

## Self-Compassion



When something traumatic happens, it threatens our sense of safety and control. Sometimes we look for someone to blame. And we often blame ourselves - even when we shouldn't. Challenging these negative thoughts can help us see things in a new way and help us show compassion for ourselves and each other.

**SAFETY** We try to protect ourselves and each other. But pregnancy and childbirth can be dangerous. While we can't eliminate all risks, there are things we can do to reduce them.

I wanted...

I wish that...

I know that...

I can make things safer by...



**Example:** I wanted to have a healthy pregnancy. I wish I had not developed preeclampsia. I know that it is not my fault. It is a common condition. I can make things safer by monitoring my blood pressure at home.

**CONTROL** We can do our best to have the outcomes we want. But we can not plan for every complication. Some things are not within our control. How we respond and adapt matters.

I wanted...

I wish that...

I know that...

I can control...



**Example:** I wanted my baby to be born full-term. I wish I had not gone into preterm labor. I know that we don't know what causes this. Now that my baby is here, I can control what I learn about supporting their healthy growth and development. And I can get enrolled in early intervention services. Find the programs in your state at [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states)

## RESPONSIBILITY

While we may not be responsible for what happened to us, we can use what we learned to make things better for ourselves and others.

I wanted...

I wish that...

I know that...

I can make things better by...



**Example:** I wanted to have a vaginal birth. I wish that the doctor would have supported my decision to have a VBAC. I know that I deserved to be heard and respected as we made an informed decision together. I can give my providers feedback and use my experience to advocate for better care for me and people like me.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

We need to feel like we can rely on each other. When we are able to communicate openly and honestly, we build trust.

I wanted...

I wish that...

I know that...

I can make sure that...



**Example:** I wanted to be substance-free during my pregnancy and postpartum. I wish that I had better access to evidence-based treatments and interventions. I know that relapses are a normal and expected part of recovery. I can make sure that I ask my trusted providers for what I need - and that they will have my best interests at heart.



### AFFIRMATIONS for when I need encouragement:

- Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better. - Maya Angelou
- Listening is where love begins: listening to ourselves and then to our neighbors. - Mr. Rogers
- Am I good enough? Yes, I am. - Michele Obama