



ADVOCACY

INFORMED DECISION MAKING

What is advocacy?

Advocacy isn't about having the perfect birth or challenging healthcare professionals.

It's about understanding your options, asking questions, and feeling confident that your voice matters in every decision made about you and your baby. The skills you develop now won't just help you during birth—they'll support you throughout parenthood too.

USING BRAINS TO MAKE DECISIONS

When you're faced with a recommendation or decision, BRAINS can help you gather information and make an informed choice.

B – BENEFITS

What are the benefits for me? What are the benefits for my baby?

R – RISKS

What are the risks or potential downsides for me & my baby? What are the risks if I don't go ahead with this?

A – ALTERNATIVES

What other options are available? Aren't told any? Do your own research!

I – INTUITION

What does your intuition tell you? How do you feel about this option? Listen to your gut!

N – NOTHING

What happens if we do nothing for now? Any immediate risks? No? Take 5 minutes/a day/a week – whatever works best for you

S – SECOND OPINION

Would it be helpful to speak to someone else before making a decision? A PMA for example? Professional Midwifery Advocate? A consultant?



REFLECTION

Think of a recent decision you've made in pregnancy. Did you consider all aspects of BRAINS? Which part came most naturally to you?

Which part might you like to use more in future?

HELPFUL ADVOCACY PHRASES

You don't need to know all the answers. Sometimes advocacy is simply knowing what questions to ask.

Tick the phrases you feel comfortable using:

- ☐ "Can you talk me through the benefits, risks and alternatives?"
- ☐ "What happens if we do nothing for now?"
- ☐ "Is this urgent, or do we have time to discuss our options?"
- ☐ "Can we have a moment before we continue?"
- ☐ "Can you explain why you're ruling that out?"
- ☐ "Can you help me understand what evidence this recommendation is based on?"
- ☐ "I'd like that documented in my medical records, please."
- ☐ "I'd like a referral to..."
- ☐ "I've been tracking my symptoms - here's the information I've collected."
- ☐ "I understand your recommendation. I'd like some time to think about it."



BUILDING YOUR ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Which three phrases feel most natural for you to use?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Is there a phrase you'd like to practise saying out loud with your birth partner?

Are there any phrases you'd like to write out as prompts for your birth partner?

LOOKING AHEAD

Are there any upcoming appointments, discussions or decisions where you may need to advocate for yourself?

What questions would you like answered before making a decision?

REMEMBER

Advocacy doesn't have to be confrontational.

It can be as simple as asking questions, seeking clarity, taking time to think, and ensuring that any decisions made about your care are truly informed.

Your voice matters.