

Renovating postnatal unit care for safety and wellness

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Momma KT Shoots by Katie Lacier

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Disclosures

- I am an inventor of a medical bassinet and Founder and Chief Scientist at Couplet Care, LLC
- Research supported by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality R18HS027260
- My program of research **is compliant** with the World Health Organization International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes
- I am a mother, who birthed and breastfed in the community in which I work

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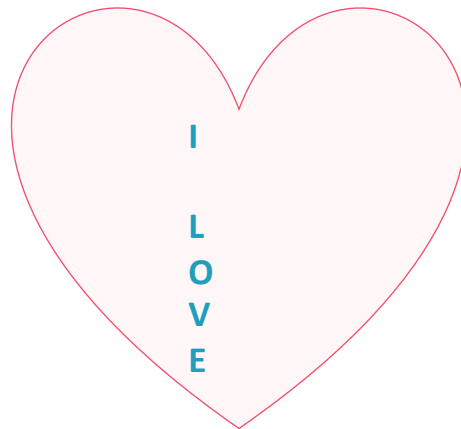
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Goal

Strengthen systems of perinatal care to better accommodate what each family needs to know, feel, and have happen.

Objectives

- Define the concept of the 4th trimester.
- Describe birthing parent perspectives of their postnatal unit experiences.
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A human rights perspective

World Health Organization 2012

The concept of “safe motherhood” is usually restricted to physical safety, but childbearing is also an important rite of passage, with deep personal and cultural significance for a woman and her family.

Thus, the notion of safe motherhood must be expanded beyond the prevention of morbidity or mortality to encompass respect for women’s basic **human rights**, including:

- respect for women’s autonomy
- dignity
- feelings
- choices
- preferences
- companionship

Black Mamas Matter Alliance 2018

The right to safe and respectful maternal health care encompasses a woman’s right to **actively participate and make informed decisions** about her care.

To make an informed decision, a woman must be provided with information about her condition, her health care options, and the risks and benefits associated with each one.

Maternal health care providers can empower their patients to become engaged decisionmakers by:

- centering them
- educating them
- listening to them

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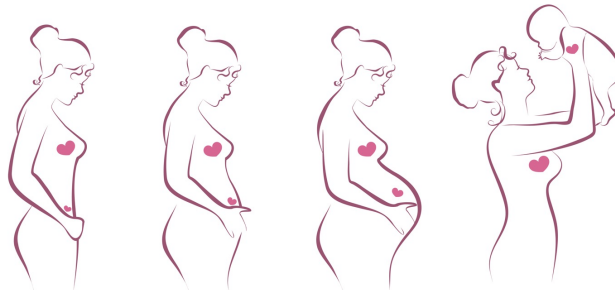


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There is a 4th trimester to pregnancy

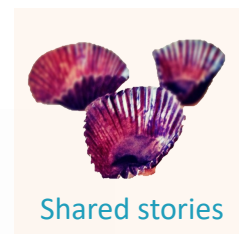
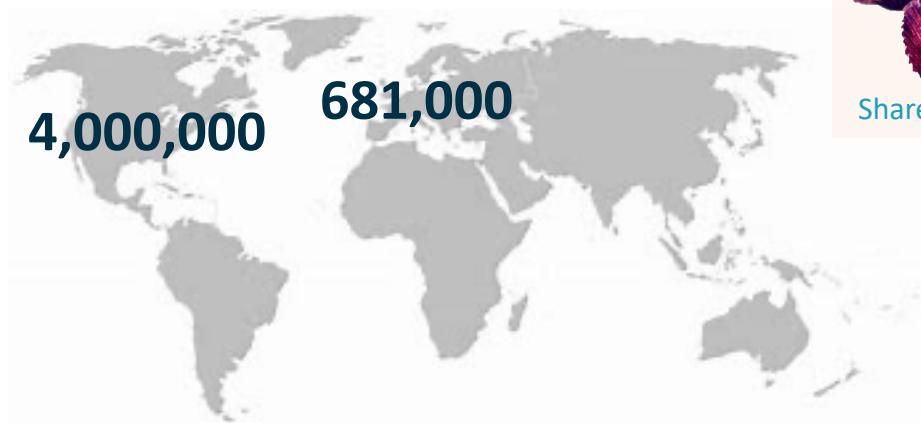


and we neglect it at our peril.

Kitzinger S. The fourth trimester? *Midwife Health Visit Community Nurse*. 1975;11:118-121.

