and she needs it now, but does she need medication? Probably not. She needs a strong coach who can reassure her and get her through this time. The most common time for this to happen is in transition. She may be almost ready to push, the hardest part is almost over, she will not want to miss the sensations of birth and the pride of accomplishment that will soon follow. So what can you, as the coach, do for a mother who says “Give me something for the pain!”?

- a hug
- a compliment
- an encouraging phrase
- a spoon full of honey
- some time alone with coach
- a bath or shower
- a cool cloth
- a cool drink
- a pep talk (“you’re doing so well!” “this is such important work you’re doing!” “you are such a good mommy!”)
- a great massage
- sit down and hold her hand
- take one contraction at a time
- guide her breathing
- go to bathroom
- call your Bradley teacher
- praise and encourage her
- massage her
- try another relaxation technique
- talk about the baby

If she keeps asking for medication after I’ve tried other things, how will I know if she really needs it? How will I know if there is a real problem or is she just can’t take the pain? Always consider 5 things first:

1. Your medical team will tell you if there’s a problem. If they don’t say that anything is wrong, you can assume that, physically, your wife and baby are fine.
2. Surrender is an important part of the birth process. Most women do get to a point when they feel they cannot go on much longer and that is usually just before her labor is over.
3. You are her confidence at this time. If you are unsure and concerned, she will be too. If you are enthusiastic and self-confident, she will be too. You must be confident for her sake. If you are really nervous and concerned, then fake it! She needs you.
4. Remember why you’ve worked so long to avoid the medication - for your wife’s sake and for your baby’s sake. What will the medication do for her? She could have an epidural or a spinal and be completely numbed from the breasts down, but then she would miss out on her reward, the wonderful sensations and feeling of accomplishment that comes when she pushes the baby out. Another option would be to give her a narcotic which may slow the labor and may not give her much relief. What she needs is that little something extra to get her through this time. What she needs is your super coaching!
5. Finally, consider when she complains. Very often the mothers will complain about the pain, and even ask for medication, to their coaches in private. When one of the medical people walks in and asks how she is doing, most mothers say “just fine.”