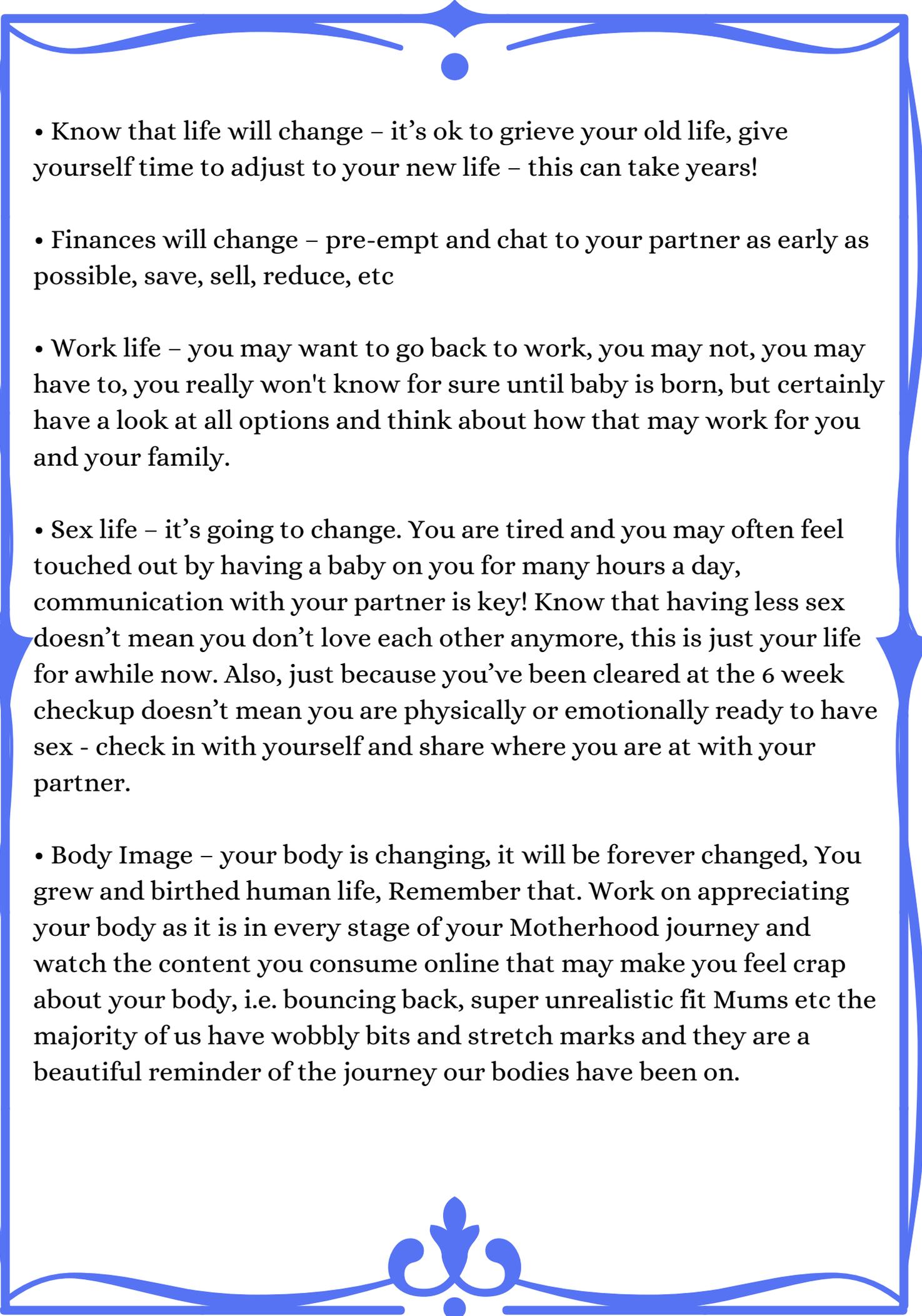
