

March, 2022



A Note to Survivors about Language, Identity, and You:

A Special Welcome to Transgender and Non-Binary Survivor Parents

We here at Growing Forward Together would like to acknowledge the dated language and inherent lack of gender inclusivity in the Survivor Moms' Companion name and throughout the workbook. We celebrate the gender diverse identities of all pregnant and parenting people.

The Survivor Moms' Companion was written in 2010 and published with the philanthropic support of the Sidran Traumatic Stress Institute. We look forward to updating to be inclusive when our small non-profit can undertake the expense of a new edition. We absolutely welcome everyone to SMC who can find meaningful support here. The following letter was written for you by one of our earliest tutors, and we hope that it will be welcoming as you consider if the SMC is right for you.

With love and support,

The SMC creators and team.

May 2020

Dear Survivor Parent,

You may be considering participating in the Survivor Moms' Companion (SMC) because you are pregnant or early in your parenting, see something in here that speaks to you, but are wondering – What can this do for me if I'm not a "mom/mama/mother"? You may be wondering if a program that talks about pregnancy and early parenting as *women's* experiences and about pregnancy and birth as something that *moms* do could possibly *see you*.

We are glad you are here, and we see you.

When I was first introduced to the SMC, I was overjoyed that I would be able to offer a thoughtful and evidence-based trauma-informed program to the clients I serve that could improve the experience of pregnancy, birth, and early parenting for trauma survivors – and that also has the potential to strengthen the relationships between pregnant people and their care providers. But that excitement coupled with disappointment as I delved into material that was full of language that does not speak inclusively of and to the gender diversity among childbearing people today.

While greater numbers of people than ever before are identifying as transgender and non-binary, many of whom are, or would like to be, childbearing and parenting, much of the professional world involved in perinatal health is still catching up (as is the rest of the world, for that matter!). Along with several of the other SMC early adopters, I have been grateful to be in conversation with the SMC developers about how to address this need for inclusion of transgender and non-binary experience into the program. This letter is a step toward being inclusive of transgender parents in maternity care and making SMC a trans-affirming tool for people of all gender identities. Additionally, this letter serves as an invitation to *you* to make use of the SMC, and a hope that you will find it relevant for your trauma-related needs, even if the written language within it does not appear to speak to you directly. We invite you to work with your tutor to change pronouns/names in the vignettes as needed, for instance, to make it more accessible as you work through the chapters.

We also would like to offer a final note to transgender and non-binary pregnant and parenting survivors, which is that we recognize that, in addition to some of the ways you may recognize yourself in the SMC vignettes, you may also experience gender dysphoria that overlaps with or is exacerbated by other trauma responses. We encourage you to bring up these experiences with your tutor, who may be able to provide additional support and resources for you.

With love and respect to you on your journey,

Corinne Westing, CNM

Tutor for the Survivor Moms' Companion

Chicago, Illinois