

**QUARTER +  
PREGNANT**

**A PREGNANCY  
JOURNAL**



LOVE OVER FEAR  
WELLNESS AND BIRTH LLC

Created and distributed by Jenna Brown  
Philadelphia PA  
2019

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# **SO... YOU'RE PREGNANT, AND A LITTLE (OR A LOT) QUEER.**

For whatever reason, this journal found its way into your hands.

Maybe you're excited to be pregnant.

You might have put a lot of intention into trying to conceive.

Or, maybe this pregnancy is a surprise.

You might not be sure how you feel.

The way you feel might change day-to-day, or even moment-to-moment.

You might be supported by a partner, or partners.

Maybe you are on this journey alone.

Pregnancy can be isolating for anyone, but especially for queers.

Other people make assumptions about what your pregnancy means.

Changes in your body and identity can be dysphoric.

Queer identity means different things to each of us. If there is a single common denominator, it is in how we choose to show up - with a willingness to break the rules and live our best live. For that reason, I deeply believe that queer pregnant people and parents are in a position to shift the narrative of family-building out of what is conventional, and into what is intentional... and autonomous... and maybe even badass.

I created this journal to provide space for you to reflect throughout your pregnancy, and help you to clarify what this experience means to you - without the limits of cultural binaries. This is a space where you are free to self-define without the burden of other people's projections.

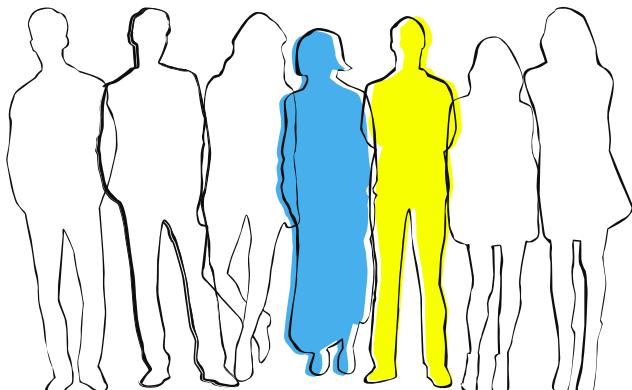
Everyone's foundation in self-reflection is different. Everyone's approach to self-work is different. Whether you have spent years in therapy, developed countless self-regulation tools, are experienced in somatic practices, or have never given any of this a single thought – I created this journal based on what I have seen work most often for people preparing for birth.

There may be other approaches that you use that compliment the reflection you do here. I encourage you to go wild when it comes to self-study and self-care! Create – paint, craft, play music, sing, cook. Move – yoga, walk, swim, dance, stretch. Experience – massage, chiropractic care, acupuncture.

There may be sections of this journal that you'd like to invite your partner(s) to do with you (if applicable). While most of the journal is prompted, the final section provides more open-ended space for you to reflect whenever you need.

Because self-reflection can bring up some of the icky stuff we all carry, please pay attention to your reactions as you go through this material. If anything triggers you, put it down and walk away. Take a breath and return to it later, or don't! You do not have to do this all in one sitting or all in order. This journal does not replace therapy or mental health treatment.

Take what works for you, and leave what doesn't.



I hope you find this resource helpful and affirming. Whatever brought you here, I am glad that you are.

Jenna Brown  
queer doula & radical educator  
Love Over Fear Wellness and Birth



THIS JORNAL BELONGS TO

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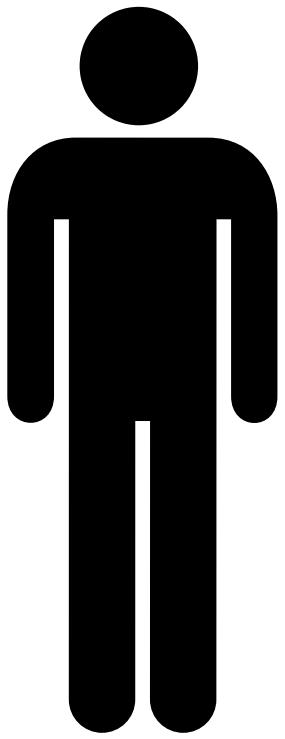
# **WHO YA GONNA CALL?**

Things can get overwhelming. Prepare this list and keep it handy for those moments when you need someone to chat with.

## **WHEN I NEED SOMEONE TO LISTEN:**

## **WHEN I NEED SOME GOOD ADVICE:**

## **WHEN I NEED A FUN DISTRACTION:**



Pregnancy is transformative. It is one of the few life experiences during which it is impossible to deny how dynamic we are.

Some of the changes of pregnancy may be physically uncomfortable – nausea, aches and pains, exhaustion, etc.

Some of these changes may cause more mental-emotional unease. As you watch your body change shape, in a way that may feel - at times - alien, you are also navigating the ways in which other people respond to your pregnant body,

Perhaps the experience you are having in your changing body is overwhelmingly positive, or you have isolated moments of positivity – strength, wonder, excitement, etc.

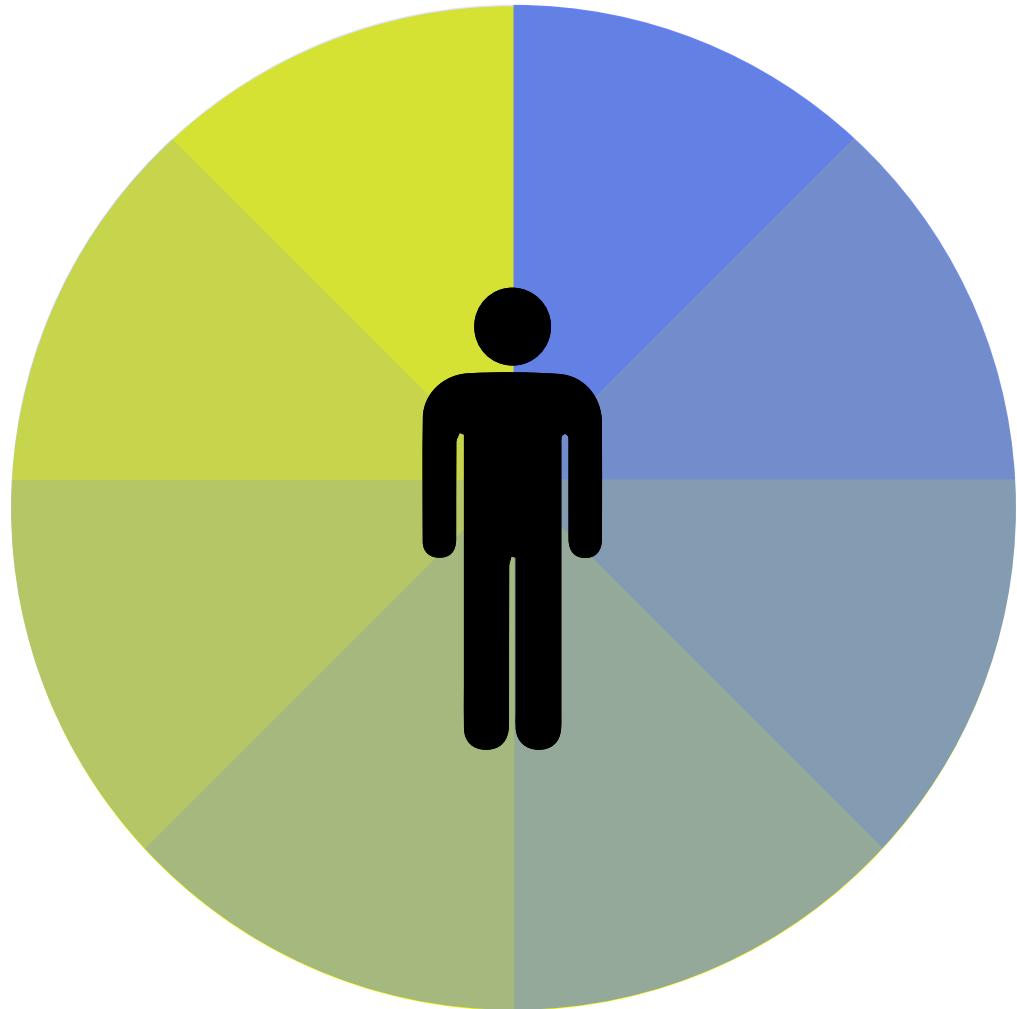
No matter how you crack it, pregnancy can bring up lots of intense feelings. Especially when it comes to your changing body.

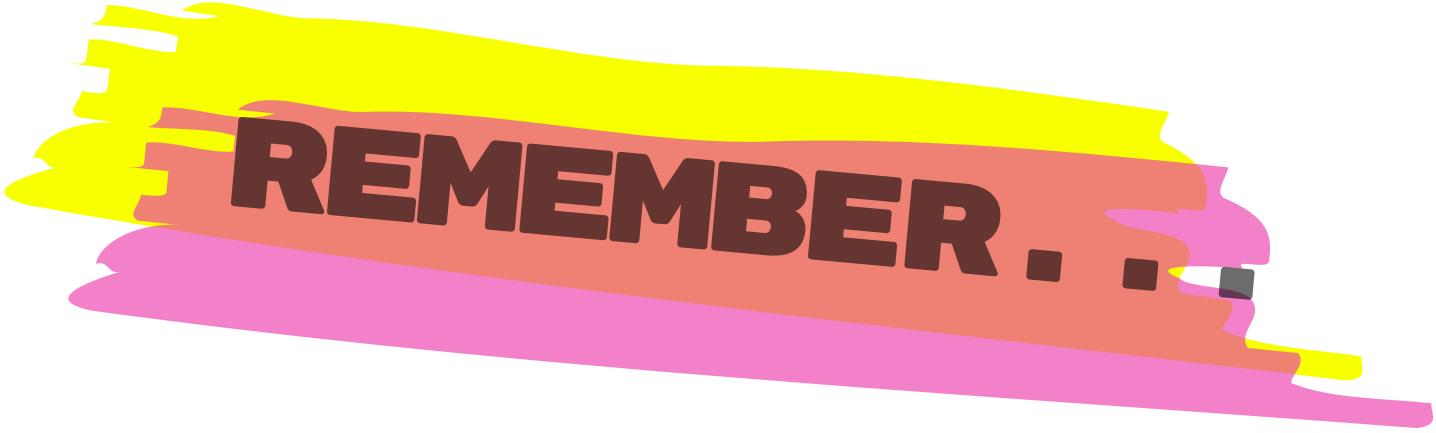
Despite these complexities, your body can be used as a tool (pregnant or not) to self-regulate, stay present, and gain a sense of groundedness when things feel unsteady. It may be worthwhile to examine your relationship to your changing body, rather than avoiding it.

