A Message for the Labor Support Person

You are about to play an important role as support person for a mother in labor. Whether you are the father of the baby, a friend, relative, or professional, this could be one of the most memorable times of your life. How active a role you play in labor support is very individual.

To prepare during the pregnancy
• Attend childbirth classes with the mother.
• Practice relaxation and breathing methods with the mother.
• Discuss with the mother her wishes for managing her labor.
• Learn as much as you can about the process of labor and birth.

What your role includes
As you become aware of what labor involves for a mother, you will also realize this is an emotional and tiring time for you. For example, seeing a laboring mother in pain may bring on feelings of helplessness to those who care about her. Remind yourself that labor is pain with a purpose. You will learn ways to help comfort her.

You will be a link between the mother and the medical team.* It’s important that you are reassuring to the mother. If you become overly anxious, be sure to ask the nursing staff for help and answers to your questions, so you can stay relaxed and calm.

You can also help keep the environment calm and quiet. This may mean limiting phone calls and visitors. You might also try dimming the lights, playing soft music and helping with a focal point. Your constant support and encouragement are helpful, including telling the mother how well she is doing.

For specific ideas on relief and comfort measures for labor, see the “Labor From Start to Finish” handout. Further information is available in books on the reading resource list.

Take care of yourself, too
In order to support a mother throughout labor, there are things you will need to do for yourself, such as:
• Eat regularly and get enough fluids. You may want to pack a lunch to take along.
• Take along extra clothes and a razor in case the labor is very long.
• Move around in the labor room. Move chairs and stools, put your feet up. You can help best if you are comfortable.

Remember, by your very presence you are a source of support for a laboring mother.

Affirmations for Labor Support
Personal strength for the rewarding work ahead can come from mental preparation, acceptance, and confidence in your power. Take ten minutes, several times a week, to focus on yourself and the baby and practice some of the following affirmations. Put stars by the ones that feel right for you. Write them down, say them aloud, and add others that would be helpful to you.

I am taking care of myself during this pregnancy.
I see my partner/wife as a strong and capable woman.
I am supporting her during her labor, especially when she is in pain.
I am expressing my love to my partner/wife easily and frequently.
I am accepting the labor as it comes.
I am accepting feelings of helplessness.
I am sensitive, tender, open, and trusting.
I am feeling the love that others have for me when I need support.
I am helping our baby feel safe.

* Upon admission, discuss with the nurse what type of support you would like to provide.