

Hypnotherapy eases labour for both mother and baby

Using mind power for stress-free births

by DAN CARRIER

THE days of labour being the most painful experience of your life could be over – thanks to a new clinic based in Primrose Hill. The Hypno Clinic, in Regent's Park Road, uses hypnotherapy techniques and can help make labour safer and less stressful for both the parents and the baby.

Run by 33-year-old Dutch hypnotherapist Helianthe Rusken, the centre uses hypnotherapy in a four-week antenatal course.

She uses hypnotherapy techniques to relax the mother and baby. Known as 'creative vision', it helps set the body at ease and is coupled with massage and breathing exercises.

But the hypnosis does not work through pregnant women being told to 'look into my eyes'.

Ms Rusken (pictured) says: "Creative vision is simple and it works. Imagine cutting a lemon in half and biting into it. Visualise it carefully and your mouth will salivate and contract. This shows how powerful the mind can be, and we apply the same ideas to labour."

Ms Rusken was working with hypnotherapy and pain relief when she began exploring the possibility of using it in labour.

She says: "I had seen it

work elsewhere and thought it was worth applying it to childbirth."

She discovered that there was a well-established hypno-birthing tradition in America. An email to the college which practises the techniques set her up to study a course which American obstetricians and midwives say help make labour easier.

The course lasts over a month and with an evening per week spent working through exercises – and partners are encouraged to come too.

Ms Rusken continues: "The baby in the womb responds to the course. When the mother

is relaxed, so is the baby. You can listen to music or talk to them through the womb. This all adds to a stress-free birth."

The course does not use unfounded New Age ideas – Ms Rusken's techniques have been used globally for centuries.

She says:

"In other cultures childbirth is not considered painful. Drugs are not used.

"It is simply easier to give birth because of the person's frame of mind."

This means making the parent use slow breathing techniques that go

with the contractions instead of fast puffs that midwives encourage.

Ms Rusken said: "It takes away tensions.

"Having a birth can sometimes be like a competition in this society – everyone has their own horror story. Every woman knows that giving birth will be painful and the fear of it adds to it.

"But the human body can do a lot of amazing things that do not need to be painful – and giving birth is one of them."

So the using of hypnotherapy to relax takes away the pain.

"At the end of the course we work on visualising the baby moving into the right position, and then moving down the birth canal," she says. Ms Rusken says the process helps rediscover the essence of being human.

She adds: "Giving birth is one of the most natural things in the world. As a society we are advanced in so many ways – but we have lost some simple ideas that are part of our humanity. This is all about using our bodies how nature intended."

■ Contact the clinic at: www.hypnoclinic.net