**RIGHT NOW, MY RELATIONSHIP  
TO MY BODY FEELS . . .**

**SENSATIONS IN MY BODY . . .**

Use this space to write in things you think/feel about your pregnant body.  
Notice the language you use? Are you critical of yourself or appreciative?  
Where do you think these thoughts and stories come from?





**REMEMBER.**

**I AM DOING THE INCREDIBLY HARD WORK OF  
GROWING A BABY.**

**I AM PRACTICED IN TRANSFORMATION.**

**I FEEL MOST BEAUTIFUL  
WHEN . . .**

**I FEEL MOST CALM  
WHEN . . .**

**I FEEL MOST  
SEXY/SENSUAL WHEN . . .**

**I FEEL MOST ENERGIZED  
WHEN . . .**



**I FEEL MOST ALIVE  
WHEN . . .**

**I FEEL HAPPIEST WHEN . . .**



# **SUPPORT**

**WHO IS MOST SUPPORTIVE OF MY  
PREGNANCY AND HOW DO THEY SHOW THEIR  
SUPPORT?**

**DO I FIND IT EASY OR DIFFICULT TO  
SET BOUNDARIES IN ORDER TO KEEP  
MYSELF HAPPY AND WELL?**

# **IN WHICH RELATIONSHIPS CAN I WORK TO MAINTAIN STRONGER BOUNDARIES?**

**DO I FIND IT EASY OR DIFFICULT TO  
ASK FOR AND RECEIVE HELP WHEN I  
NEED IT?**



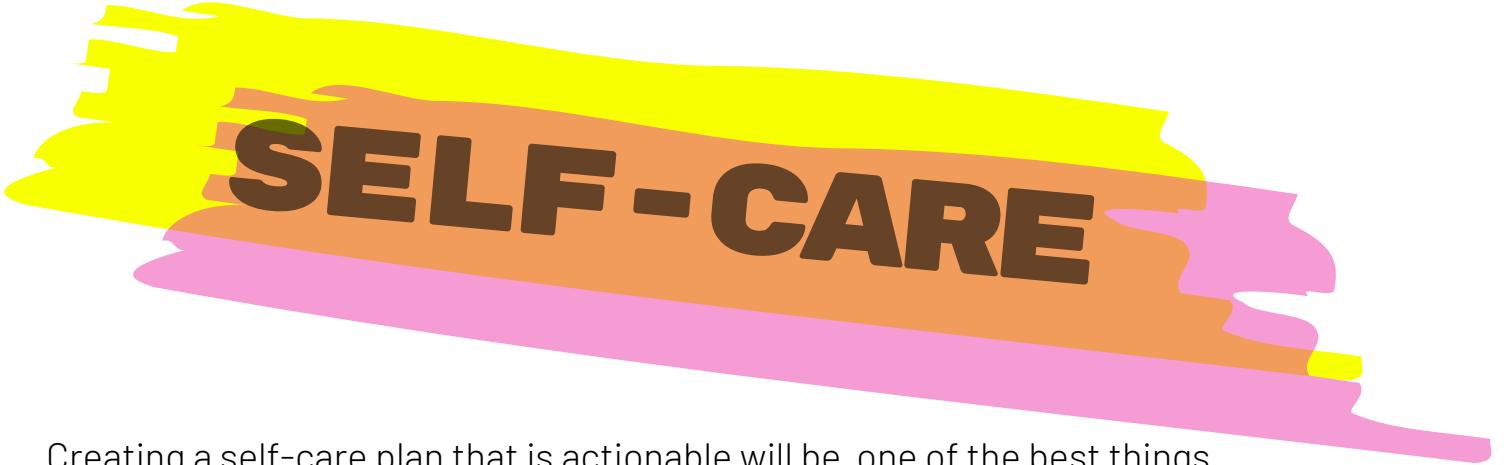


# EARLY PREGNANCY

**WHEN I FOUND OUT I WAS  
PREGNANT, I FELT....**

**MY CONCEPTION JOURNEY WAS... .**

**WHEN I SHARE WITH PEOPLE  
THAT I AM PREGNANT . . .**



# **SELF - CARE**

Creating a self-care plan that is actionable will be one of the best things you can do to support yourself in pregnancy and parenthood.

