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Postpartum Plan Worksheet:

Because many parents find themselves underprepared for the weeks & months following the birth of their baby. Here are a few tips -

SUPPORT FOR REST IN THE EARLY DAYS

During the days and early weeks following the birth of a baby, new parents need extra help to ensure they meet their needs for sleep. Support during the night, naps and tag-team parenting can all be effective tools. More than one person is necessary to meet this important need. The goal is to schedule this type of support for several weeks. Potential sources of help are family members, friends, postpartum doulas and members of a local church. If gaps are identified, now is the time to strategize how to address this important need.

The following people are available to help us rest during the day, eve, night:

_____

_____

HAVING A GROUP OF FRIENDS WHO ARE ALSO PARENTS OF YOUNG BABIES. Life experience and research confirm that having someone to talk to who can empathize with our experiences normalizes problems and makes them more bearable. These friends enhance our life, rather than replace our existing support network. If several peers with young babies cannot be identified, then strategize where these friends can be found. Suggestions include childbirth education classes, prenatal / postnatal fitness classes, breastfeeding support groups, common friends, new mom programs, online discussion groups and church communities.

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The following people are friends or neighbors with babies of their own:

_____

_____

NUTRITIOUS MEALS & ADEQUATE HYDRATION ARE VERY IMPORTANT. Friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, and church communities, can be great resources. It is okay and even advisable to let people know what kinds of meals are preferred. Plan ahead by double batching meals that are prepared in the weeks before the baby's birth. Plan on taking as much as a couple of months before buckling down and preparing meals on a daily basis.

We would like to have food prepared and available for the first _____ weeks after the birth of our baby.

The following are people who would be willing to prepare meals. Arrangements will be made well ahead of the baby's birth:

_____

_____

We will also prepare _____ frozen dishes before the birth.

Nutritious and affordable take-out or delivery options include:

_____

_____

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THE NEED FOR KNOWLEDGEABLE, EMPOWERING BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT. Breastfeeding is a natural process, but it does not always come naturally. Few new or experienced mothers are blessed with a community of knowledgeable women to provide education, assessment, support and guidance on breastfeeding during the several weeks that it takes to establish breastfeeding. Appropriate support can help to avoid early breastfeeding difficulties.

The following friends or relatives are supportive of breastfeeding:

_____

_____

The following people in my life are not only supportive, they have up to date information and can answer questions and make recommendations that will help breastfeeding be successful:

_____

_____

Local DONA Postpartum Doulas who can come to my home and help with successful breastfeeding initiation are:

_____

_____

Local Board Certified Lactation Consultants or Certified Lactation Counselors, who can help with any breastfeeding challenges are:

_____

_____

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Local Breastfeeding Support Groups where I can find both emotional support and quality breastfeeding support information are:

_____

_____

SUPPORT FOR OLDER SIBLINGS. Older children will experience a time of transition following the addition of a newborn to the family. Welcoming the baby while maintaining a nurturing relationship with older children is a parental goal. Planning ahead for older children to have time to welcome their new sibling, but still have special parent time is an important step in ensuring a smooth transition.

Needs of older children might include:

_____

_____

People able to spend quality time with our children, as well as drive them to school, daycare and activities, include:

_____

_____

Times of day, rituals or special activities that we want to share with our older children include:

_____

_____

_____

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Specific strategies that we plan to use to blend this new baby in with our existing family, include:

_____

_____

MAINTAINING OUR "US" TIME & "SENSE OF SELF." Parents need time to develop their own interests and their relationship as a couple, which does not happen as easily or spontaneously with a new baby. Many parents find that occasional "me" and "us" time helps them to be more loving and better bonded with their baby and as a family unit as a whole.
Plan support needs many weeks and even months ahead.

Loving, responsible friends and family members who would willingly provide occasional child care include:

_____

_____

Loving, responsible, professional child care providers include:

_____

_____

Activities and "breathers" that help me to feel nurtured, rested and energized include:

_____

_____

Reference: Jacqueline Kelleher, PCD(DONA), CLC (2014). The Postpartum Plan. DONA International, Vol (22), Issue 1, 24-26