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Births per year



Shared stories

Verbiest SB, Tully KP, Simpson M, Stuebe AM. Elevat
for improved patient-centered postpartum. *J Behav*

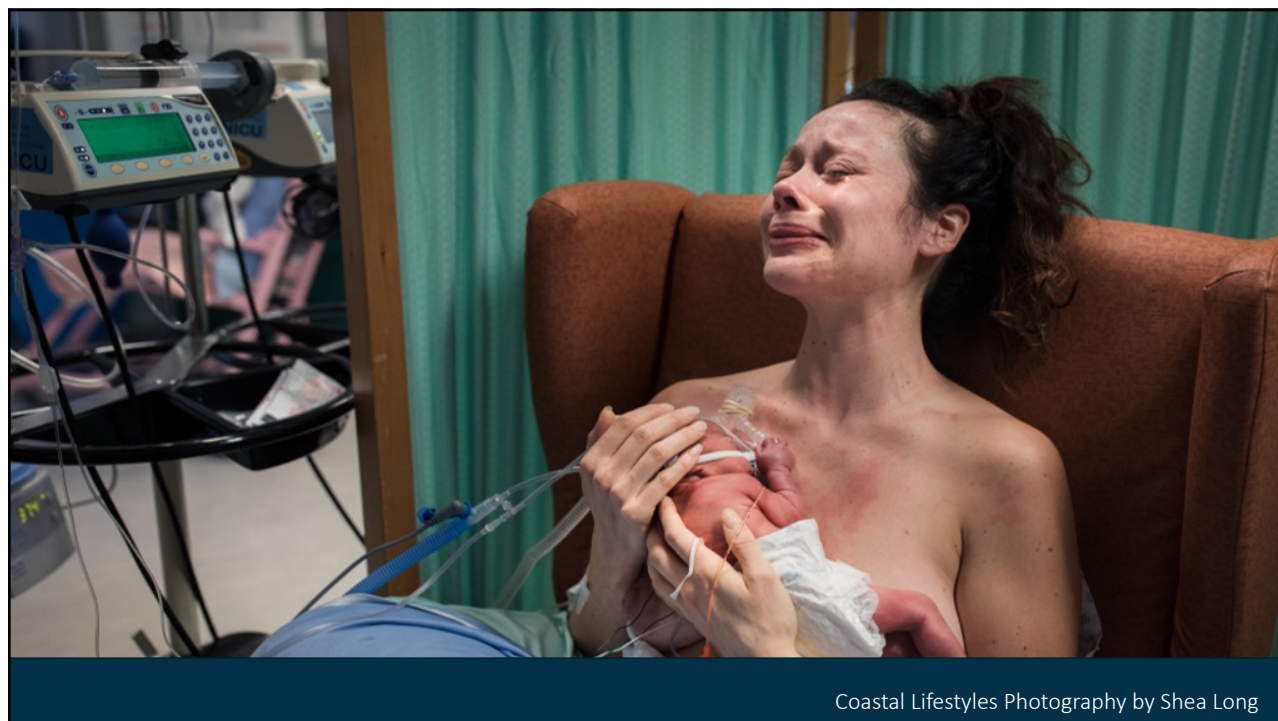


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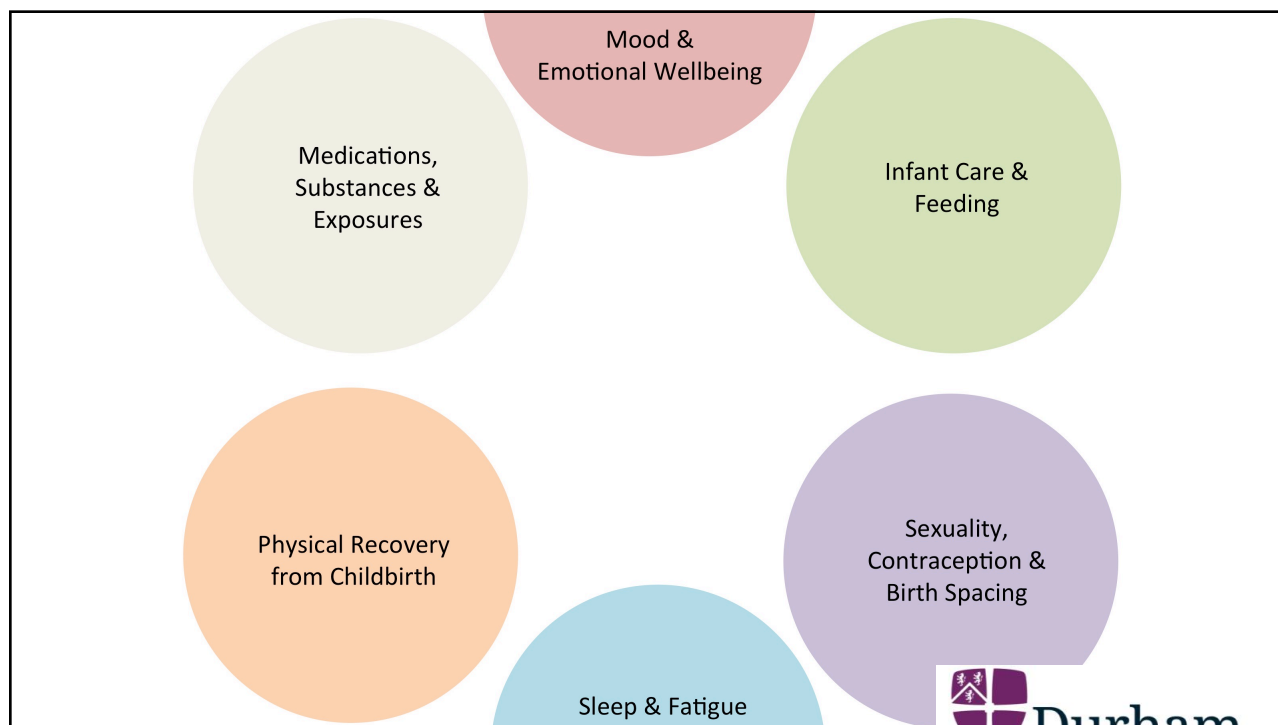