## **MY HISTORY OF SELF-CARE IS.. .**

**WAS SELF-CARE MODELED TO ME  
GROWING UP? BY WHOM? HOW CAN  
I PLAN TO MODEL SELF-CARE TO  
MY CHILD?**

**WHICH OF MY HABITS ARE  
REALLY HELPING ME? WHICH ARE  
GETTING IN THE WAY?**



**I FEEL OUT OF BALANCE  
WHEN . . .**

**I FEEL STRETCHED TOO THIN  
BY . . .**

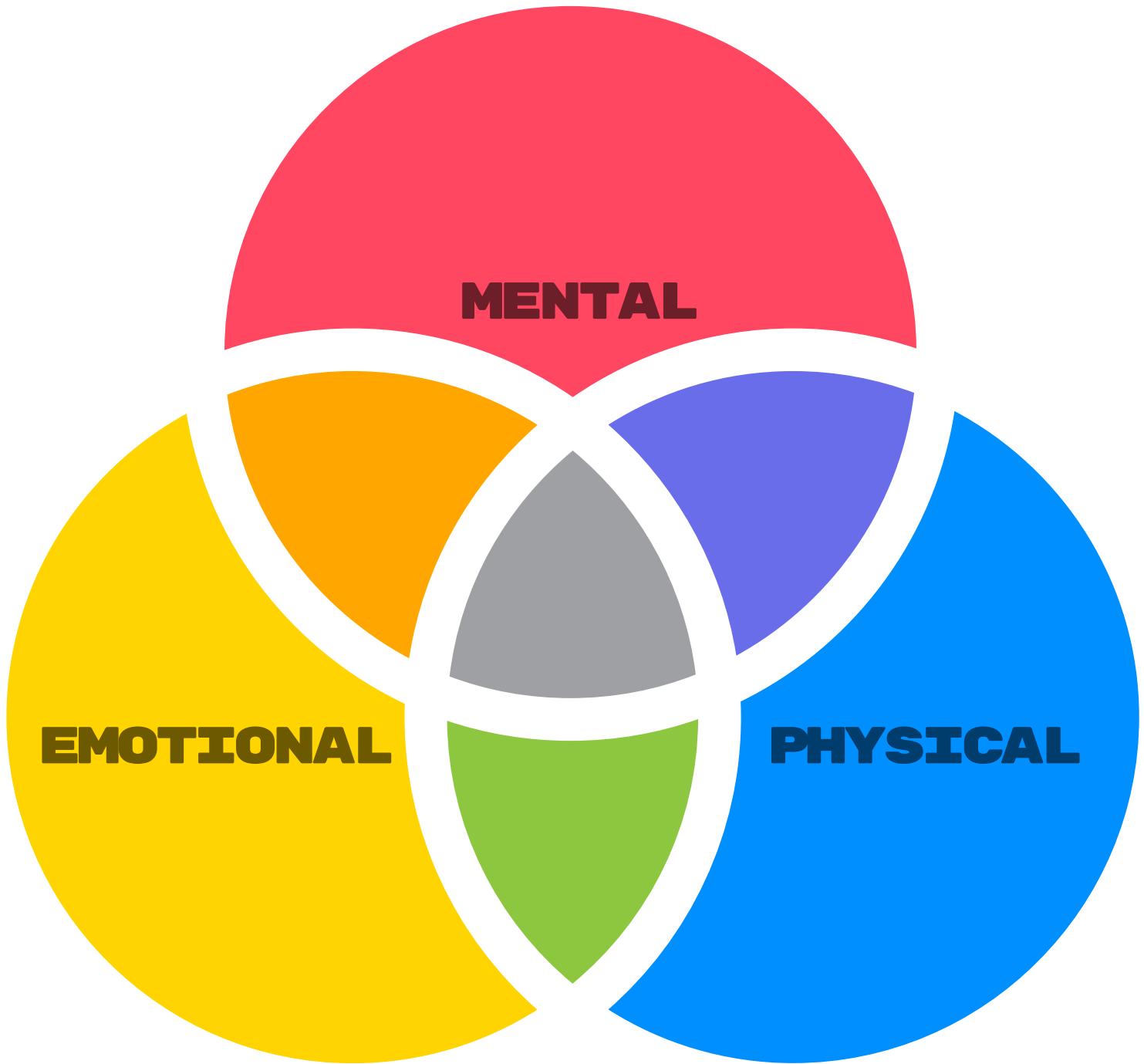
**IN RESPONSE, I COULD ASK FOR  
HELP OR SET BOUNDARIES BY . . .**

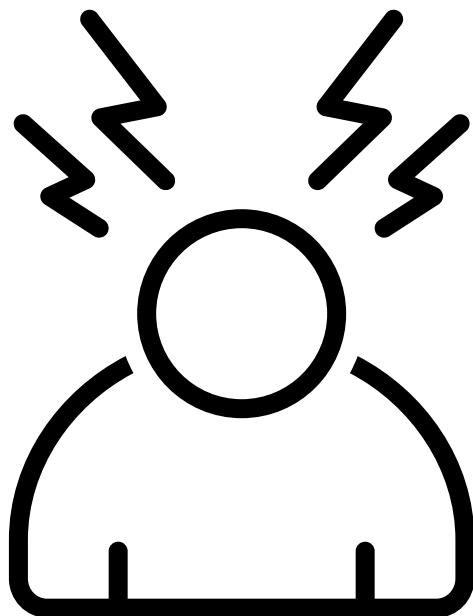
**I FEEL MOST IN NEED OF SELF-CARE WHEN . . .**

**WHAT ACTIVITIES, RITUALS,  
PEOPLE, PLACES, ETC. "FILL  
MY CUP?"**

# **MY SELF-CARE PLAN**

Use this space to write in the mental, physical, and emotional aspects of your personal self-care plan. You may find it is helpful to note which items are realistic as daily/weekly/monthly goals, as well as any resources or support you need to make those goals possible.





A lot is changing and more will continue to change!

It is human nature to resist change, or to feel worry/anxiety around it. You may find yourself contemplating the ways in which the growth of your family will impact your personal life, partnership(s), career, relationships, mental health, finances... everything! As your pregnancy progresses there may be increasing external stressors, whether financial, work-related, familial, health-related, etc. And, as you do your work to become increasingly self-aware and empowered as a pregnant person and parent-to-be, you may encounter unresolved baggage or trauma from your past.

The physical changes of pregnancy (hormonal and mechanical) can intensify feelings of stress and make stress especially difficult to manage. Everyone is telling you to reduce your stress level during pregnancy, but worrying about your stress level only creates more stress! It can feel like a vicious cycle.

You may not be able to eliminate all stressors from your lives, but you can work to identify, manage, and reduce it more successfully and healthily.



**STRESS**

**MY RELATIONSHIP TO STRESS . . .**

**DO I GET STRESSED EASILY, OR  
AM I USUALLY ABLE TO MANAGE  
STRESSORS BEFORE THEY BECOME  
OVERWHELMING?**

# **HOW DO I TYPICALLY HANDLE STRESS?**

# **WHAT AM I TYPICALLY MOST STRESSED ABOUT?**

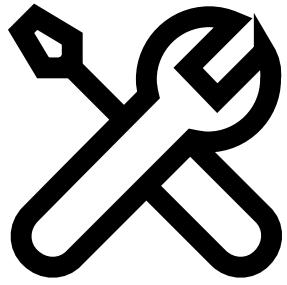
# **WHERE DO I USUALLY FEEL STRESS IN MY BODY?**



**DO I HAVE EFFECTIVE TOOLS  
AND TECHNIQUES TO COPE WITH  
STRESS? IF SO, WHAT ARE  
THEY?**

**IF NOT, WHAT NEW COPING  
MECHANISMS MIGHT I BE OPEN  
TO LEARNING? WHAT RESOURCES  
ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?**

**HOW CAN I REDUCE THE LEVEL  
OF STRESS IN MY LIFE,  
OVERALL? WHAT ARE SOME  
CONCRETE, PRACTICAL STEPS?**



# MY STRESS RELIEF TOOLBOX



**IDENTITY**

**MY SENSE OF SELF RIGHT  
NOW . . .**

**WHAT PIECES OF ME ARE  
STARTING TO FEEL FAR AWAY?  
DO I WANT TO INVITE THOSE  
PIECES BACK, OR IS IT TIME  
TO RELEASE MY ATTACHMENT TO  
THEM?**

**WHAT ABOUT BEING  
PREGNANT/BUILDING A FAMILY  
IS FUN FOR ME?**



**WHAT AM I MOST EXCITED ABOUT  
WHEN I THINK ABOUT MY SHIFT  
INTO PARENTHOOD? HOW CAN I  
BRING THAT EXCITEMENT INTO  
OTHER ELEMENTS OF MY  
EXPERIENCE DURING PREGNANCY?**

**HOW ARE OTHERS'  
PERCEPTIONS/EXPECTATIONS OF  
ME IMPACTING MY SENSE OF  
SELF?**

# **RELATIONSHIPS**

**RIGHT NOW, I FEEL CLOSEST  
TO . . .**

**MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY  
PARTNER(S) LOOKS LIKE . . .**

**I FEEL MOST UNDERSTOOD BY . . .**

**I FEEL LEAST UNDERSTOOD  
BY . . .**

**WHO IS DISAPPOINTING ME  
RIGHT NOW? HOW CAN I FEEL  
MORE PEACE AROUND THAT  
RELATIONSHIP?**

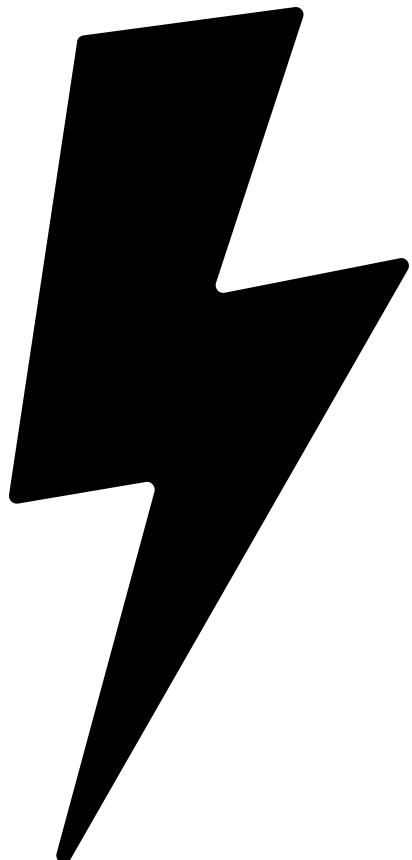
Most pregnant people feel some amount of fear as they approach labor, birth, and parenthood.

Every pregnancy, birth, and baby is different and carries with it many unknowns. You may be wondering how life will look with a baby (or another baby), whether your labor will be challenging, how your partnership or relationships will be affected, etc.

Fear is a completely normal and valid response when we are faced with unknowns. But, getting stuck in fear can be damaging and disempowering.

I believe that all of our responses to life's experiences are rooted in either fear, or love. Radical self-awareness empowers us to actively choose which path we take, rather than automatically following the path of least resistance.

Fear can illuminate work that we still have to do. Rather than running from it, you may find it is useful to acknowledge it head-on.



One tool for challenging fear is to identify a specific fear, and then think of a loving truth that challenges it. To do this, I like to use the phrase, "I'm afraid \_\_\_\_\_, but I know \_\_\_\_\_."

