

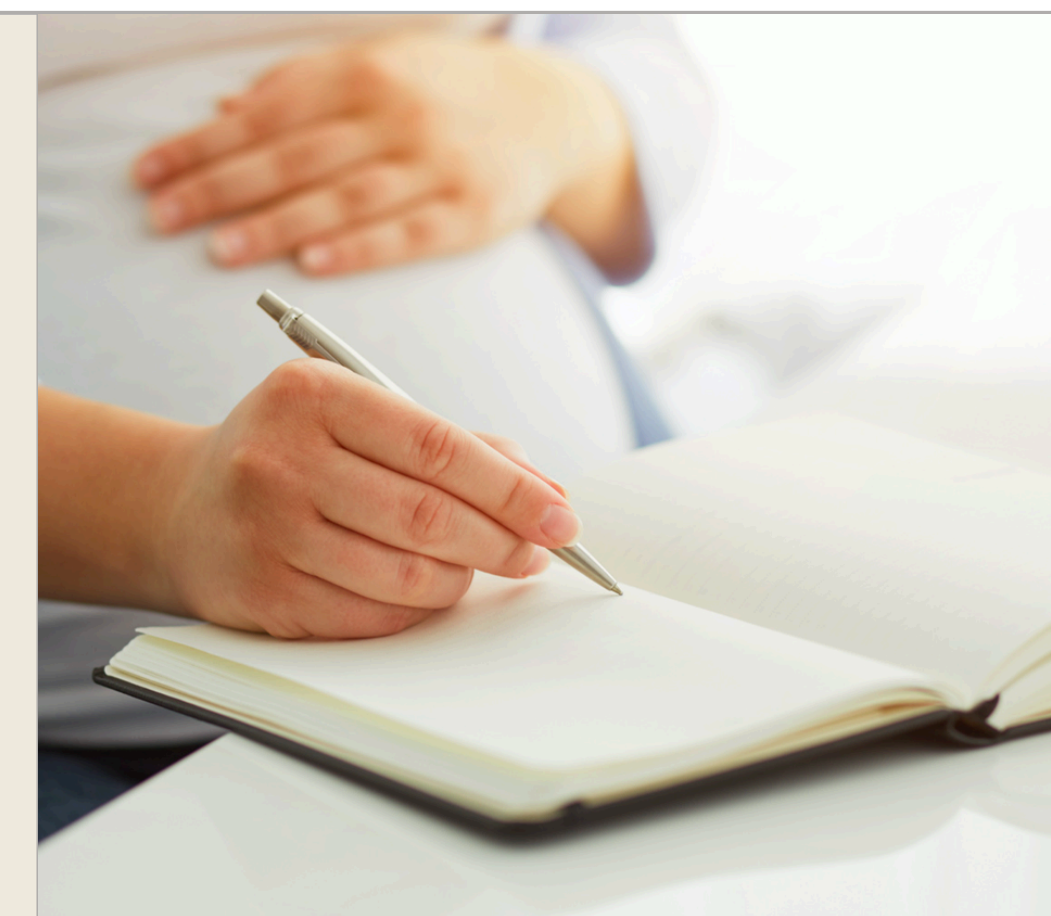


# Beyond Checklists: A Trauma-Sensitive Approach to Strengthen Trust Between Parents and Midwives

AUTHOR

Mgr. Zuzana Laubmann, MA., HPP. CD

*Trauma-sensitive and relationship-centred birth plan guide supporting communication, emotional safety and sense of agency between parents and midwives.*



## 01. Introduction

Birth plans are commonly used to support parental autonomy and informed decision-making. However, traditional birth plans may not adequately address relational communication, emotional safety, or the realities of clinical maternity care. Research highlights the importance of relational trust and perceived safety for positive birth experiences.

## 02. Objective

Reframing birth plans as trauma-sensitive dialogue tools can strengthen trust between parents and midwives and support safer, more respectful childbirth experiences.

### Why Rethink Birth Plans?

Traditional birth plans often:  
\* focus mainly on medical preferences  
\* overlook emotional regulation and coping strategies  
\* rarely address relational communication with healthcare professionals

In busy maternity settings this can unintentionally create tension between **parental expectations and clinical realities** and between **parents and caregivers**.

## 03. Methodology

This approach was developed through integrative work as a doula and somatic trauma therapist, combining scientific research, analysis of existing studies, and deep clinical experience with clients.

Rooted in trauma-sensitive principles, it emerged from supporting individuals with highly sensitive nervous systems—particularly during vulnerable transitions such as pregnancy, birth, and recovery.

By bridging evidence-based knowledge with embodied therapeutic practice, the method supports safety, regulation, and a felt sense of agency, even in moments of overwhelm.

- Surveys
- systematic reviews
- Research & Literature Review
- Interviews

## 05. Conclusion

Research shows that birth experiences are strongly influenced by:  
**perceived safety, relational trust, emotional support and sense of agency during labour, sense of agency.**

Individuals with previous negative or traumatic medical experiences may face additional vulnerability in maternity care.