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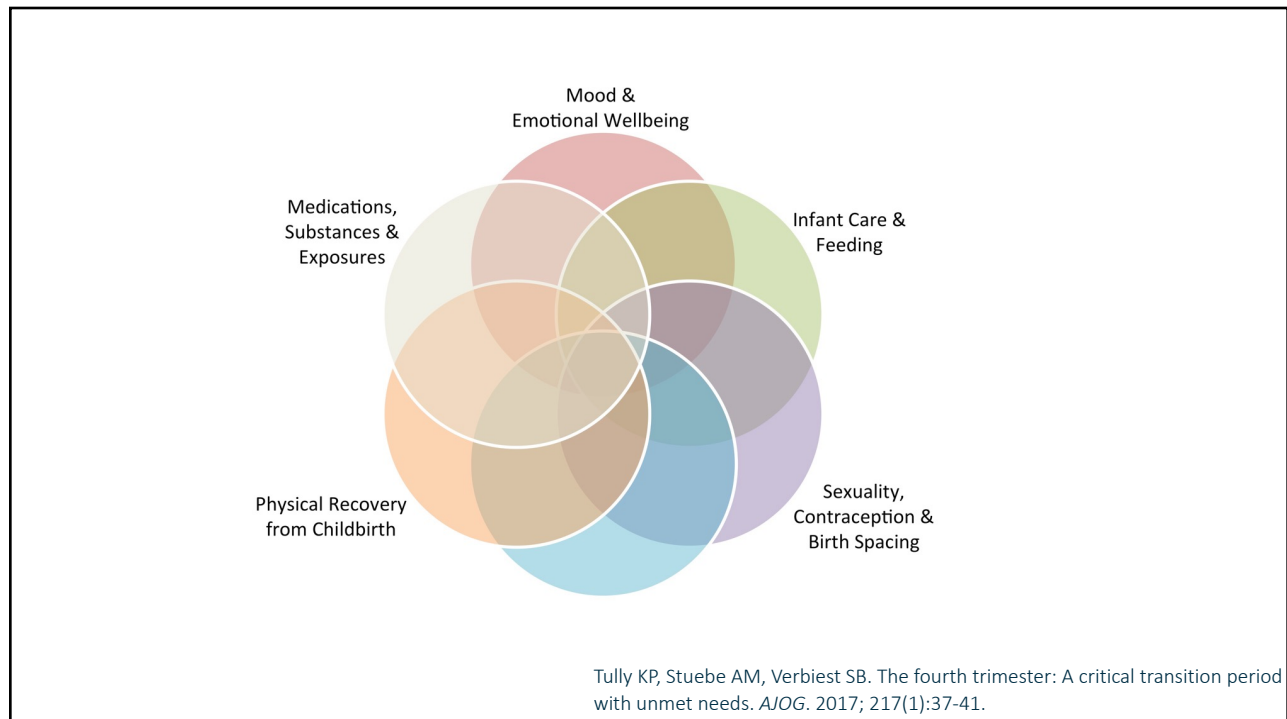
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Key postpartum challenges

- Information access
- Care timing
- Onus of responsibility.
- Structure of care.
- Clinical encounters.
- Stigma and unrealistic expectations.