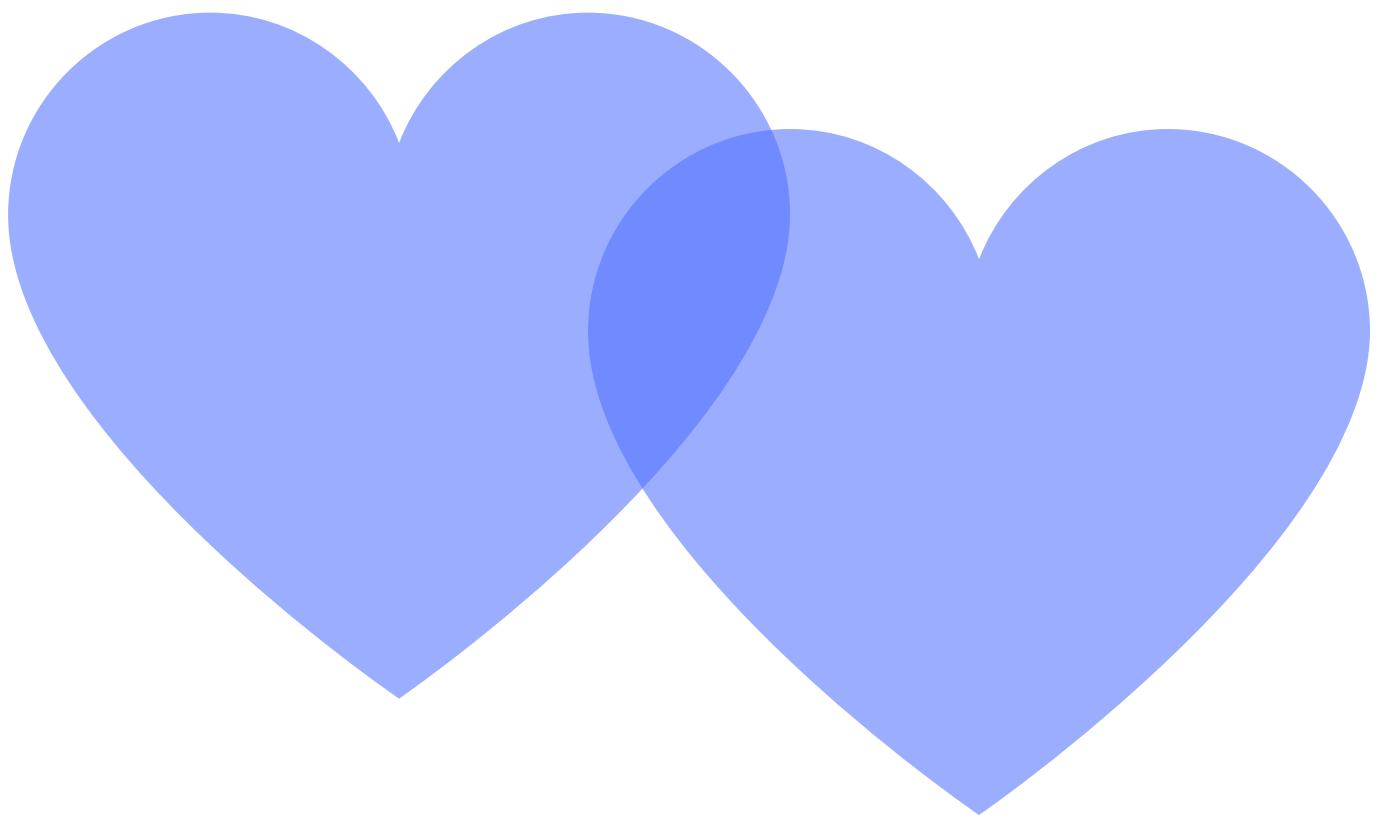
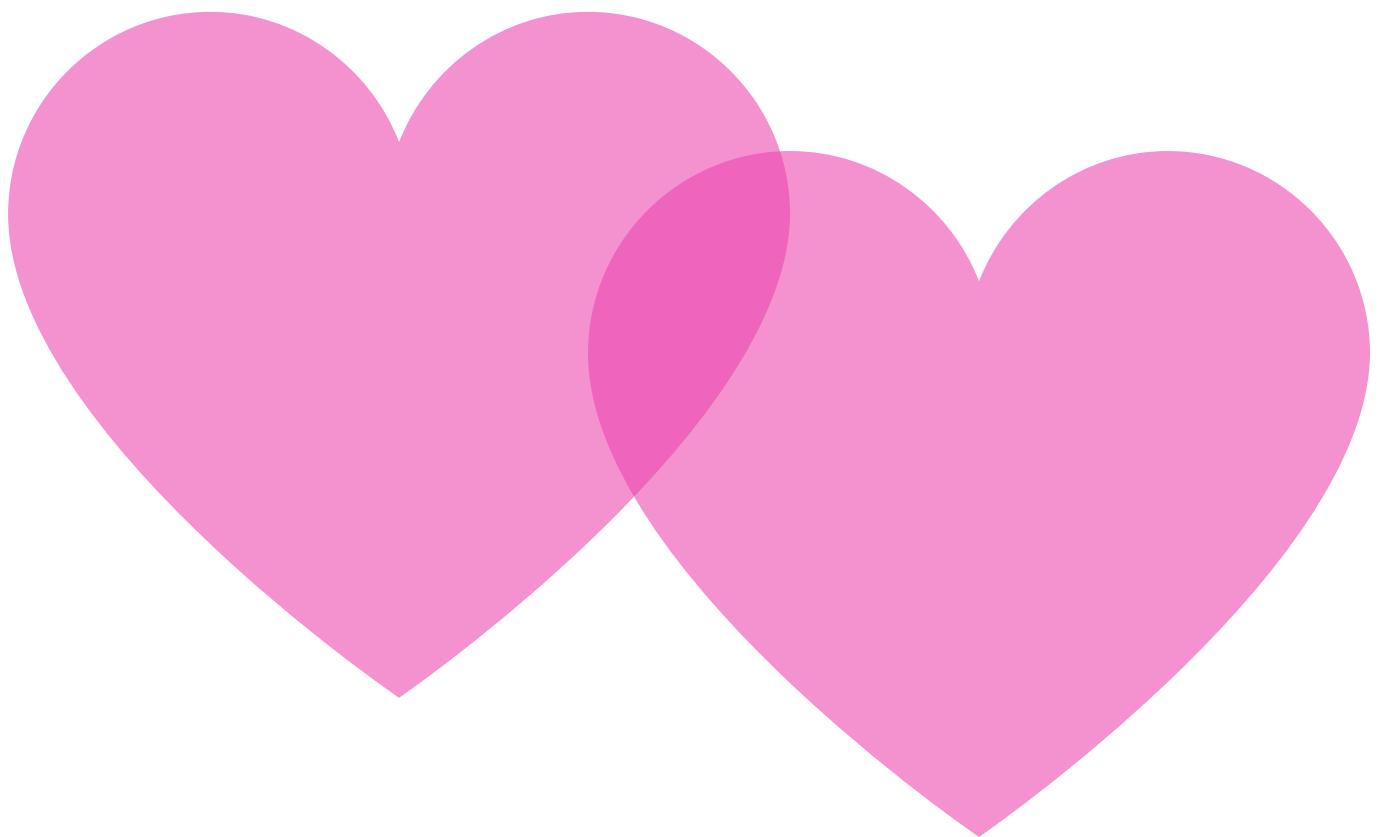
Use the spaces next few pages to practice this technique. Here are a couple of examples to get you started...

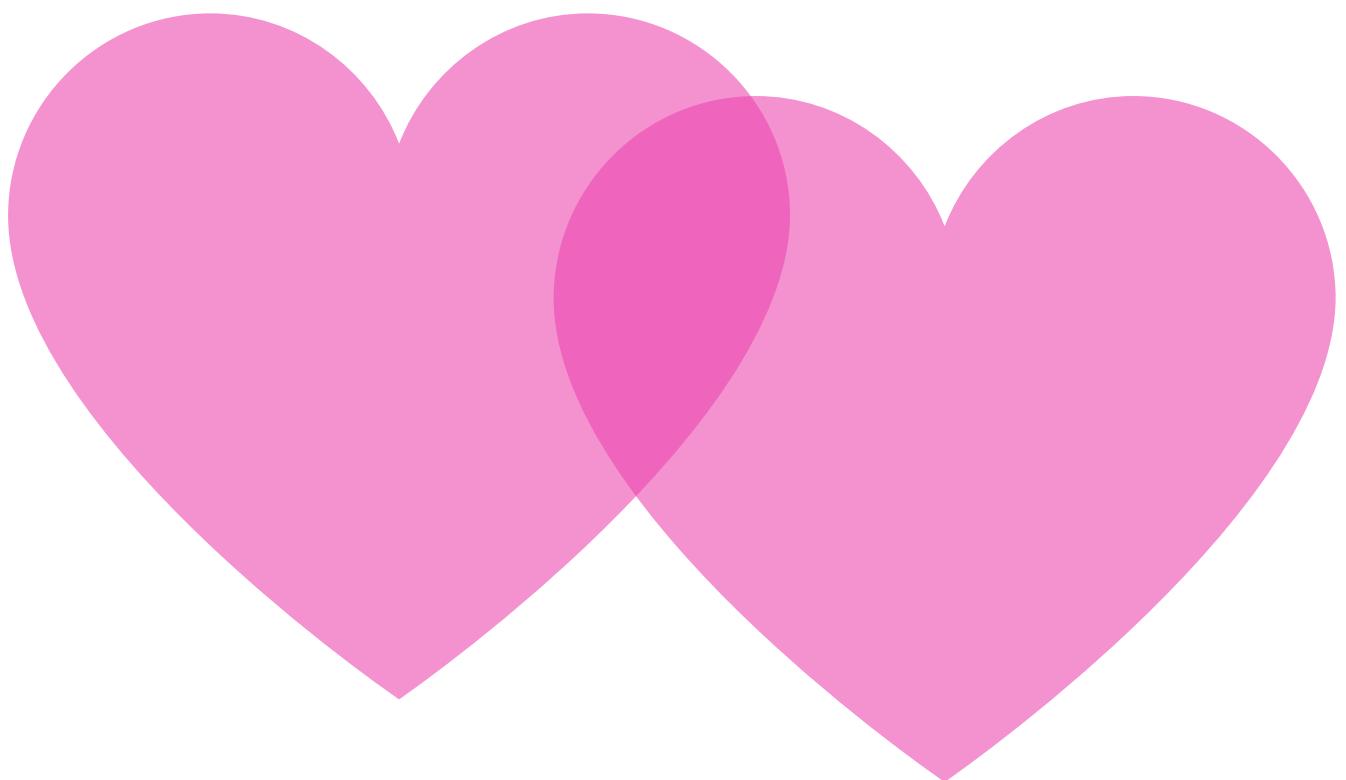
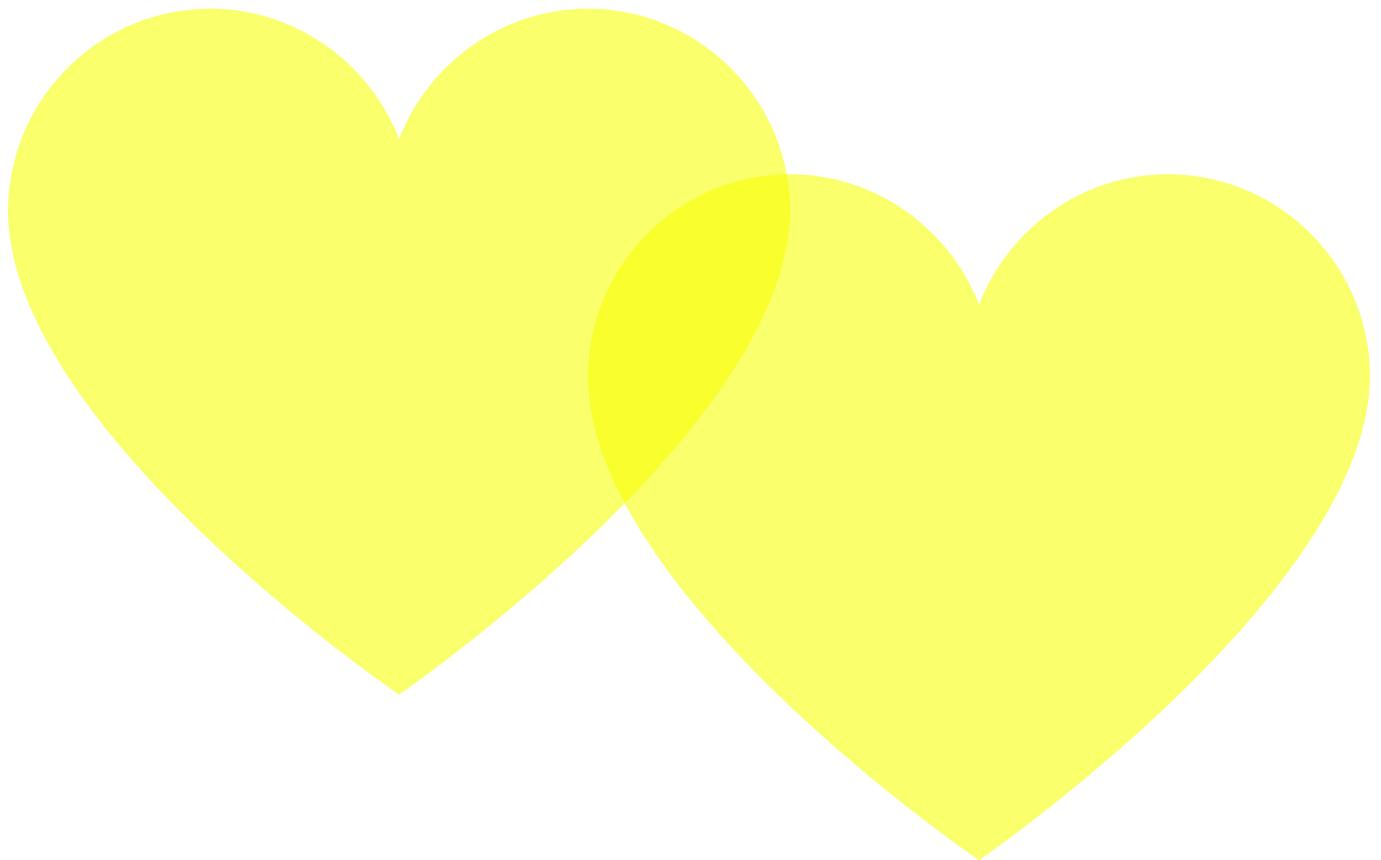
I'm afraid that my life will change completely as a new parent