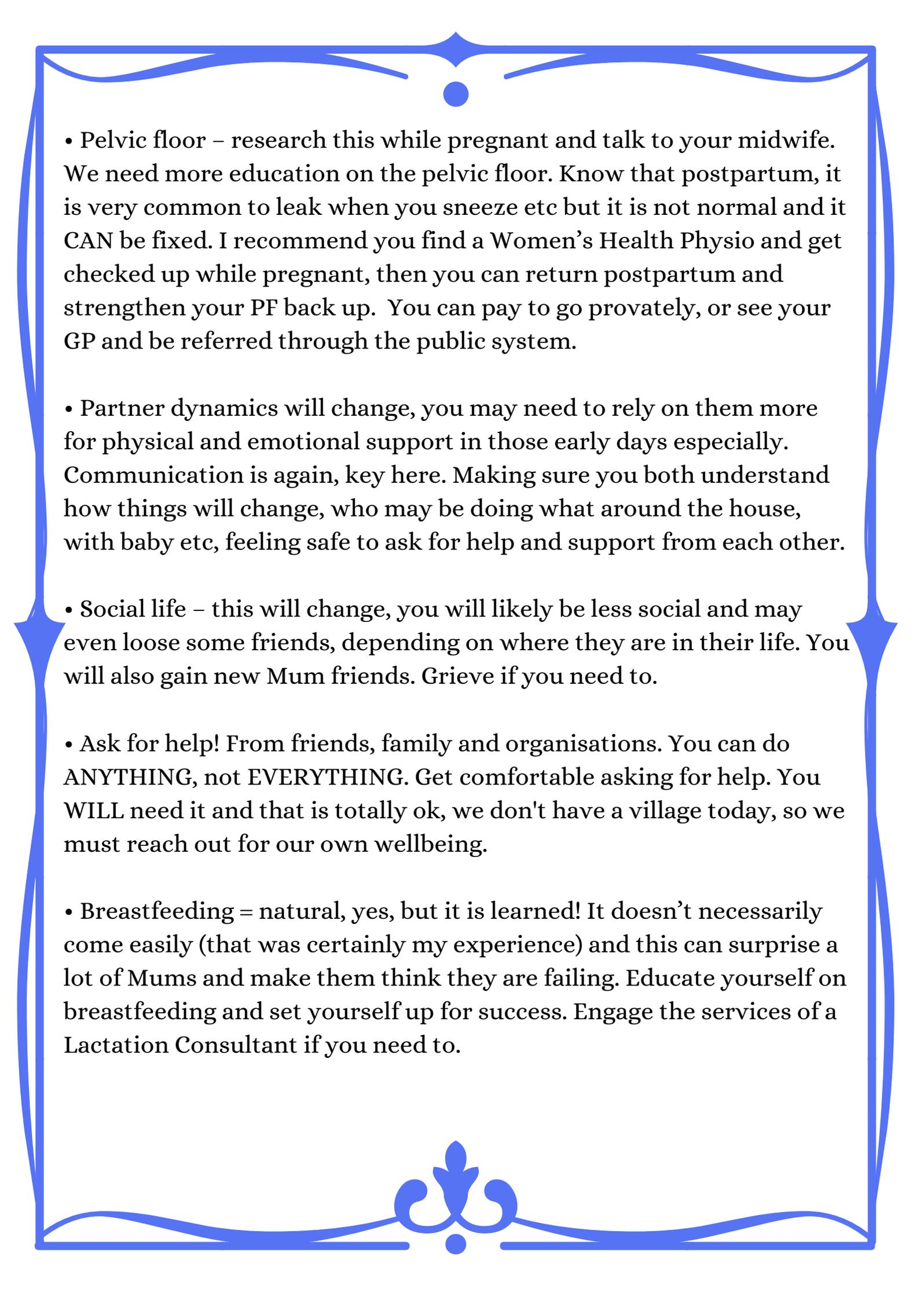


