



The *Survivor Moms' Companion* Program

Is it right for you?

One in 5 pregnant women has had childhood trauma. Sometimes memories, feelings or concerns about past abuse or neglect can affect moms during this important time.



The *Survivor Moms' Companion (SMC)* course explains how past trauma can come up during pregnancy, birth and parenting. It teaches skills to manage that. Tutors can give emotional support too.

The question is, “Is it right for you?”

Welcome to your personal fitting room!



While you're here, you can look at what the *Survivor Moms' Companion*—or *SMC*—will be like. You can “try it on for size.”

When you try on clothes, you ask:

- Does this fit?
- Is this my style?
- Will I really wear this?



These are questions you can ask yourself about the *SMC* to see if it is the right fit for you right now.



What is the *SMC*?



It's a pregnancy, birth and parenting course.
But it takes your trauma issues into account.



How do I know if I am a Survivor Mom?

A Survivor Mom is our name for any mom, or soon-to-be mom, who has had some abuse or neglect while growing up.



By “abuse” we mean events that happened to you that were harmful to you emotionally, physically, or sexually, and that still affect you sometimes.



Here are some questions you can ask yourself:



Do you think past trauma might have an impact on you now?

Does it seem ok to view yourself as a Survivor Mom?

Maybe you don't love the idea, but does it seem at least a little bit true for you?

The SMC can help you in 3 ways.

It can teach you to...



1. Manage “triggers” that remind you of past trauma
2. Ride out intense emotions better
3. Be more easy going with your maternity care team and your baby

To “try it on” and see how it might fit,
ask yourself:

How much have you talked
about the past trauma?

- Not at all
- A little
- Some
- A lot



Who have you talked to about the trauma?



- No one
- A few friends or family members
- My partner
- My doctor or midwife
- A counselor or mental health worker

Every Survivor Mom is unique. But they have things in common too.



Here are some examples of the concerns Survivor Moms may have:

- Having distressing dreams.
- Feeling detached from your body or baby or pregnancy. Like it's not real.
- Feeling like the trauma is happening all over again. Maybe during clinic visits. Or when the baby moves.

And here are some other concerns:

- Avoiding things that remind you of the trauma
- Fearing labor
- Worrying if you will be a good enough mom
- Having a hard time sleeping or focusing
- Being irritable or easy to anger



Imagine you are in this situation:

Your midwife or doctor just did a vaginal exam during your visit.

What are your thoughts and feelings?



- I am trying NOT to think. I feel numb.
- I am glad it's over with. But I feel calm and safe.
- Overwhelmed! Get me out of here!
- I feel upset and want to cry. Even though I know they were kind and gentle.



Imagine talking in a clinic visit about labor or infant feeding plans:

How is that for you?

- I feel helped and supported.
- I feel numb and can't really think.
- I feel a little uneasy.
- I feel upset.

Imagine feeling the baby move inside you:

How is that for you?

- I try to ignore it.
- I enjoy feeling the baby move.
- I get anxious.
- I feel upset.
- I feel disconnected.



Imagine yourself in labor:



How does that feel?

- I feel anxious but also excited.
- I feel numb. I try not to think about it.
- I am calm and strong and getting ready.
- I feel a sense of dread and fear.

Imagine your baby has been born.

You are low on sleep and the baby keeps crying.

How do you feel?

- I feel I'll manage like all moms do.
- I feel loving feelings. They'll help me meet my baby's needs.
- I feel scared that my baby won't love me. Or won't accept my help.
- I can't imagine really.
- I feel numb.
- I am worried I'll 'lose it' and shake or squeeze the baby. Mostly when the crying is too intense.





What do you think?

Does the SMC seem to fit needs you have?

Some women who used the *SMC* found it was not a good fit.

Here's what they told us:

- It brought up too many feelings for them to manage.
- They didn't have enough support to work on it.
- It wasn't the priority or the right time.

To see if the *SMC* fits for you, ask yourself:

Who is your support system?

- Partner?
- Family?
- Counselor?
- Midwife or doctor?
- Friend?
- Someone else?



Ask yourself these questions as well:



- Do you feel safe with your partner?
Yes or No
- Are you using drugs or alcohol to cope?
Yes or No

If you are safe and pretty steady and have some support, the *SMC* is worth a try.

You can always change your mind.

And...if you're not sure, you can talk with a tutor to help you decide.



Question:

Will I have to read a lot?

Answer:

Each workbook module takes about an hour.

When you're done, you'll talk with the tutor for about a half hour.

There are 10 modules. But you don't have to do them all.





Question: Is the
SMC counseling?

Answer: Great question! NO.

You do NOT have to talk about the trauma.

The focus is on what you need now. You'd be getting information and learning skills.

If you have a counselor though, she or he might help with the *SMC* too.



Question:
What is the *SMC* like?

Answer:

It is a workbook that covers topics that matter to pregnant women who've had trauma.

There are stories about survivor moms.

You practice new skills by problem-solving for the women in the stories. Like you would for a friend.



Question:
What is the tutor like?



Answer:

The tutor knows how trauma can affect moms-to-be. You'll meet by phone (or in person) to talk about each module.



What do you think?

**Thank you for taking the time to ask if the *SMC*
is a good fit for you.**