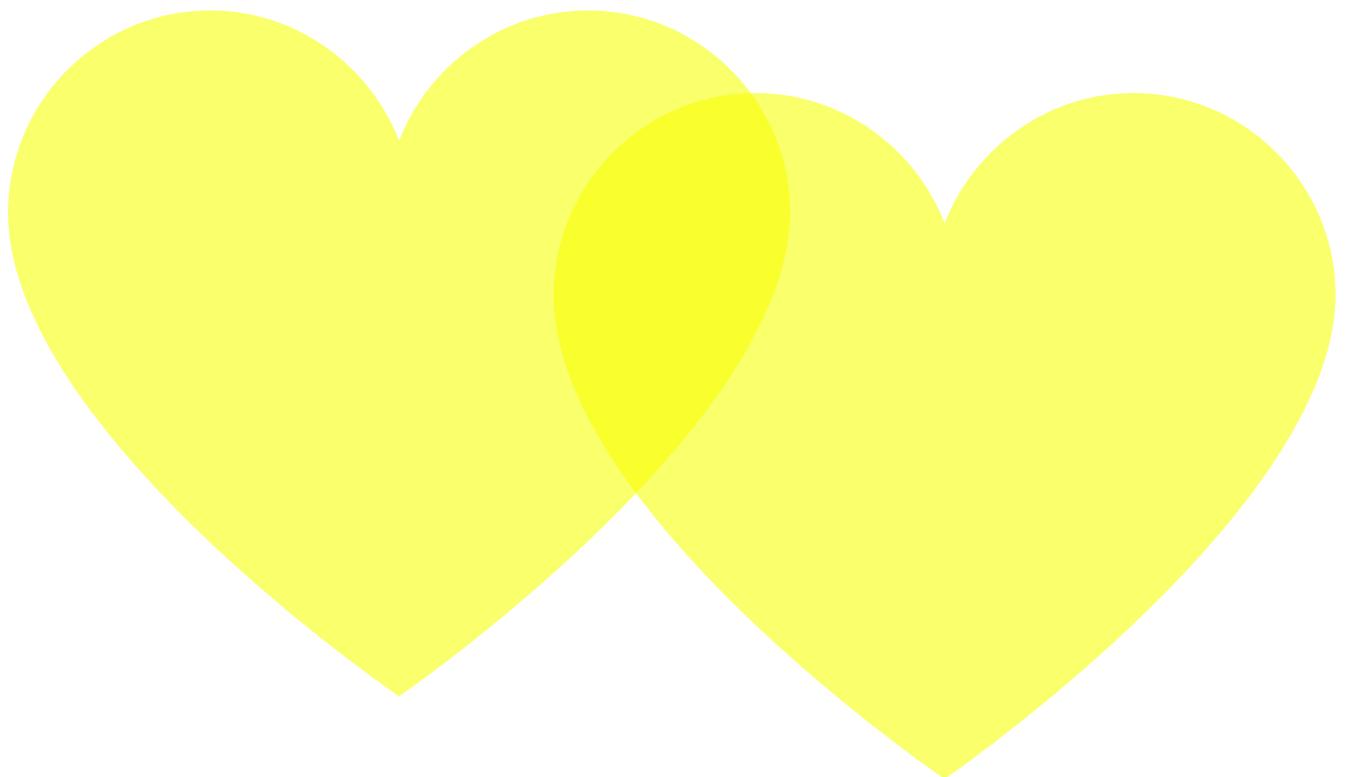
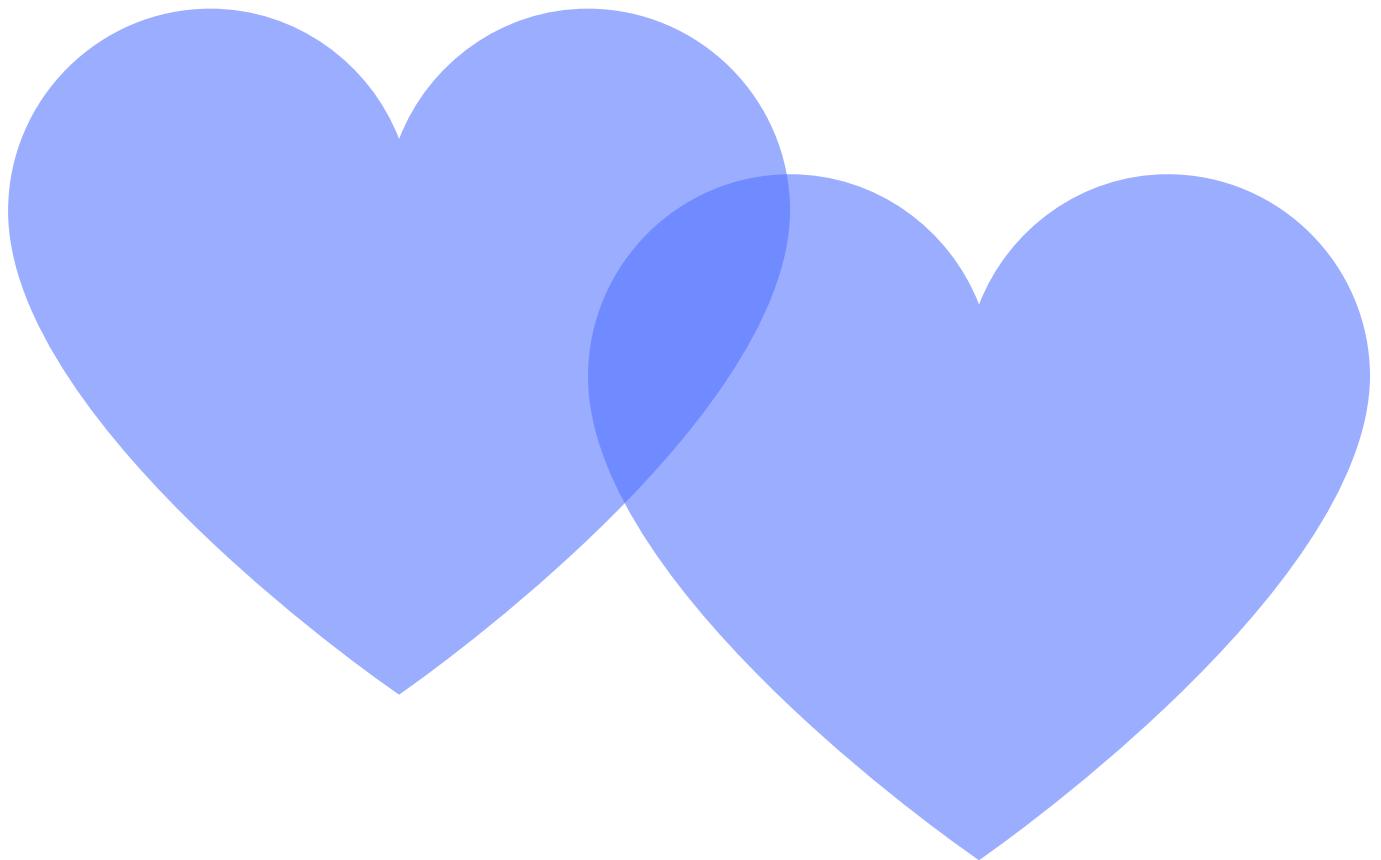
but I know that I am approaching this change with intention, strength, and support.