Tully KP, Stuebe AM, Verbiest SB. The fourth trimester: A critical transition period with unmet needs. *AJOG*. 2017; 217(1):37-41.



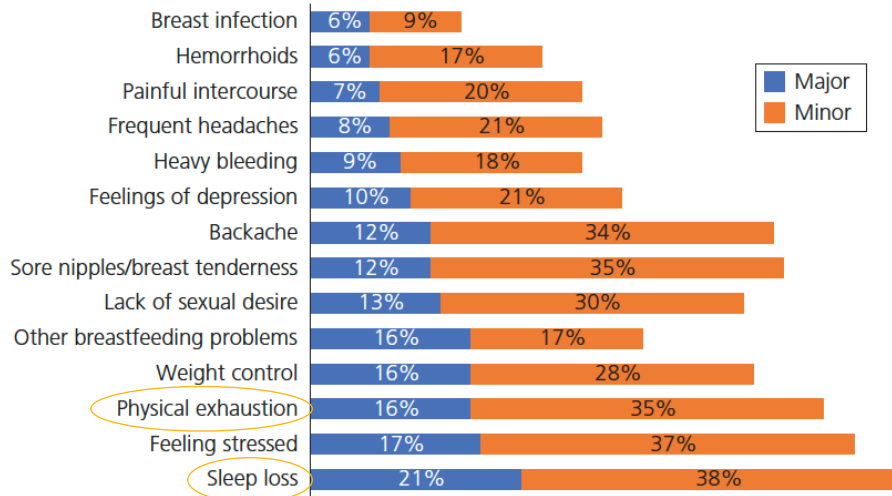
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Sleep and fatigue are common postpartum concerns



Declercq et al. Listening to Mothers III: Pregnancy and Birth. New York: Childbirth Connection, May 2013.

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Culturally constructed understandings of infant sleep and nighttime parenting

The generally perceived 'worldwide norm' for how infants sleep actually reflects behavior typical of formula-fed infants who are put to sleep in their own rooms. This is because that is how babies have primarily been studied.

The result is that we often think the patterns associated with that context – such as early consolidation of bouts of sleep – are appropriate, achievable, and desirable for infants.



© Rob Mank Photography

Rob Mank Photography

BASIS: Baby Sleep Info Source

<https://www.basisonline.org.uk/co-sleeping-image-archive/>

Tully KP, McKenna JJ. 2020. Culture and sleep – A focus on infancy.

In H Montgomery-Downs (Ed). *Sleep Science*. Oxford University Press: Oxford (pp. 63-77).



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Our Mission

To improve
the health and wellbeing
of North Carolinians and others
whom we serve



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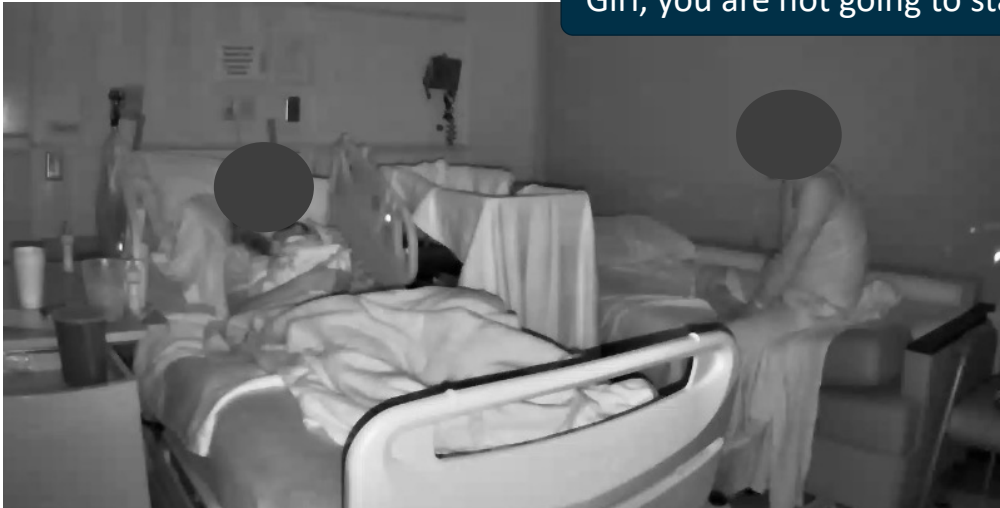
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Sleep, fatigue, and stress