Mindfully You

Guide to Preparing Mentally & Emotionally for Birth & Postpartum

- Be aware of your feelings and allow yourself to FEEL them
- Tune into your instincts and intuition and trust them, follow them, believe them, listen to them. You intuitively know what is best for your body & baby.
- Feel secure in your decisions, don't let others opinions, experiences, status, judgements etc sway you when it doesn't feel right for you and your family. Take what resonates, leave what doesn't. Understand that just because someone has had kids before, or has a title, doesn't mean they know what is best for YOU and YOUR BABY.
- Experiment! Find out what works for your baby and your family. Enjoy the journey. Be patient.
- Birth expectations – be open minded, don't fixate on one particular outcome, think about and be prepared for ALL scenarios. Fixating on one way to labour and birth only, can lead to trauma if it doesn't go the way you'd planned.
- Pregnancy & Birth expectations – do your due diligence, research, arm yourself with knowledge, so you can advocate for yourself when you need to. Know that you have every right to say NO.

- 
- Know that life will change – it's ok to grieve your old life, give yourself time to adjust to your new life – this can take years!
 - Finances will change – pre-empt and chat to your partner as early as possible, save, sell, reduce, etc
 - Work life – you may want to go back to work, you may not, you may have to, you really won't know for sure until baby is born, but certainly have a look at all options and think about how that may work for you and your family.
 - Sex life – it's going to change. You are tired and you may often feel touched out by having a baby on you for many hours a day, communication with your partner is key! Know that having less sex doesn't mean you don't love each other anymore, this is just your life for awhile now. Also, just because you've been cleared at the 6 week checkup doesn't mean you are physically or emotionally ready to have sex - check in with yourself and share where you are at with your partner.
 - Body Image – your body is changing, it will be forever changed, You grew and birthed human life, Remember that. Work on appreciating your body as it is in every stage of your Motherhood journey and watch the content you consume online that may make you feel crap about your body, i.e. bouncing back, super unrealistic fit Mums etc the majority of us have wobbly bits and stretch marks and they are a beautiful reminder of the journey our bodies have been on.



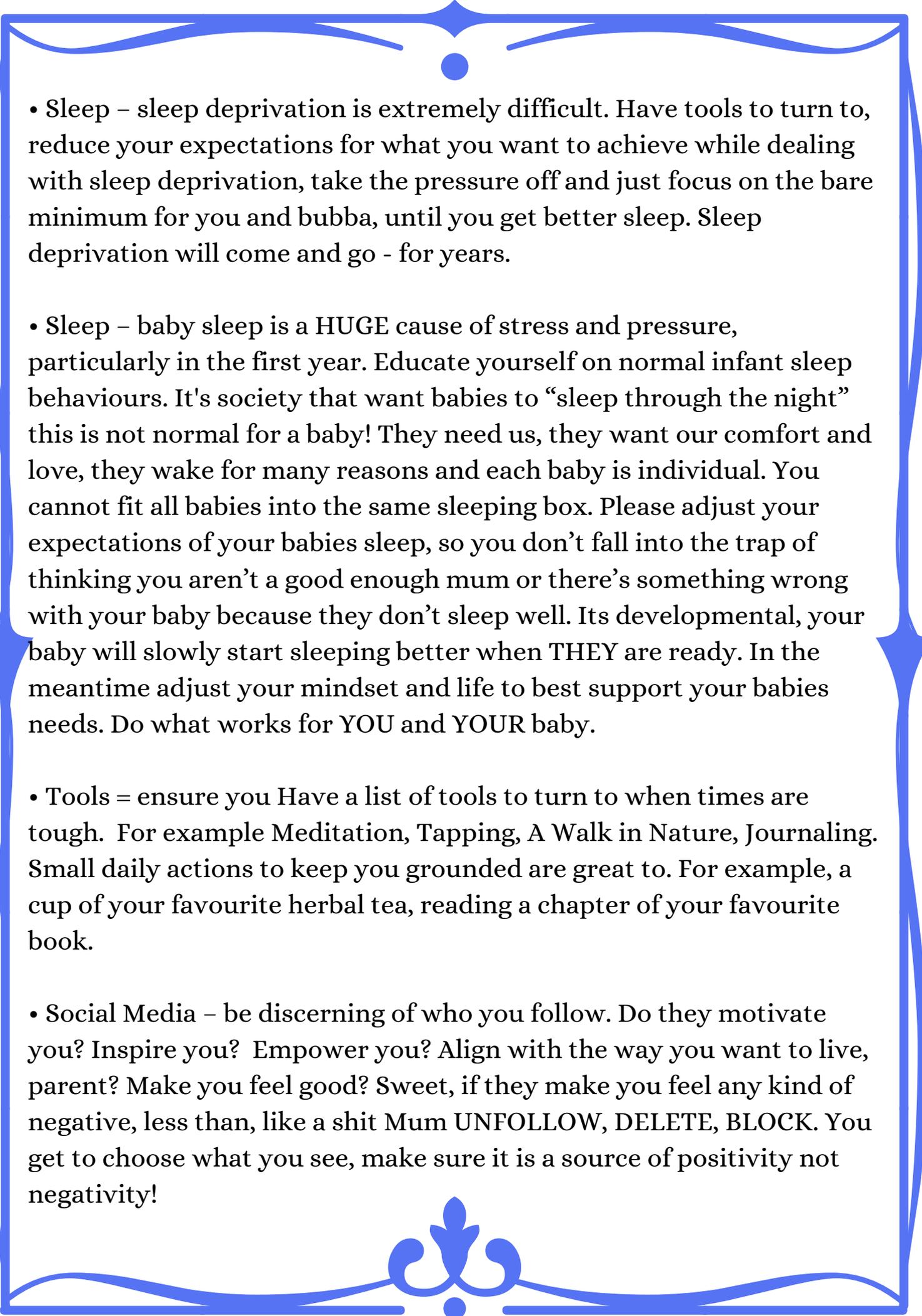
- Pelvic floor – research this while pregnant and talk to your midwife. We need more education on the pelvic floor. Know that postpartum, it is very common to leak when you sneeze etc but it is not normal and it CAN be fixed. I recommend you find a Women’s Health Physio and get checked up while pregnant, then you can return postpartum and strengthen your PF back up. You can pay to go privately, or see your GP and be referred through the public system.

