

**BIRTH  
MONOPOLY**



**KNOW YOUR**

*Rights*

Group Discussion  
Guide



Legal and Human Rights in Childbirth for Birth Professionals and Advocates  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2025)

## BIRTH MONOPOLY



# MEET

*Cristen Pasanucci*



Thank you so much for taking this course! I'm Cristen, the founder of Birth Monopoly and host of Birth Allowed Radio. You may have seen the Exposing the Silence Project, which I co-created with Spot of Serendipity Photography. I also spent about four years as vice president of Improving Birth, working to get the maternity care crisis in the media, spearheading consumer campaigns around obstetric violence. It has been my full-time job since 2012 to take the maternity care crisis mainstream and educate the public and providers about the human and legal rights of people giving birth. Today, I'm working on a documentary called Mother May I, about abuse in maternity care.

I'd like to thank the always supportive Rebecca Dekker of Evidence Based Birth, who originally asked me to create this course for her instructors, and Hermine Hayes-Klein for her ongoing instruction and collaboration, as well as birth lawyers Farah Diaz-Tello, and the late Susan Jenkins.

"Know Your Rights" is the culmination of my work with those colleagues and others, and I'm excited to share it with people like you. Together, we are going to flip maternity care upside down by working towards one critical concept: that the legal authority in birth is the person giving birth.



*Welcome!*

## **A WORD ABOUT GROUP SETTINGS**

If there's one thing I've learned about childbirth, it is that the topic is WILDLY triggering to people. Birth professionals and advocates are not immune to this. Sadly, there is a lot of trauma tied up in many of our personal experiences of birth and in our advocacy, as well.

I encourage group hosts to be aware of this dynamic.

It's helpful to acknowledge this up front among the group: some people might find themselves uncomfortable, emotional, or triggered at times--and that's okay. We are all here to support each other. Remind everyone to think well of each other today and every day.

Pace yourselves as a group and pay attention to what your bodies need. Have healthy snacks and plenty of water on hand, and take regular bathroom and "brain" breaks.

As we all know, validating someone's experience creates a path for that person to process it. If you have time with your group, set aside some quality time to share and have some safe emotional release with each other.

Group settings are also priceless opportunities for insights and collaborations that can change the way you approach your work. I hope you find it healing as well as stimulating. Amazing things can happen when we put our hearts and heads together!

Cristen



## **ABOUT CONTACT HOURS**

This course is worth 1.25 nursing contact hours. Birth Monopoly is approved continuing education provider through the California Board of Nursing.

To obtain your certificate, you must register at [community.birthmonopoly.com](https://community.birthmonopoly.com).

Once you are logged in, go to the "Know Your Rights" course, where you will see evaluation and quiz modules.

For your certificate, you must complete the evaluation and pass the quiz with an 80% or above. The quiz is five questions and you may attempt the quiz a maximum of two times.

Upon passing, you will be able to immediately download your certificate.



# COURSE AGENDA

- ▼ Examine pertinent case studies
- ▼ Discuss the concept of human rights in childbirth
- ▼ Define informed consent and refusal
- ▼ Define and discuss obstetric violence
- ▼ Discuss enforcement of rights in U.S. maternity care system
- ▼ Discussion and brainstorming



