

Jessica Austin, Vancouver Doula

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Promoting a gentle and informed birth culture in Vancouver, BC.

Assessment of Discussion of Birthing Preferences with your Care Provider

Take a look at your original birth vision and go through it step by step, asking yourself the following questions:

1. Which of your original preferences did your care provider agree were reasonable?

2. How did your care provider make you feel assured that the requests he or she agreed to would be supported during the birth? How often have they supported clients with these preferences in the past? How many of their clients ultimately have these preferences met?

3. If you are having a hospital birth with a doctor: did your doctor explain that it is not only his/her support of your preferences that matters, but also the support you are likely to receive from nursing staff? In this type of birth, your doctor will likely only be present very briefly and intermittently, and a nurse will be monitoring you in between. How did your doctor assure you that the nursing staff will be as likely to be supportive of the preferences you've expressed as your care provider is in the office?

4. Similarly, both doctors and registered midwives very frequently work in teams that share on-call schedules. How has your care provider assured you that the other members of the on-call team will be as likely to be supportive of your preferences as they are?

4. Which of your original preferences did your care provider ask you to compromise a bit on? In what ways have you compromised your original preferences?

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5. Which of your original preferences did your care provider ask you to let go of all together? Was there anything your care provider was completely unsupportive of?

For the preferences you either compromised or let go of after the discussion:

6. What new information did your care provider give you that made you feel it was in your best interest to change your mind about these preferences?

7. Does the new information make sense to you, or do you need further details about your care provider's recommendation to make you feel comfortable with the changes you've made to the original preferences?

8. Do the changes you've made to your original preferences still support the things that were important to you about the specific procedure, practice, or stage of birth? (For example, if your original preference was to be given room to birth in whichever position you like, avoiding lying on your back in order to be gentle on your perineum, did you change your mind because your care provider gave you new information that convinced you lying on your back would in fact be the better choice for your perineum? Or did you change your mind for another reason altogether?) **Note, this is for example purposes only... birthing on your back is NOT considered best for your perineum**

9. Do the changes you've made to your original preferences still support your over-all birth philosophy?

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After looking consciously at the differences between your original preferences and what was agreed to in your appointment:

10. Is there anything you would like to discuss further with your care provider?

11. Is there anything you would like a second opinion about?

12. Are you feeling like you've got a great birth plan and a great birth team, or do you need to reconsider your options now that you have a better idea of how you and your care provider differ / match up in terms of birth philosophy?

Additional Resources:

* These resources can all be found in the "blog" section of birthtakesavillage.com

- [Informed consent in childbirth](#)
- [The #1 thing to consider when writing a detailed birth plan](#)
- [Why it matters if your care provider likes doulas – even if you don't plan to hire one](#)

Created by Jessica Austin, birth doula

Jessica Austin is a birth doula serving Vancouver and surrounding area. She supports a variety of families in home births and hospital births. She frequently works with birthing families who have had previously challenging or traumatic births.

If you have questions about this assessment form, your childbirth options, or her birth services, you can contact her at jessica@birthtakesavillage.com

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