

# Module 1: History and Context

## Introduction to module

This module provides a foundational overview of the history and context of birth in an Indigenous context. This includes an overview of Indigenous birthing practices, how these practices have been impacted by colonization, and racism in the healthcare setting.

## Learning objectives

- Understand the history and importance of birth in Indigenous contexts.
- Describe the traditional roles and training for Indigenous midwives and doulas.
- Recognize the impacts of colonization on healthcare delivery and the birthing experience for Indigenous families.
- Reflect on what reconciliation in the birthing practice may look like, and what the role of the doula is in supporting this.
- Recognize of what racism in the healthcare setting might look like, and understand how racism in the healthcare setting impacts the birthing experience for Indigenous families.
- Reflect on ways that doulas can intervene, support, and advocate for Indigenous families if experiences of racism occur.

## Outline of topics

**Indigenous birth** - The history of Indigenous birth in communities, the historical role of Indigenous midwives and doulas, and the importance and meaning behind traditional birthing practices, customs, and medicines.

**Colonization and the impacts on Indigenous birth and health delivery** - The impacts of colonization to healthcare delivery in communities, including the impacts to traditional practices, and impacts to families. This includes an overview of what it means to reclaim traditional practices, and the importance of understanding the ceremonial aspect of birth in this context.

**Racism in the healthcare setting** - Understanding racism in the hospital and healthcare delivery setting, including what this may entail, and how experiences interacting with these systems may be different for everyone. This includes a discussion on the implications of racism in the healthcare setting, and the role of a doula in these circumstances.

## Reflection questions

1. Describe ways in which colonization has impacted the childbirth process for Indigenous families.
2. What are some examples of what reconciliation in the birthing process might look like? How can you support this as a doula?
3. Discuss your role as a witness when providing doula care for Indigenous families.

## Further reading

Perinatal and Infant Wellness – First Nations Health Authority.

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-PHO-Sacred-and-Strong-Infancy-and-Perinatal.pdf>

In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care. <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Summary-Report.pdf>

# Module 2: Cultural Safety and Trauma Informed Care

## Introduction to module

This module provides an introduction to the concept of cultural safety and trauma informed care, and how they relate to your role as a doula for Indigenous families. The module discusses strategies for providing culturally safe and trauma-informed care, and what this may look like in practice.

## Learning objectives

- Describe the concept of cultural safety and trauma-informed care.
- Describe the importance of cultural safety and trauma-informed care in the context of Indigenous birth.
- Develop strategies for effective relationship-building with care recipients.
- Demonstrate the ability to employ culturally-safe and trauma-informed communication with care recipients.

## Outline of topics

**Introduction to the concept of cultural safety and what it may look like in practice** - What cultural safety means, and how it can be understood in the context of childbirth. This includes discussion on the importance of relationship building, understanding history and intergenerational trauma, attention to power dynamics, respect for identity, culture and diversity, and self-reflection.

**Principles of culturally safe care** - Two key principles of culturally safe care: defined by the care recipient, and self reflection.

**Introduction to the concept of trauma-informed care and what it may look like in practice** - The concept of trauma-informed care in Indigenous contexts and what this might look like in practice, including the importance of communication tools, attention to potential triggers, self-awareness, and responsive care.

**Apprehension** - What apprehension at birth looks like, and approaches to addressing this scenario through a trauma-informed and culturally safe lens.

## Reflection questions

1. How do you think your own culture influences who you are and how you think?
2. What does cultural safety mean to you? What are some strategies that you will bring into your work to provide culturally safe care?
3. Who should receive trauma-informed care? How should a care provider decide what trauma-informed care should look like?

## Further reading

Cultural Safety and Humility - First Nations Health Authority.

<https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/cultural-safety-and-humility#learn>

Fact Sheet: Cultural Safety - National Aboriginal Health Organization.

<https://fnim.sehc.com/getmedia/c1ef783b-520a-44cf-a7b8-d40df5e406e7/Cultural-Safety-Fact-Sheet.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf>

Honouring Indigenous Women's and Families' Pregnancy Journeys - Perinatal Services BC.