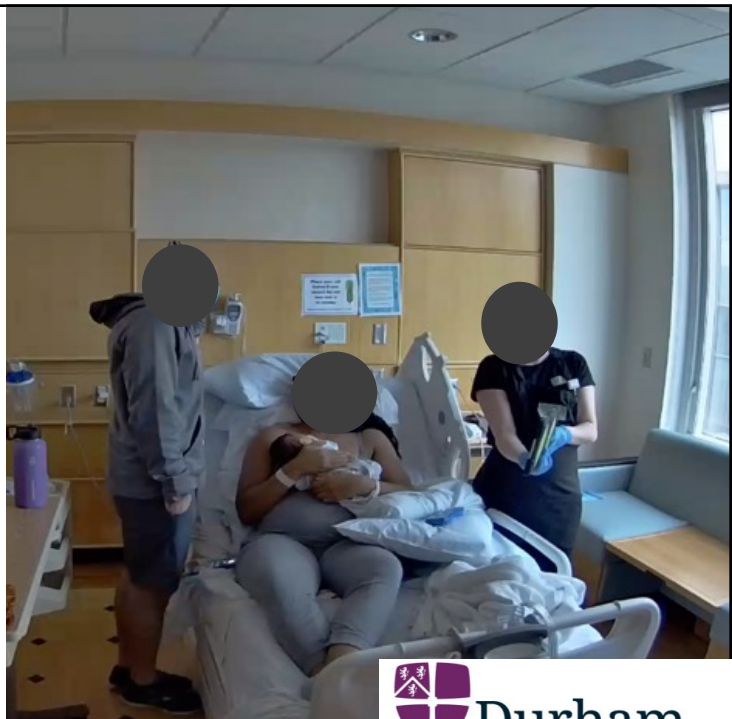
"Girl, you are not going to start this."

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Companionship

It was the world.

It meant the world to me,
especially with everything
that's going on.
I felt like I had somebody
in my corner
that knew me
and knew the experiences that
we had leading up to giving birth.



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COVID-19 challenges

Restrictions have been very strict.

Limited access

Just not being able to leave into the hall if I wanted to take a walk, stuff like that, you know.

Communication barrier

Well the doctors and nurses come in with masks on their face, and I have a hard time reading social cues in general like normally, so it was hard to tell if they are being serious or if, you know, like whether I should be concerned or not, just because I can't see their mouth and that bottom part of their face.



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Vigilance

Self-protection

She went to go put her stethoscope on my baby, and she didn't wipe it with an alcohol pad or alcohol wipe, and that really made me cringe because it's like I know you guys are using this on different babies, and I don't know what's going on out there in these other rooms, and it made me feel really uncomfortable to see you just come in.

It's very important to do these things in front of parents so that they have the reassurance and their minds are at peace.



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A system that can harm

They're dealing with a different kind of fear,
with deportation and depending on what legal –
Like I said, some of their customs and things
are a little bit different in some ways.

And they're not gonna tell you the whole truth,
because they're afraid
that what they're doing will be seen as wrong...

**They fear that something or someone could be taken
from them because of their lifestyle.**



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Mother-newborn rooming-in

Different experiences

It [separation] is voluntary,
but I think that message gets missed or that message gets maybe misperceived.

It's hard to know where the disconnect is.
What we see is the result, which is disproportionate numbers
of Spanish-speaking families – being separated. So, yeah.
It's hard to know where the kind of break in the system is.
I think it is probably safe to assume
that those conversations maybe don't go quite the same way.

Maybe the recommendations are framed
in a way that doesn't feel like a recommendation.



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Towards more consistent, meaningful support



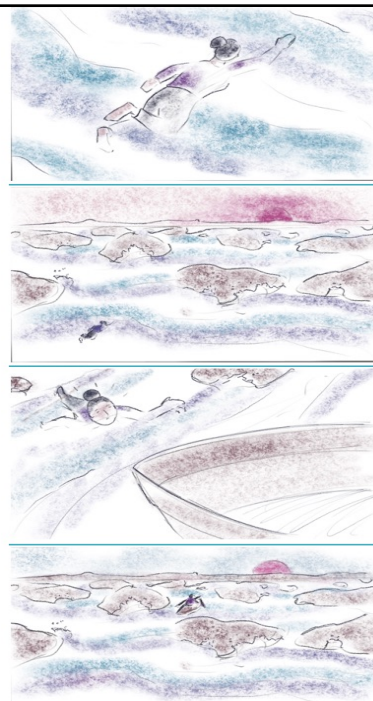
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Why didn't you advocate for yourself?

