AIMS For a better birth...

The AIMS Guide to Resolution After Birth

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Reviewed for AIMS by Sakina Ballard

The first thing to mention is how digestible this book is, especially considering the challenge of needing to seek resolution after birth and the complexities of navigating systems that can feel like mazes to the service user. This book breaks down lots of the barriers that may prevent people from moving forward in their practical resolution and is especially helpful for those who need to engage with maternity systems.

The book is succinct, clearly laid out and each chapter packed with the key insights and knowledge in accessible and understandable language, not lots of jargon. The contents page is comprehensive, so the reader can find the parts of the book that feel most relevant with ease. This was a great feature and a welcome relief as a reader, given the topic of birth resolution is often emotive and can feel overwhelming to tackle as a service user.

The introduction of the book sets out who it is aimed at, maternity service users and those that support them, it is definitely highly useful to both, being both accessible and informative in a broad range of areas of resolution after birth, whilst holding the sensitivity this subject requires. There was also some consideration to the different experiences and needs birthing people have, noting the need for language and services to be inclusive for all.

This book covered every topic, from the foundational concepts of human rights and consent in birth, which impact all, to reflective prompts to support maternity service users to process their experiences and emotions around birth, as well as plan for subsequent births.

Whilst the process of resolution is not linear, this book sets out each chapter in a way the reader may often process their experience. From initially understanding what has happened and processing it, to then explaining the feedback and complaints routes, including the legal ones, so the reader can discern what feels like resolution for themselves with knowledge and understanding of the procedures.

It was great to see guest contributors adding further insights: human rights in birth, by Birthrights; birth trauma and diagnostic PTSD (which are not necessarily the same), from Make Birth Better; baby loss (a subject not often covered in maternity literature), by Sands; and a legal perspective on medical harm, from AvMA. Rather than try to brush over these topics, or leave them out entirely, these guest contributions added signposting and a richness to the voice of support this book offers.

Overall, a great resource for service users and practitioners alike, demystifying complex systems and procedures into a concise step by step format, so that those navigating the various paths of resolution, can consider what the next right step is in their individual circumstance.

As someone who has walked down the parent and practitioner paths, I read this book with a sense of relief that firstly, it exists and secondly, I can continue to use it as a valuable resource at work.

I would definitely recommend this book, a thoughtful, informative and vital book that eases some of the bewilderment of how to practically deal with this challenging topic.

Author Bio: Sakina Ballard birth trauma and perinatal mental health practitioner working inside and outside of the NHS. She is Community Lead for Make Birth Better.