[http://www.perinatalervicesbc.ca/Documents/Resources/Honouring\\_Indigenous\\_Womens\\_and\\_Families\\_Pregnancy\\_Journeys.pdf](http://www.perinatalervicesbc.ca/Documents/Resources/Honouring_Indigenous_Womens_and_Families_Pregnancy_Journeys.pdf)

# Module 3: Cultural Safety Continued

## Introduction to module

This module delves deeper into the concept of cultural safety to explore additional tools to promote culturally-safe care, including: critical reflexivity, communication and relationship building, and different tools for establishing culturally-safe care for care recipients.

## Learning objectives

- Define critical reflexivity and describe what this entails in the context of doula care.
- Identify the importance of communication and relationship building in providing culturally safe care.
- Describe the role of the doula in advocacy for the care recipient.
- Identify tools to promote effective communication and interactions with care recipients.
- Recognize the need for fluid forms of communication with care recipients and families, and identify different approaches to communication and education.
- Reflect on the role of the doula in communicating about culture, history, and previous birth experiences.

## Outline of topics

**Critical reflexivity** - The definition of critical reflexivity and what this may look like in practice, including discussion on tools to promote critical reflexivity, and things to consider when reflecting on your role as a doula.

**Communication and relationship building** - The importance of establishing trust with care recipients and families, and discussion on tools to promote effective advocacy and interactions. including: body language, transparency, and collaboration.

**Developing a toolkit for culturally safe care** - The need for intuitive, fluid, open, and adaptable communication with care recipients, and the role of the doula in asking about culture, history, and previous experiences.

## Reflection questions

1. What assumptions and actions do you need to be aware of when providing culturally safe doula care?
2. What is the role and importance of self-reflection in cultural safety?
3. Reflect on your preferred learning style and form of communication. How could this differ from other forms of learning and communicating preferred by others?

## Further reading

Health Inequalities and Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health - National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. <https://www.ccnsa-nccah.ca/docs/determinants/RPT-HealthInequalities-Reading-Wien-EN.pdf>

Cultural safety: developing self-awareness through reflective practice - Health Central NZ. <https://healthcentral.nz/cultural-safety-developing-self-awareness-through-reflective-practice/>

# Module 4: Putting it into Practice

## Introduction to module

This module brings together learning and reflections from Modules 1-3 to explore how they can be put into practice through three phases of doula support: preparing for labour, during labour, and after labour.

## Learning objectives

- Describe the various roles of the role of the doula when preparing for labour, during labour, and after labour.
- Recognize the importance of relationship-building in decision-making with the care recipient.
- Reflect on different things that the doula can bring to labour to support culturally safe care.
- Understand the importance of different customs and traditions after labour, and the ways in which a doula can support their incorporation in the birth plan.
- Identify different resources and supports that the care recipient and family may need after labour, and the ways in which a doula can facilitate these connections.

## Outline of topics

**Preparing for labour** - The key components of prenatal preparation, including: facilitation of prenatal care, establishing core values and plans for labour, and the need for relationships as a foundation for decision making.

**During labour** - The role of the doula during labour, what support for the care recipient and family may look like, and what a doula can bring to the birth to promote culturally safe care.

**After labour** - What doula support may look like after labour, and examples of traditions and customs that care recipients may want to incorporate into their plan. This includes close attention to the role of the doula in listening, giving space, and supporting families in connecting to needed resources.

## Reflection questions

1. What are some examples of core values/factors that you would want to discuss with the care recipient when preparing for labour?
2. What is your role as a doula during labour? How will you provide culturally appropriate support?
3. What is your role as a doula after labour? How will you provide culturally appropriate support?

## Further reading

Stories and Teachings About Pregnancy - National Aboriginal Council of Midwives.  
[https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NACM\\_Booklet\\_Pregnancy\\_2017\\_MED.pdf](https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NACM_Booklet_Pregnancy_2017_MED.pdf)

Stories and Teachings About Birth - National Aboriginal Council of Midwives.  
[https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NACM\\_Booklet\\_Birth\\_2016\\_MED.pdf](https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NACM_Booklet_Birth_2016_MED.pdf)