But it's just like, whenever you're in the ocean,
like if you've ever been caught in a rip current,
and then you get a wave,
and then you get a wave.

That's how people drown.

© Mahtani and Tully



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Waves



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Unnecessary suffering and risk



Tully KP, Ball HL. Postnatal unit bassinet types when rooming-in after cesarean birth: Implications for breastfeeding and infant safety. *Journal of Human Lactation*. 2012;28(4):495-505.

Taylor CE, Tully KP, Ball HL. 2016. Night-time on a postnatal ward: experiences of mothers, infants, and staff. In F Dykes, R Flacking (Eds). *Ethnographic Research in Maternal and Child Health*. Routledge Press: New York, NY (pp 1171-1181)

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I would just start to cry.

It was absolutely horrendous. I was totally alone, isolated.

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From barriers to maternal-infant access



Tully KP, Ball HL. Maternal accounts of their breast-feeding intent and early challenges after caesarean childbirth. *Midwifery* 2014; 30(6), 712-719.

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Timely, comprehensible care and breastfeeding

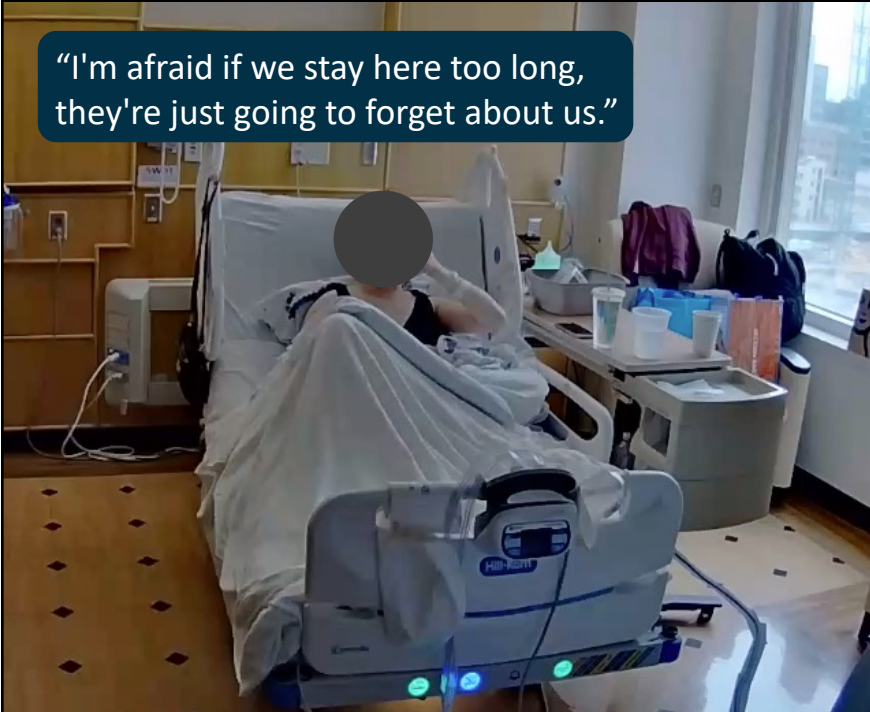
N=2,401 online survey respondents

Postnatal Unit Experiences	Adjusted Odds Ratio	95% CI	χ^2	p
Mother held infant skin-to-skin within 2 hours of birth	1.08	0.68, 1.74	0.11	0.74
Mother held infant skin-to-skin after 2 hours postpartum	1.02	0.65, 1.62	0.01	0.92
Mother did not ask staff to take infant out of postnatal unit room	1.84	1.31, 2.58	12.37	<.001
Infant stayed in postnatal unit room, except for treatments	1.77	1.24, 2.52	9.83	0.002
Mother got help from clinical staff as soon as she wanted it, after pressing the call button	1.29	1.06, 1.57	6.48	0.01
Nurse/midwife explained things to mother understandably	1.48	1.21, 1.81	14.64	<.001
Doctor explained things to mother understandably	1.44	1.18, 1.76	13.06	<.001

Note. Covariates included in the model: mode of childbirth, infant received any care in the neonatal intensive care unit, and gestational age at birth.

Tully KP et al. Postnatal unit experiences associated with exclusive breastfeeding during the inpatient stay:
A cross-sectional online survey. *Journal of Human Lactation*. 2021. doi: 10.1177/0890334421105876.

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"I'm afraid if we stay here too long, they're just going to forget about us."