I'm afraid of the pain of labor

but I know that labor cannot be stronger than me, because it is me.









# **CARE PROVIDER**

**AS I NAVIGATE HEALTH SYSTEMS  
TO RECEIVE PRENATAL CARE, I  
FEEL...**

**DO I FEEL I HAVE ACCESS TO  
CARE THAT IS AFFIRMING OF MY  
IDENTITY AND FAMILY? WHAT  
DOES/WOULD AFFIRMING CARE  
LOOK AND FEEL LIKE FOR ME?**

**DO I FEEL A SENSE OF BODILY  
AUTONOMY, EVEN IN THE  
PRESENCE OF MY CARE  
PROVIDER? WHAT DOES BODILY  
AUTONOMY LOOK AND FEEL LIKE  
TO ME?**

**HAVE I REACHED OUT TO OTHER  
QUEER INDIVIDUALS/FAMILIES  
WHO HAVE NAVIGATED THE CARE  
SYSTEM IN MY AREA  
PREVIOUSLY? WHERE CAN I SEEK  
ADVICE, IF NEEDED?**

Note: Facebook is a great resource for connecting with other queer parents and families, if you are feeling unsupported locally.



LATE  
PREGNANCY

**AS I GET CLOSER TO BIRTH, I  
FEEL...**

**WHO AM I MOST EXCITED FOR MY  
BABY TO MEET?**

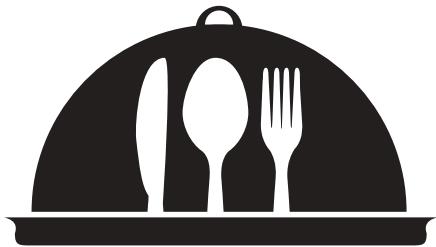


# **HOW DO I ANTICIPATE MY BABY WILL CHANGE MY DAILY ROUTINES?**

**HOW HAVE MY NEEDS CHANGED  
OVER THE PAST FEW  
WEEKS/MONTHS?**

**SOMETHING I ALWAYS WANT TO  
REMEMBER ABOUT THIS  
PREGNANCY . . .**

# **PREGNANCY CRAVINGS AND AVERSIONS I HAVE EXPERIENCED . . .**



# **PREGNANCY DREAMS I HAVE HAD . . .**



Take the words "birth plan" and throw them out the window. We cannot plan for birth. The unpredictability of birth can be daunting. Don't panic!

How do you want to feel during labor? No matter what circumstance you find yourself in, with the right support, you can create the emotional experience that you are hoping for.

It may seem cheesy to think about your "dream birth," but I promise you - mapping it out will help you identify how you want to feel during labor. Culturally, we are stuck in the mindset "healthy baby, healthy parent," and we don't think to ask for more than that from our birth experience. I am telling you that you deserve more!

Do the same as you prepare for postpartum. Think about the emotional experience that you want to cultivate, and then create the support network necessary to actualize it. Remember that we used to grow and care for our families in large communities. Don't do this alone! Ask for what you need!



# **DREAM BIRTH**

**WHEN I IGNORE MY FEARS AND  
ASSUME THE BEST POSSIBLE  
OUTCOME, MY FEELINGS ABOUT  
BIRTH ARE... .**

**MY DREAM BIRTH**

**WHERE AM I?**

**WHO IS WITH ME?**

**WHAT CAN I SEE?**

**WHAT CAN I HEAR?**

**WHAT CAN I SMELL?**

**WHAT ELSE IS TRUE ABOUT THE  
ENVIRONMENT?**

**WHAT OR WHO IN THIS SPACE  
HELPS ME TO FEEL CALM?**

**HOW DO I IMAGINE THE FIRST  
FEW MOMENTS/MINUTES/HOURS  
AFTER MY BABY IS BORN?**

# **HOW DO I WANT MY BIRTH EXPERIENCE TO FEEL?**



**HOW DO I USUALLY RESPOND TO . . .**

**STRESS**

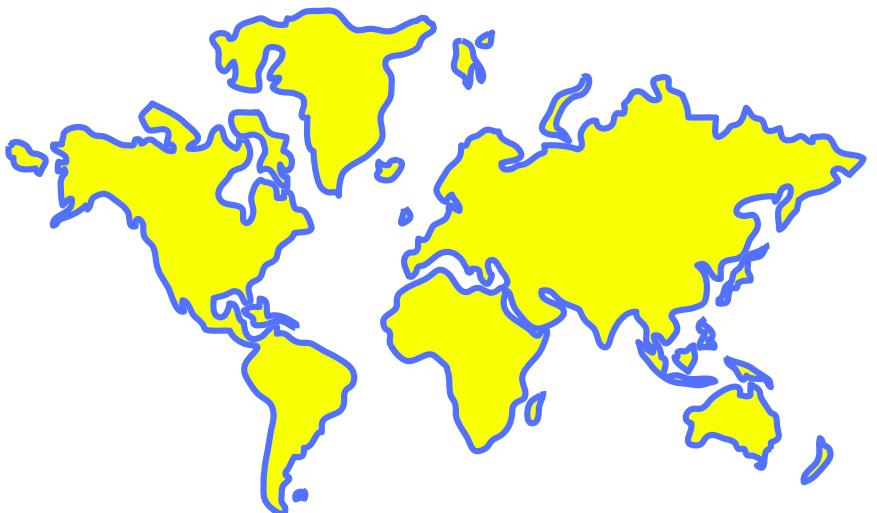
**FEAR**

**PAIN**

**HOW CAN I PLAN TO COMMUNICATE MY  
NEEDS DURING LABOR DESPITE THE  
POTENTIAL FOR OVERWHELMING  
FEELINGS?**

## BIRTH TRADITIONS

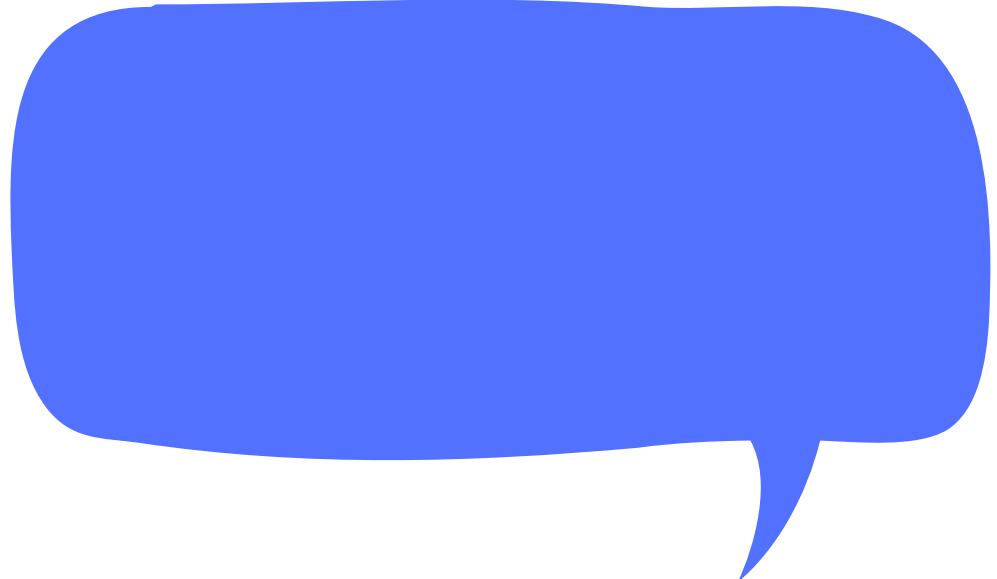
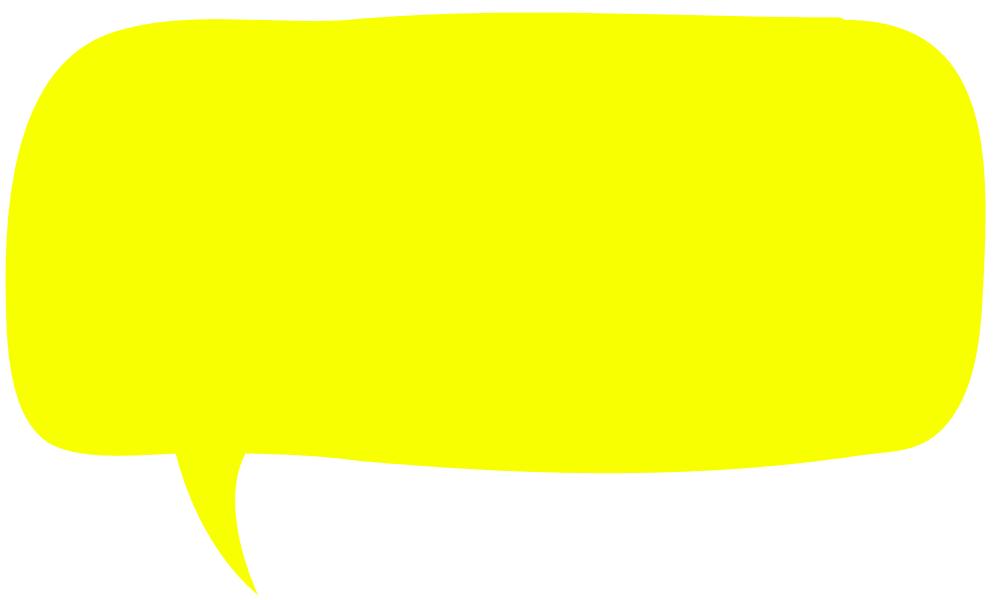
It may be helpful for you to research and connect with birth traditions that feel meaningful to you. Whether they are part of your own heritage, or mindfully borrowed. Record what you find here!