- Partner dynamics will change, you may need to rely on them more for physical and emotional support in those early days especially. Communication is again, key here. Making sure you both understand how things will change, who may be doing what around the house, with baby etc, feeling safe to ask for help and support from each other.

- Social life – this will change, you will likely be less social and may even lose some friends, depending on where they are in their life. You will also gain new Mum friends. Grieve if you need to.

- Ask for help! From friends, family and organisations. You can do ANYTHING, not EVERYTHING. Get comfortable asking for help. You WILL need it and that is totally ok, we don't have a village today, so we must reach out for our own wellbeing.

- Breastfeeding = natural, yes, but it is learned! It doesn’t necessarily come easily (that was certainly my experience) and this can surprise a lot of Mums and make them think they are failing. Educate yourself on breastfeeding and set yourself up for success. Engage the services of a Lactation Consultant if you need to.



- Sleep – sleep deprivation is extremely difficult. Have tools to turn to, reduce your expectations for what you want to achieve while dealing with sleep deprivation, take the pressure off and just focus on the bare minimum for you and bubba, until you get better sleep. Sleep deprivation will come and go - for years.

- Sleep – baby sleep is a HUGE cause of stress and pressure, particularly in the first year. Educate yourself on normal infant sleep behaviours. It's society that want babies to “sleep through the night” this is not normal for a baby! They need us, they want our comfort and love, they wake for many reasons and each baby is individual. You cannot fit all babies into the same sleeping box. Please adjust your expectations of your babies sleep, so you don't fall into the trap of thinking you aren't a good enough mum or there's something wrong with your baby because they don't sleep well. Its developmental, your baby will slowly start sleeping better when THEY are ready. In the meantime adjust your mindset and life to best support your babies needs. Do what works for YOU and YOUR baby.

- Tools = ensure you Have a list of tools to turn to when times are tough. For example Meditation, Tapping, A Walk in Nature, Journaling. Small daily actions to keep you grounded are great to. For example, a cup of your favourite herbal tea, reading a chapter of your favourite book.

- Social Media – be discerning of who you follow. Do they motivate you? Inspire you? Empower you? Align with the way you want to live, parent? Make you feel good? Sweet, if they make you feel any kind of negative, less than, like a shit Mum UNFOLLOW, DELETE, BLOCK. You get to choose what you see, make sure it is a source of positivity not negativity!

- Support System – what will this look like for you? Who? Where? When? What organisations? Think about this and note down the people and organisations you can turn to when you need to.
- Find a Midwife who is fully aligned with the way you want to birth and you trust to advocate for what you desire during labour and birth – no matter where that ends up being! You can change Midwife at anytime to find one more aligned for you - don't feel bad. Feeling safe and having the right Midwife is SO important.
- Selfcare – is imperative in motherhood. If your cup is full then you are at your best for your baby. But, selfcare looks different in Motherhood, it's the quick, simple, little things you can inject into your days. Don't be afraid to ask for 30 mins to do something for you! Please do not feel guilty for taking time to nourish yourself mind, body and soul - it benefits everyone!

There you have it! This is the guide I wish I had when I was pregnant with my first. I hope it serves you.

Mindfully Yours,

Sarah xoxo

Copyright Mindfully You 2020 - Do not copy this content, please credit.

www.mindfullyyou.nz