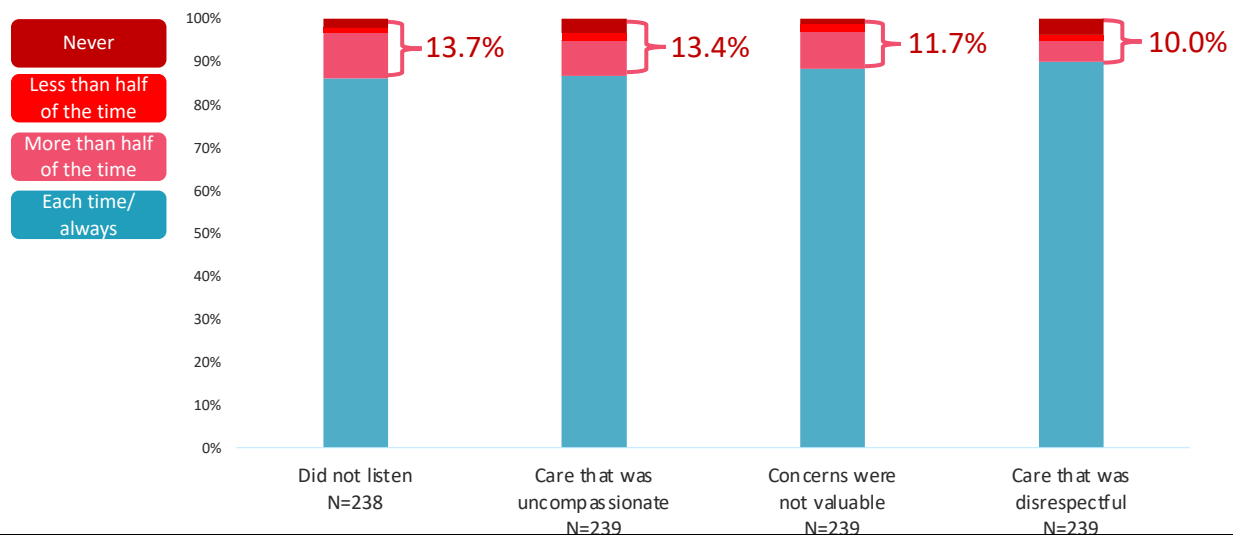
A member of your health care team **failed to respond** to your requests for help in a reasonable amount of time.

27.6%
(66/239)

Not a statistically significant difference hv

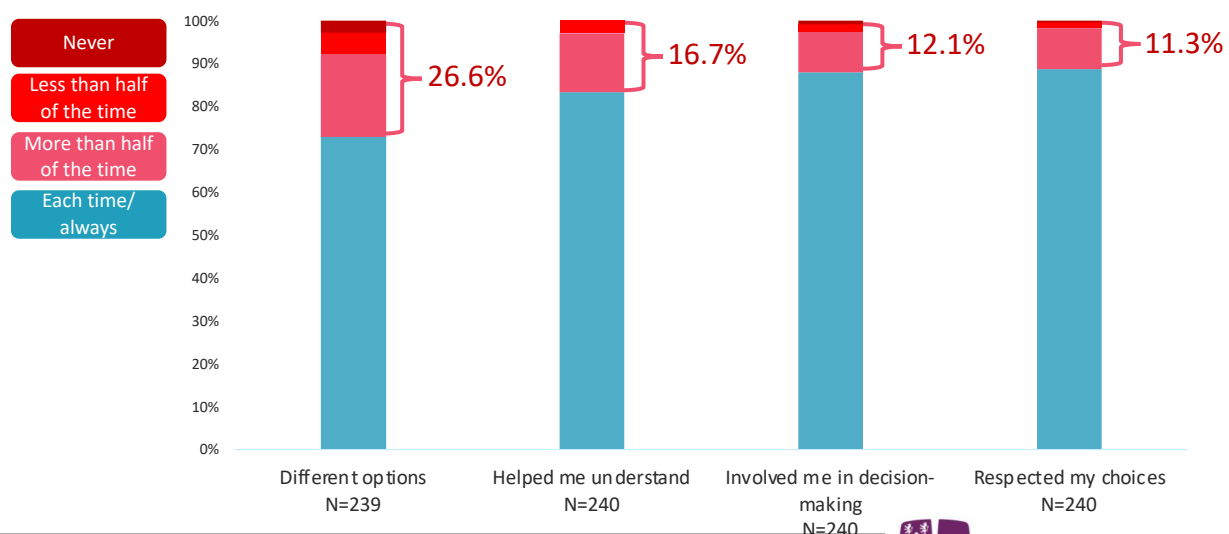
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On the postnatal unit, birthing parents reported **not always** feeling heard and valued.