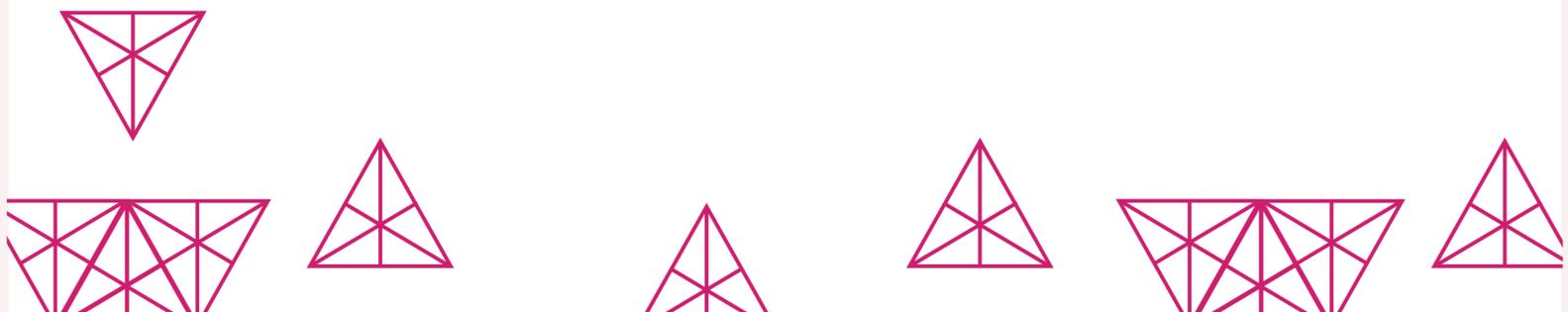
# CASE STUDIES

## DISCUSS:

Do any of these cases seem like extreme or rare examples to you? How so?

Do you notice anything these stories have in common with each other?

Do you relate to any of these women? If so, how?



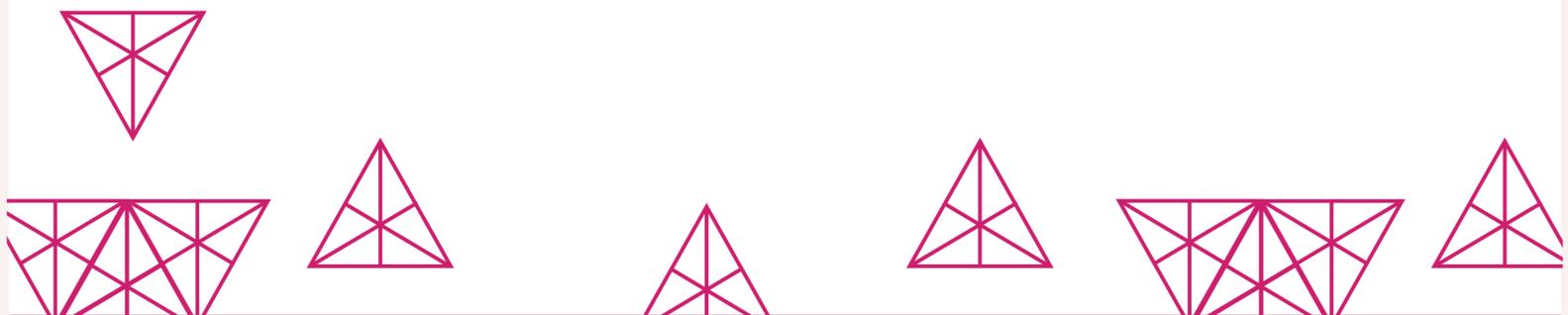


# HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILDBIRTH

## DISCUSS:

What is access to midwifery like in your state (nurse midwives in hospitals and certified professional or traditional midwives in homes and birth centers)?

In what ways does your state legally restrict the human right for each birthing person to "determine the circumstances" (how, where, and with whom) of giving birth?