## AFFIRMATIONS

What do you need to hear right now? Record encouraging words here, and choose to either speak them out loud to yourself, or share them with someone you trust. These might be affirmations you can share with your birth team, that they can speak to you during labor.







# **POSTPARTUM PLANNING**

**WHEN I THINK ABOUT  
POSTPARTUM I FEEL...**

# **MY IDEAL POSTPARTUM EXPERIENCE WOULD BE . . .**

# **SELF-CARE PRACTICES THAT I CAN CARRY WITH ME INTO POSTPARTUM . . .**

**PEOPLE I CAN CALL ON FOR  
HELP AFTER MY BABY  
ARRIVES . . .**

**FOR FOOD**

**FOR HELP AROUND THE HOUSE**

**A LISTENING EAR**

**FOR LAUGHTER**

**TO GET ME OUT OF THE HOUSE**

**TO HOLD THE BABY SO I CAN  
TAKE CARE OF MYSELF**



PARENTHOOD



Congratulations! You did it - you are a parent. Wooooo! How does it feel? Wait, don't answer that yet.

**BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF.** Please. I may not know you, but I do know that you are doing a great job. Trust that you are enough, and that your baby has what they need. There is no one else like you. You are the ideal person to parent your baby.

Here is your challenge... can you create the space to give as much to yourself as you are to your new baby? Can you create the space to receive support with grace?

Erase the martyr narrative. You do not need to be exhausted, starving, depleted, and depressed in order to win a parenting medal. You also do not have to be perfectly poised, put together, and doing all of the things. Find your sweet spot - somewhere in the middle.

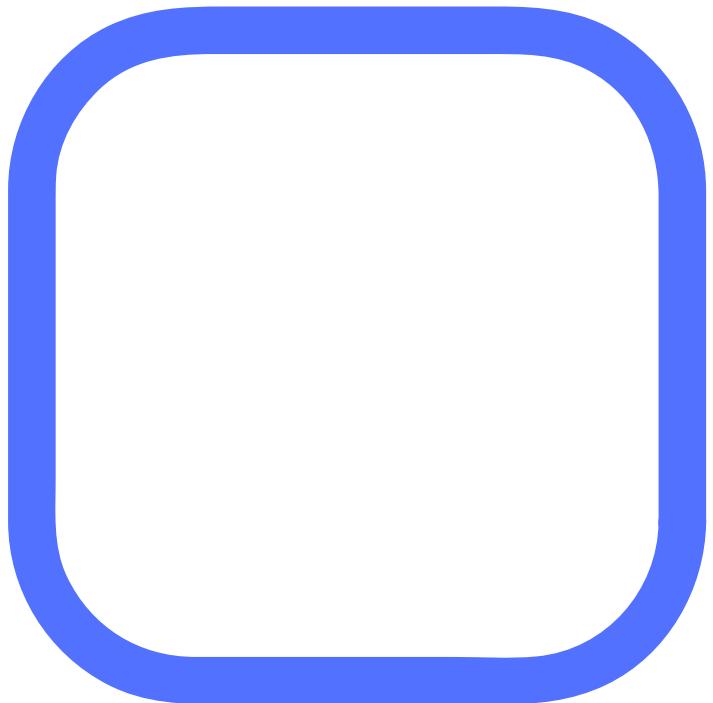
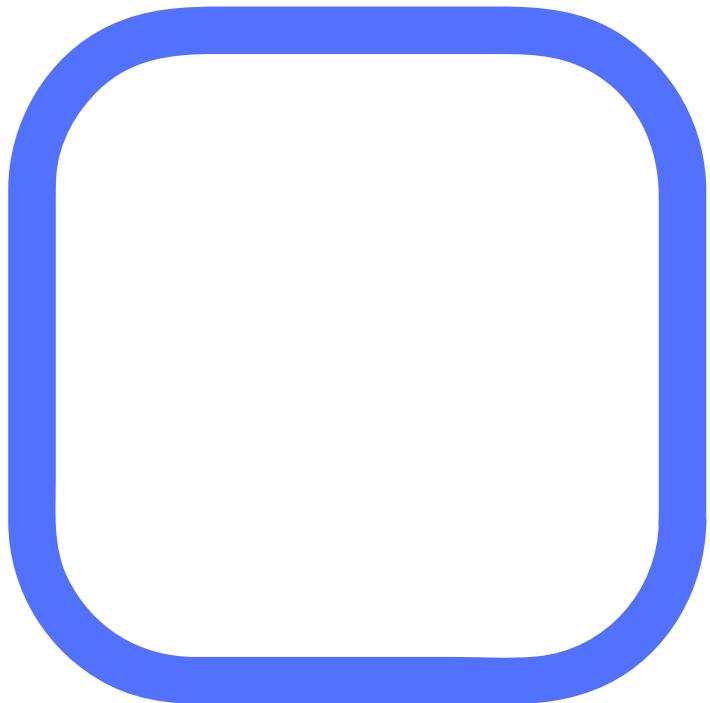
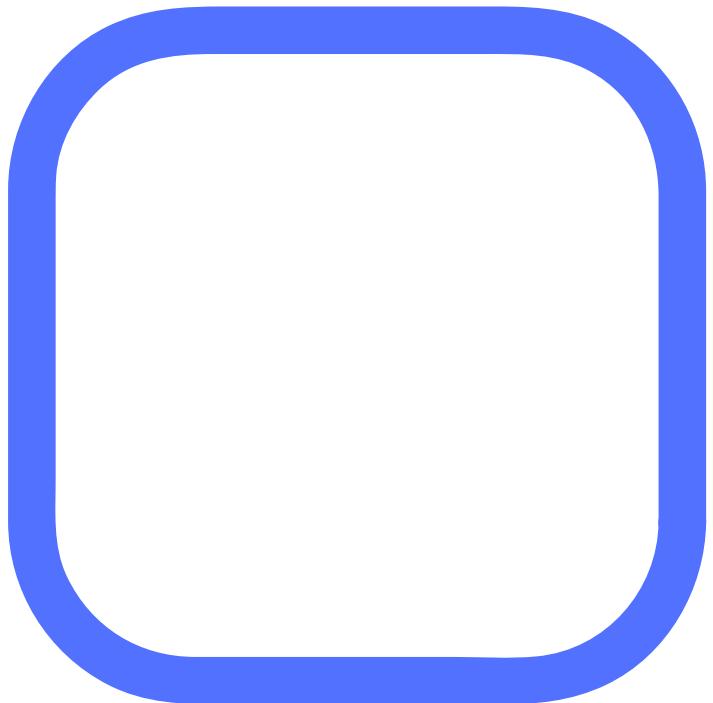
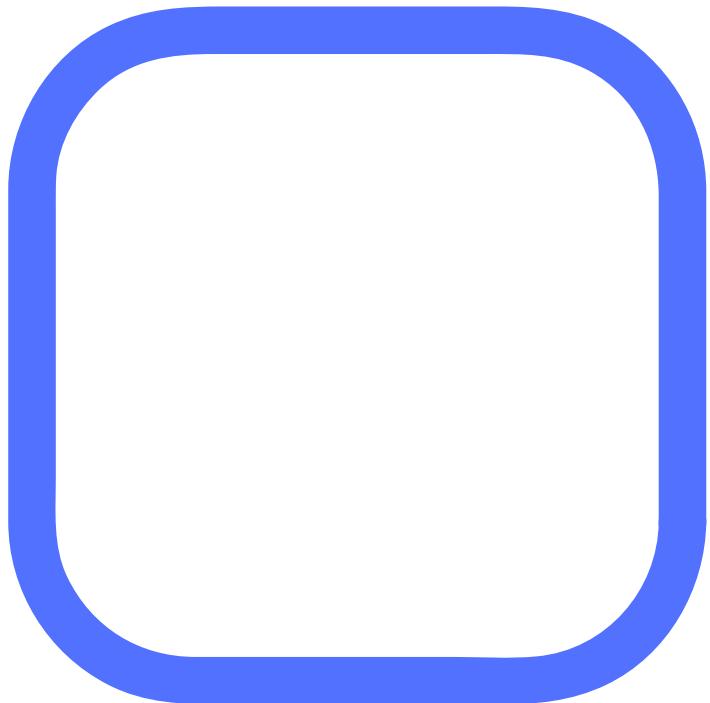
Move tenderly through your new identity shift. Whether you are a parent for the first time or not, approach this new parenthood as an opportunity to acknowledge everything about yourself that is new and different. Grieve what you feel you have lost, but CELEBRATE all you have gained, as well. Celebrate this badass new version of yourself!

