

# The Prenatal Period: Understanding Relationship Development

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# **The Formation of Maternal Identity:**

## **Supporting Women in their Transition to Motherhood**

# Maternal Tasks of Pregnancy

- Safe Passage
- Acceptance of Others
- Binding-in to the Child
- Giving of Oneself

# 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

- Safe Passage

Safety of self is more important  
than the baby

# 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

- Acceptance of Others

The woman is realigning with the “idea” of being pregnant

# 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

## Binding-in to the Child

- Very little binding-in to the child
- “Binds-in” to the idea of the pregnancy itself

# 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

## Giving of Oneself

- The Child is still an abstraction
- She weighs the risks and benefits: What may be given with what may be taken away

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

## Binding-in to the Child

- **Quickening**
- All tasks are undertaken more seriously after movement is felt
- Fetal movement transforms the baby to personhood



# 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester

## Safe Passage

- Begins to be more protective of her unborn child

# 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester

## Acceptance of others

- Progresses to focus on “the child” rather than the pregnancy

# 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester

## Giving of Oneself

- Directly explores the meaning of the act of giving and of being given to

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester

## Safe Passage

- Concern is for **self** and **baby**
- Seeks out information to ensure safe passage in labor and birth

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester

## Acceptance of Others

- Conditional vs. unconditional acceptance of others

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester

## Binding-in to the Child

- Grows tired of being pregnant
- She loves the child but hates the pregnancy

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester

## Giving of Oneself

- **Gives** and is given to
- Begins the act of giving
- **Receives** from others as a symbol of giving and receiving

# Maternal/Fetal Attachment Behaviors

- Interacting with the fetus
- Giving of self
- Identifying the fetus
- Fantasizing



# Adolescent Pregnancy

- Relationship with the father of the baby
- Social support
- Knowledge of Infant Development
- Maternal confidence

# Signs of difficulty with the maternal tasks:

- Little or no prenatal care
- High-risk health behaviors
- Nothing prepared for the baby at term
- Refers to fetus in negative terms

# High Risk Historical Factors

- Unplanned/Unwanted pregnancy
- Short interconceptual period
- Previous traumatic birth
- Previous pre-term birth

# High risk factors, cont.

- Previous pregnancy or newborn loss
- Previous loss of own mother (death, adoption, abandonment)
- Current or past abuse
- Depression

# Role of the Home Visitor

- Skillful screening
- Empathic listening
- A thorough knowledge of community resources