### BIRTH PLANNING AS DIALOGUE — NOT AS A CHECKLIST

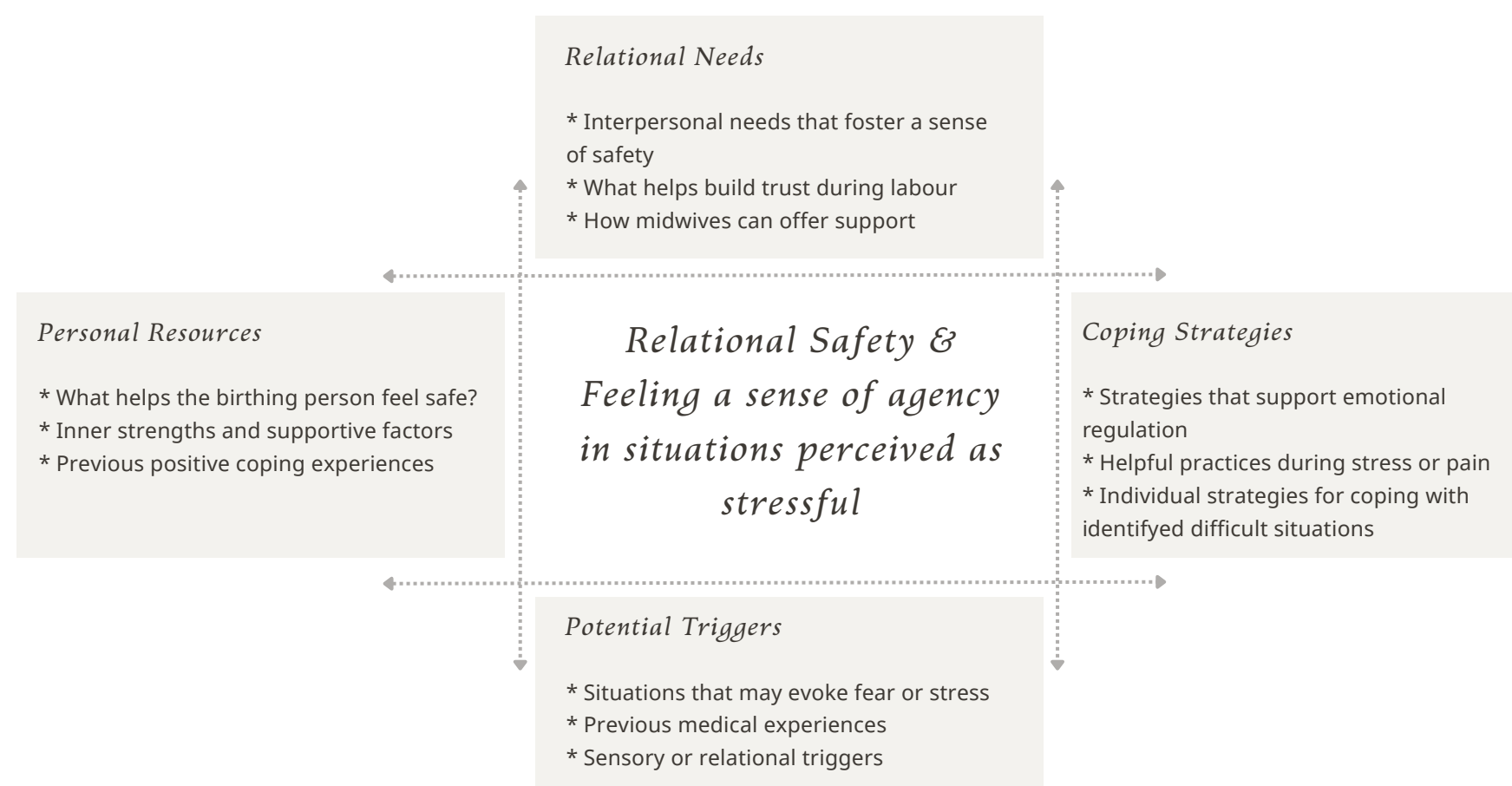
*Traditional birth plans* → **\*\*expectations\*\***

*Trauma-sensitive birth planning* → **\*\*communication, safety and coping strategies\*\***

*By shifting the focus from fixed expectations to relational communication, mutual understanding, and individual coping strategies, birth plans can become a bridge between parents and midwives—helping parents feel a sense of agency even in situations perceived as stressful.*

## 04. Results/Findings

The model illustrates how trauma-sensitive birth planning integrates four dimensions that support safety in childbirth. Together, these elements transform birth plans from static documents into relational tools that support trusting atmosphere and appreciative communication in maternity care.



## Conclusion

When birth plan centers relational care—open dialogue, shared understanding, and individual coping strategies—it becomes more than a document. It becomes a living process of trust.

This approach supports parents in feeling seen, safe, and empowered, while supporting midwives in providing care that is both professional and deeply human.

Together, it creates the foundation for a mutually respectful, trusting, and embodied birth experience—where both parents and caregivers can meet in presence, safety, and shared purpose.

### Key References

- Ondek, M. 2000. «Historical development of childbirth education». In: F. Nichols and S. Humenick (Eds.), *Childbirth education: Practice, Research and theory*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders
- Top, SK. 1996. «Do birthplans empower women? A study of midwives' views». *Nurs Stand* 10(32): 44-48. doi: 10.7748/ns1996.04.10.31.33.c6222
- Welsh, JV, and AG Symon. 2014. «Unique and proforma birth plans: A qualitative exploration of midwives' experiences.» *Midwifery* 30(7): 885-891. doi: 10.1016/j.midw.2014.03.004
- Lothian, JA. 2006. «Birth Plans: the good, the bad, and the future.» *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing* 35(2): 295-303. doi: 10.1111/j.1552-6909.2006.00042.x
- Laubmann, Z. 2022. «Signale der Geborgenheit. Traumasensible Geburtsbegleitung.» *Deutsche Hebammenzeitschrift* 2: 48-51. <https://www.dhz-online.de/news/detailartikel/signale-der-geborgenheit>
- Laubmann, Z. 2023. «Birth Plan: Does the Path Still Fit the Objective? Do the Means Still Fulfill the Purpose?». *Midwifery Today* 146. <https://www.midwiferytoday.com/mt-articles/birth-plan-does-the-path-still-fit-the-objective-do-the-means-still-fulfill-the-purpose/>