# **HOW PARENTHOOD IS IMPACTING MY IDENTITY . . .**

**I AM MOST PROUD OF MYSELF  
FOR . . .**

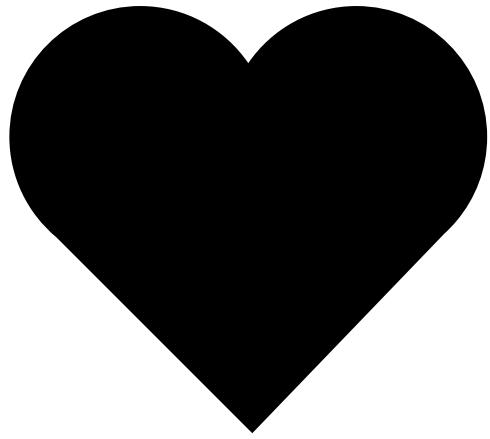
# **SELF-CARE PRACTICES THAT I AM SUCCESSFULLY MAINTAINING . . .**

# **FOUR THINGS I LOVE ABOUT MY NEW ROLE AS A PARENT**

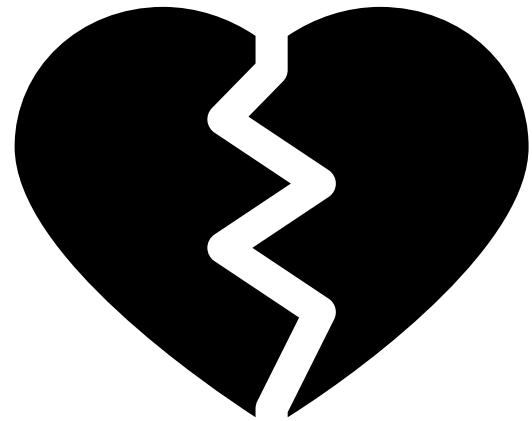


# **WHAT IS SOMETHING ABOUT PARENTHOOD THAT COMPLETELY SURPRISED ME?**

**WHO HAS BEEN MOST SUPPORTIVE  
OF ME?**



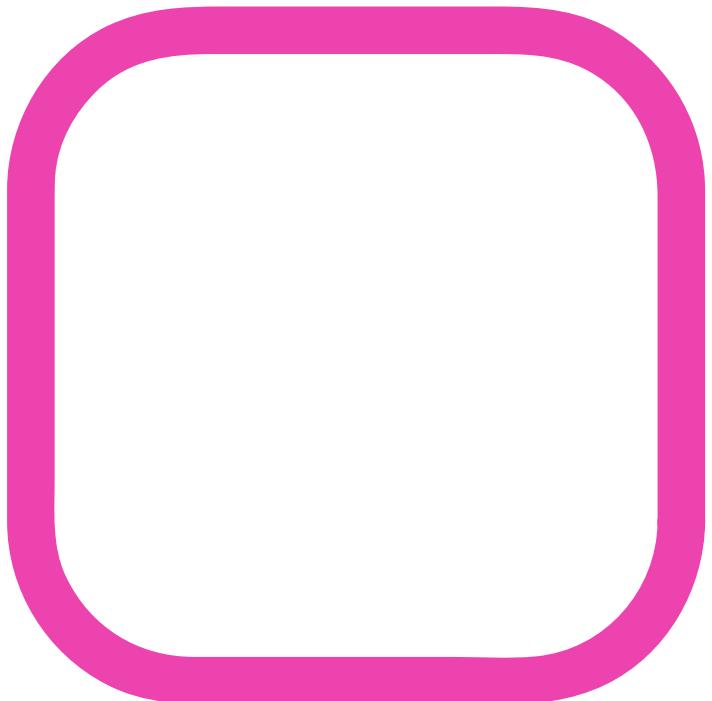
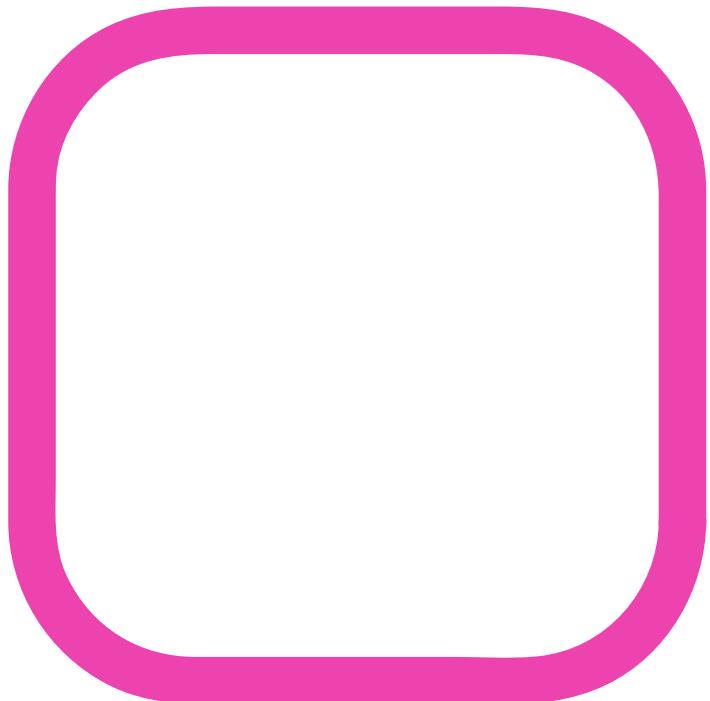
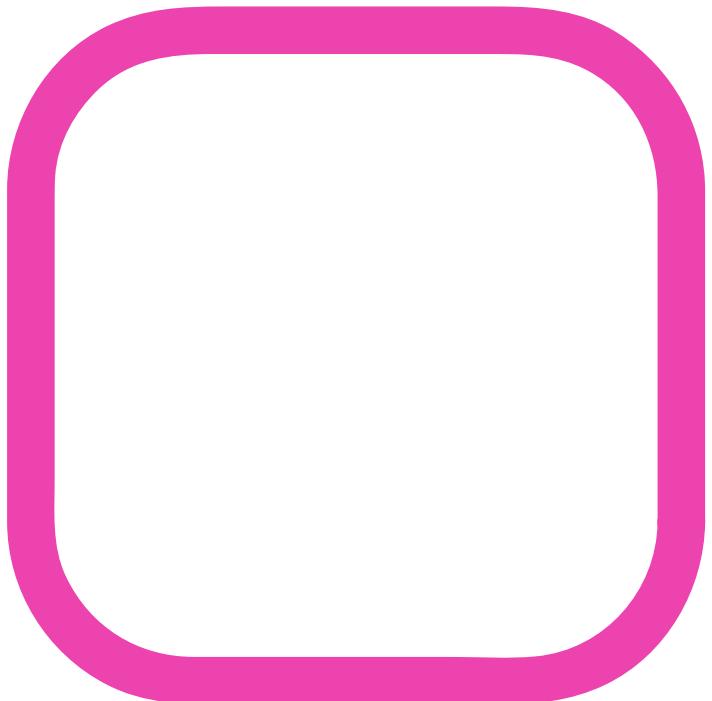
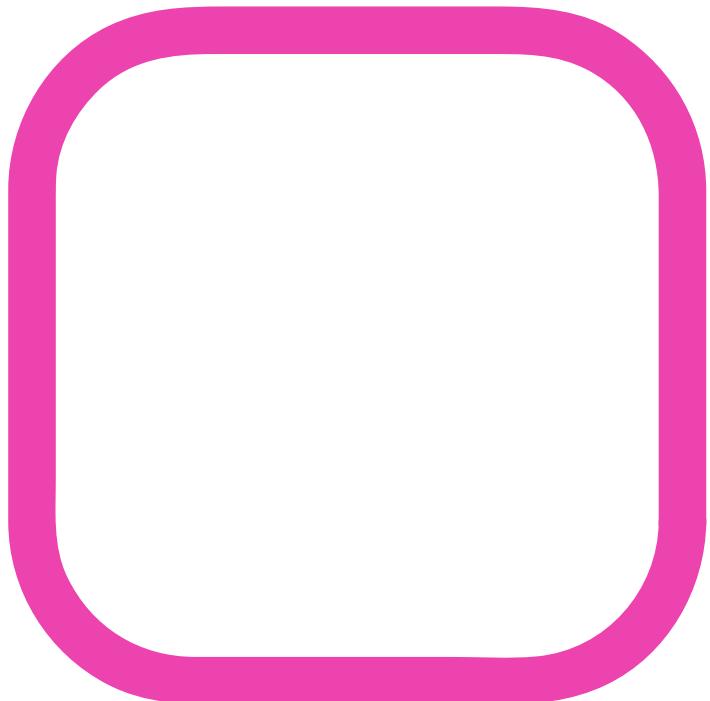
**WHO HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTING  
ME?**



# **WHERE CAN I ASK FOR MORE SUPPORT?**

# **WHERE CAN I SET BETTER BOUNDARIES?**

## **FOUR THINGS I LOVE ABOUT MY NEW BABY**



# **VALUES THAT I WANT TO INSTILL IN MY CHILD...**



# OPEN-ENDED JOURNALING

**SOME IDEAS TO GET YOU  
STARTED . . .**

**TODAY MY BODY FEELS . . .**

**THE EMOTIONS I AM FEELING  
ARE . . .**

**WHERE DO I FEEL THOSE  
EMOTIONS IN MY BODY?**

**A CONVERSATION I HAD  
RECENTLY THAT STUCK WITH  
ME . . .**

**I CAN'T SEEM TO STOP  
THINKING ABOUT . . .**

**AT A RECENT APPOINTMENT WITH  
MY CARE PROVIDER . . .**

**I AM FEELING MOST EXCITED  
ABOUT . . .**

**TODAY**

**DATE**

**I AM                    WEEKS  
PREGNANT / POSTPARTUM**

**TODAY**

**DATE**

**I AM                    WEEKS  
PREGNANT / POSTPARTUM**