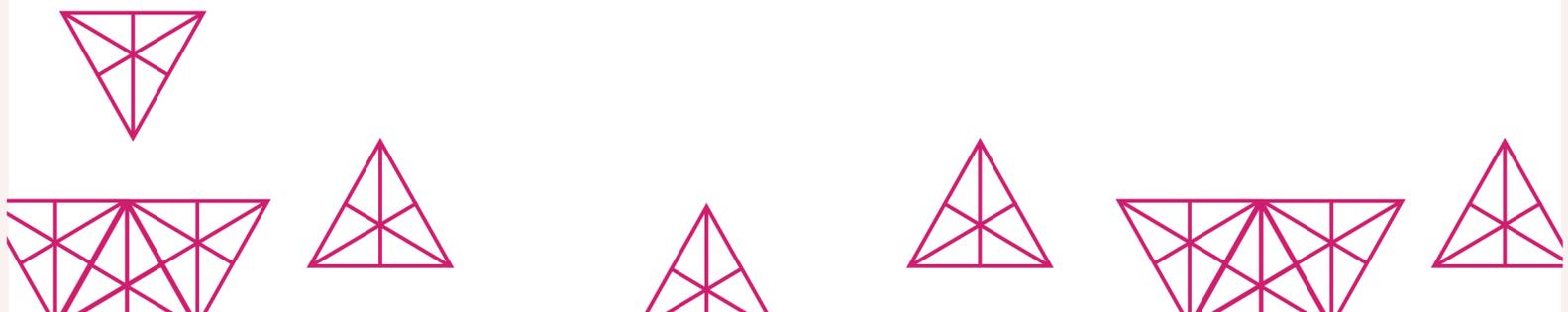


# INFORMED CONSENT & REFUSAL

## DISCUSS:

Have you ever seen consent forms used in place of informed consent?

What violations of informed consent do you witness most commonly and how do you handle those situations?



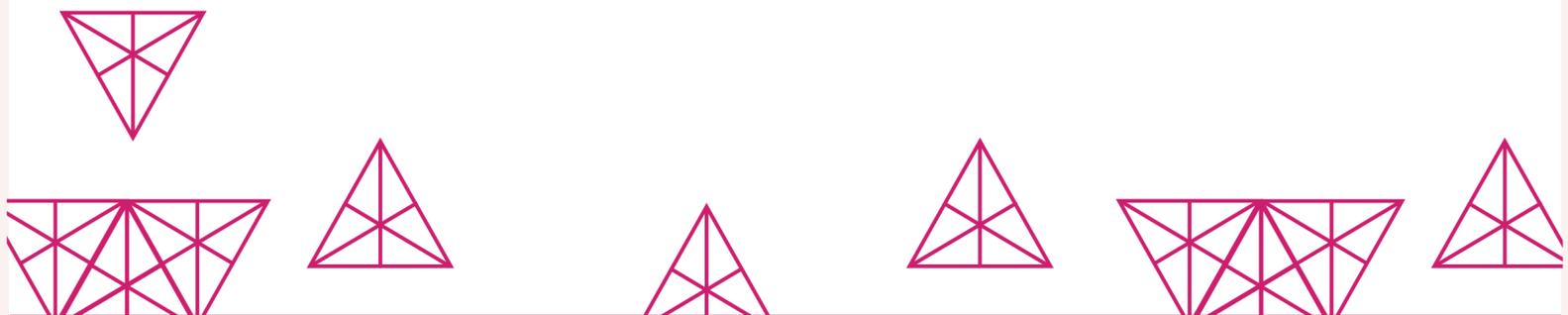


# OBSTETRIC VIOLENCE

## DISCUSS:

What does “a healthy baby is all that matters” mean to you?

Look again at the Obstetric Violence Culture pyramid. On the following page, identify some ways this culture shows up in your community or facility.



# OBSTETRIC VIOLENCE *Culture*

Name your community/facility:

What are some examples?

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ASSAULT — DEGRADATION — NORMALIZATION —

This culture affects all birthing people, and disproportionately impacts Black people and people of color, indigenous people, LGBTQI2+ people, people of size, and a host of other marginalized communities.

