

Find your safe space

My mother had died before I became pregnant. I searched my community for a safe space where I could learn to be a mother, what labour would be like, how to have a good natural birth, I wasn't a mother yet so, I read as much as I could. It wasn't till I became a mother that I realised that I needed the company of other like-minded women who could welcome me into and share the wisdom of being a mother. So it was many women who helped me: my sister taught me to lay down and breastfeed. To be as comfortable and get as much rest as possible when I could. A clinic nurse told me to look at the whole baby and no matter how small she was for weight she was alert and chubby and "obviously thriving", she was the only one to suggest I contact the local breastfeeding association as at 3 months I was going to be a long term breastfeeder. I did and found my likeminded tribe of various women: educated, skilled, knowledgeable, experienced in the ways of easy motherhood. Women from all different backgrounds: teachers, nurses, students, public servants, physios, midwives, musicians, accountants and bankers. All women who were practical, smart and brave. Who would fiercely stand up for their family's health and your family's too. I learned how to be a mother, learned to be confident in my body, in how amazing it is to be a mother, learned to ask questions, to expect evidence based answers to my questions.

The Australian breastfeeding association was very little to do with learning to breastfeed and all to do with women supporting women with accurate information, emotional and moral support to achieve each persons parenting goals. Finding your tribe in your community will help you to achieve the best for your family.

My best suggestion is to Look for the positive voices around you. The encouragers, the people who help you make a decision based on your individual needs and support you wherever you're at. Sometimes that's not a ready-made solution, it's not advice or a product, usually it's about listening and supporting you or helping you make your own educated decision. Find your tribe: if you don't at first, then keep looking, asking for support, asking for help to achieve your parenting goals and asking for evidence to back that up! There's a lot of advice out there which is not more than opinion or dressed up marketing. If in doubt take the most natural option, learn about a natural birth, learn to breastfeed before the birth and breastfeed in the delivery suite, on the ward and for as long as you wish when you get home. Oh and find that tribe of like-minded women who have you supported in whatever it is you want to achieve.

Best wishes xxx