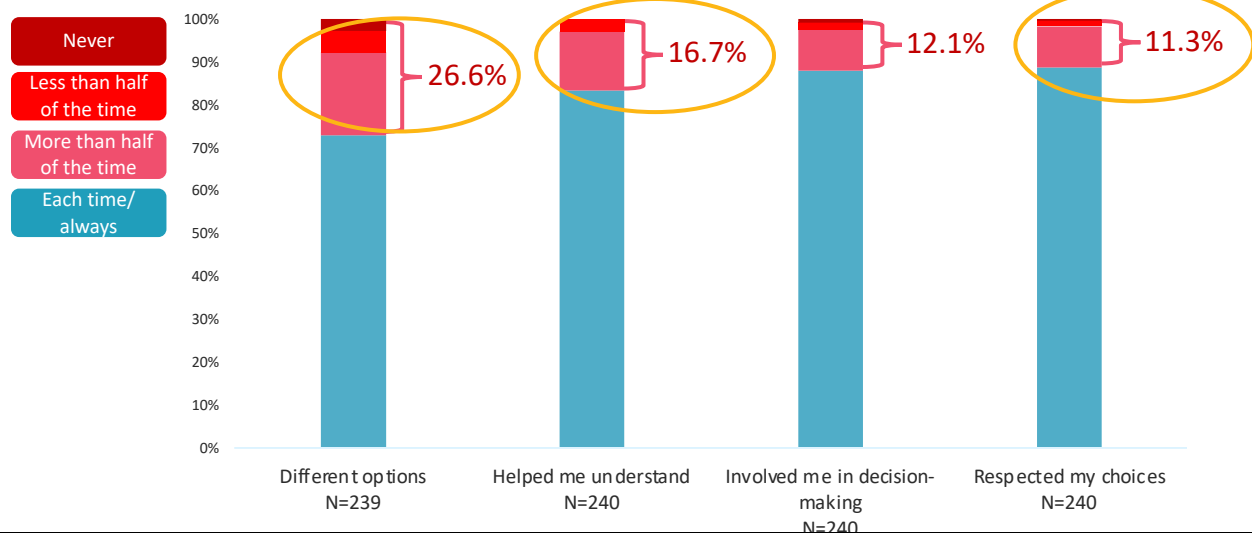
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On the postnatal unit, birthing parents reported **not always** feeling informed or respected.



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Innovation for safety

Safe Sleep and Skin-to-Skin Care in the Neonatal Period for Healthy Term Newborns

Lori Feldman-Winter, MD, MPH, FAAP, Jay P. Goldsmith, MD, FAAP, COMMITTEE ON FETUS AND NEWBORN, TASK FORCE ON SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

American Academy
of Pediatrics



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Human-centered design



National Institutes of Health (R34HD097017)

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Human-centered design



National Institutes of Health (R34HD097017)

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Randomized controlled trial completed in 2021

N=52 mother-infant pairs at UNC Medical Center in Chapel Hill

Those randomly allocated to the intervention had **less**:

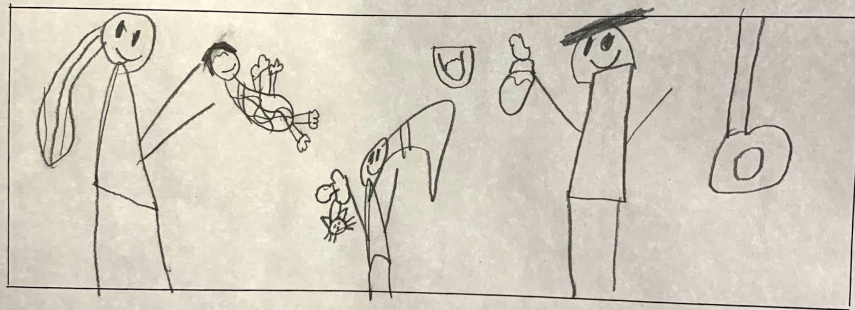
- Infant time out of the postpartum room
- Mom requests for postpartum staff assistance
- Infant wakings of moms prior to discharge

National Institutes of Health (R34HD097017)

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What do new families need most?

Draw a baby with a family.



Write what families with a baby need most.

food car uteachin
mickie dipres
Lots of love

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- ✓ The 4th trimester is a critical transition period.
- ✓ Postpartum care should be tailored to patient experiences, preferences, and needs.
- ✓ Communication should be compassionate, consistent, and culturally-sensitive.
- ✓ Care should be taken to authentically build trust and respect.

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