Pyramid concept from and thanks to [11thprincipleconsent.org](https://11thprincipleconsent.org)  
[birthmonopoly.com/ob-violence](https://birthmonopoly.com/ob-violence) | Copyright 2022 Birth Monopoly

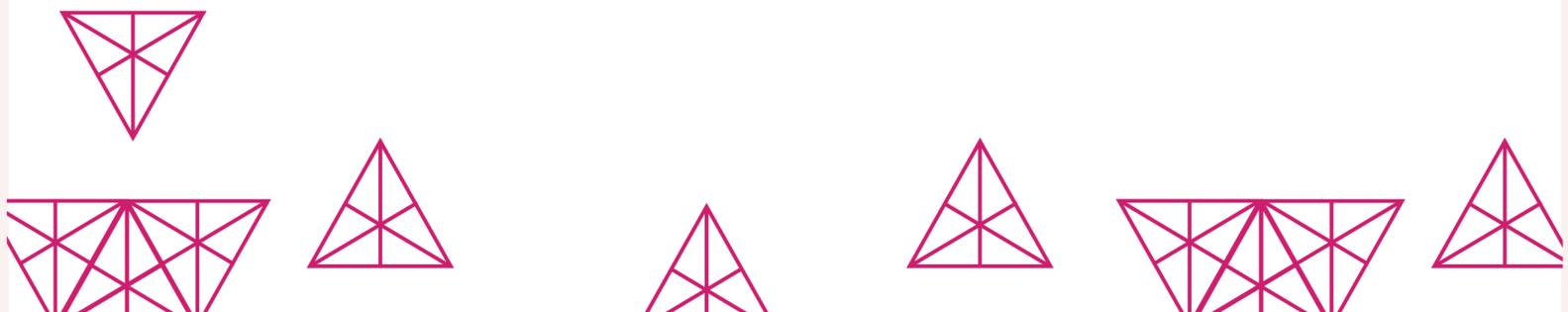


# ENFORCEMENT OF RIGHTS

## DISCUSS:

Have you ever helped a client file a complaint after a birth or filed a complaint against another birth or medical professional? What happened?

Specifically, what is your documentation process for the births you attend? What might you do differently now?





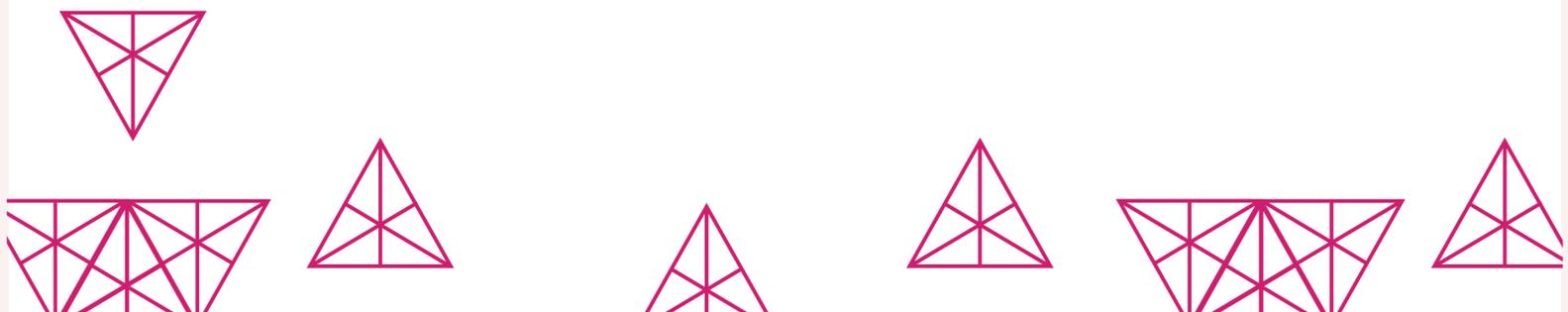
# GENERAL DISCUSSION

How skilled are you at advocating for yourself? What is one “no” in your life you’ve been wanting to say but haven’t?

What one thing from the course are you going to implement immediately?

Name two other people in your birth community you trust to collaborate.

What would it look like to keep a (private) group record of rights violations you witness first-hand?





## QUESTIONS? SUGGESTIONS?

Contact us at [birthmonopoly@gmail.com](mailto:birthmonopoly@gmail.com).

