

## Top tips for birthing partners:

At Harrogate Hospital a woman may choose to have up to two named birth partners to be with her during her labour. Whoever her birth partner is, whether they are the baby's father, her partner, a close friend, or a relative, there are many things that they can do to help.

One of the most important things you can do as a birth partner is just be with her. As a birth partner you should discuss her preferences during her pregnancy so that you can help to support her in her decisions. You may wish to write a birth preference list together. There is no way of knowing exactly what labour will be like, or how a woman may experience labour, but there are many ways you can help to support her:

- Be prepared. Attend antenatal classes with her or read about labour and birth to help you to know what to expect
- Understand her preferences and help to support her decision making during labour, whatever path labour may take
- In the early stages of labour keep her company and try to take her mind off the contractions e.g. watch a film together, go for a walk, or listen to your favourite music
- Be positive, encouraging and reassuring; using positive language is very important
- Stay calm. A calming presence will help her to remain calm too
- Be attentive
- Encourage her to eat and drink little and often. Reminding her to empty her bladder too is also helpful
- Help to physically support her if you can e.g. helping her to get into a more comfortable position
- Massage if she wishes
- Support her with breathing and relaxation techniques
- Be flexible. What is right for her one moment, may not be the next
- Be patient. Labour can take some time
- Look after yourself! It is ok to take a break sometimes. Eat and drink well to help keep your energy levels up. If at any point you do not feel well, please let your midwife know
- If you are driving to the hospital, know the route and have petrol in the car! Remember to have some money to pay for parking too
- Keep family and friends informed as appropriate
- Lastly, if you are worried or there is anything you do not understand, please ask your midwife.

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.