

A FEAR FREE CHILDBIRTH GUIDE

RAD Responsible™

STORYTELLING PACK

A guide for content creators, birth workers, educators and storytellers who want to change the reproductive narrative, and tell stories *that heal*.



WELCOME

Welcome to RAD Responsible™

This is more than a guide. It's a shift.

A new way of thinking about the stories we tell around pregnancy, birth, fertility and reproductive health. Every post, podcast, caption or course module has power.

It can soothe.

It can scar.

It can spark healing, or deepen harm.

If you're here, it's because you care about using your voice responsibly. You want your content to inform, not overwhelm. To uplift, not hijack. To heal, not harm.

Inform, not overwhelm. Uplift, not hijack. *Heal, not harm.*

This pack is here to help you do just that.

What is RAD?

RAD stands for Reproductive Anxiety Disorder. It describes the chronic, fear-based nervous system state that many women experience around pregnancy, birth and reproduction.

It isn't a formal clinical diagnosis, and we're clear about that. It's a named pattern, defined by Alexia Leachman, for something clinicians and birth workers see constantly but have had no shared language for.

RAD can look like...

- **Tokophobia:** intense fear of pregnancy or childbirth
- Hyper-control or panic around fertility or conception
- Shutdown during reproductive health appointments or stories
- Avoiding reproductive choices altogether
- Obsessive over-preparation or medicalisation

These aren't just "anxieties". They're signs of a nervous system shaped by fear-based narratives, *and sustained by the stories we keep telling.*

GO DEEPER

The role media plays in reproductive fear is set out in two white papers, *The Case for RAD* and *Fear Sells, But Does It Serve?*, published by our partner site Fearless Birthing at fearlessbirthing.com/white-paper

What is RAD Responsible™?

A movement. A framework. A storytelling integrity standard.

It isn't here to gatekeep. It's here to guide creators, educators, birth workers, podcasters and anyone else shaping the reproductive conversation.

It means creating content that...

- informs, not overwhelms
- offers clarity, not chaos
- encourages choice, not fear
- helps people integrate, not dissociate

We're not asking for perfection.
We're asking for emotional responsibility.

The five principles of RAD Responsible™ storytelling

Five shifts that turn raw content into storytelling that heals. Each one wears its petal colour from the badge.

1

Context

Don't just show what happened, tell us why. Trauma without context is overwhelming. Trauma with meaning can be healing.

DON'T

Drop dramatic scenes without explanation.

DO

Add timelines, backstory and emotional tone.

Like this: "This emergency caesarean happened after a placental abruption, following 36 hours of labour. It's rare, but this is her story."

2

Consent

Only share what's yours to share, with full, informed and enthusiastic permission. Especially when it involves births, babies, bodies or other people's lived experiences.

DON'T

Use anonymised trauma for shock value.

DO

Ask: "Whose story is this? Do I have the right to tell it this way?"

3

Containment

Don't just slap on a trigger warning. Create emotional scaffolding: let your audience know what to expect, and how to look after themselves while they take in your story.

DON'T

Drop emotional bombs without resolution.

DO

Use pre-frames and support links.

Pre-frame like this: "This story includes themes of miscarriage and may bring up strong emotions. If it does, here's where you can find support..."

And follow up like this: "If this story stirred something for you, these resources might help you process it."

4

Possibility & Potential

Don't just share what went wrong, share what's possible. Positive stories aren't naive; they're necessary for nervous system balance.

DON'T

Only share worst-case scenarios.

DO

Include a range of real outcomes: surprise home births, smooth caesareans, empowered decisions.

5

Nervous System Awareness

Speak to the body, not just the brain. Your tone, pacing, breath and structure regulate or dysregulate. Choose with care.

DON'T

Use urgency or intensity to grab attention.

DO

Use grounding tones, pauses and warmth.

Ask yourself: what state will this leave my audience in? Am I modelling calm, chaos, freeze or fear?

From raw to responsible

The difference between uncontained content and healing storytelling isn't always obvious, especially when emotions run high. The same story can be told at very different levels of RAD alignment.

RAD Aligned

Crafted with healing intention and clarity. Context, consent and care are built in, and the audience leaves more regulated than they arrived.

Raw & Real

Honest, raw and real, but not yet integrated. The feeling is true, yet it's shared before it's been processed or scaffolded.

Uncontained

Emotional, intense or uncontained, and needs context or scaffolding. Often activating, sometimes shared for shock rather than support.

The table on the next page shows how each of these sounds in practice, across the moments your audience is most likely to bring you.

SIDE BY SIDE · THE SAME STORY, THREE WAYS

RAD ALIGNED	RAW & REAL	UNCONTAINED
"After three miscarriages, we finally carried to term. I share this to honour that journey, and offer hope to others still walking it."	"We lost the baby again. I'm devastated. I just needed to say that out loud."	"Here's what my miscarriage looked like." [Graphic medical detail, no pre-frame or support.]
"A planned caesarean after a long journey of healing birth trauma. It was calm, joyful, and exactly what we needed."	"We ended up with a caesarean. I didn't want it, but I'm trying to make peace with it."	"My birth was stolen from me. Hospitals are abusive. Don't let this happen to you."
"After infertility treatment and five years of trying, we conceived. I'm still integrating what this means, and want to share what helped."	"We got the two lines! I can't believe this happened."	"Trigger warning: I'm pregnant. Please don't comment. I'm spiralling."
"This birth included interventions I didn't expect, but I stayed connected and felt respected. Here's how I advocated for myself."	"I didn't get the birth I wanted. I felt out of control. Still figuring it out."	"Hospitals are where birth dreams go to die. Don't trust anyone but yourself."
"A birth story involving shoulder dystocia. I've added a pre-frame and linked to resources for those who might be activated."	"My baby almost died during birth. I'm still processing it."	Raw birth footage of shoulder dystocia, no warning, posted for shock value.
"I had tokophobia. I was able to clear that fear, and I want others to know they're not alone, and that fear can be cleared."	"I was terrified of birth. I think I still am."	"Birth is terrifying. I don't know why anyone would willingly go through it."
"In this episode we talk about stillbirth. We open with grounding, and close with hope and links to support."	"This is my stillbirth story. It's raw and real."	"Stillbirth warning. This is going to wreck you."
"We had to terminate for medical reasons. I'm sharing with care so others feel less alone. Please read with gentleness."	"We ended the pregnancy. I don't know what to say yet, but I needed to share."	"TFMR is the worst thing you can go through. Nothing prepares you. This world is cruel."

Use this to reflect on your own content. Small shifts in tone, context and care can turn a story into something supportive.

Story integrity checklist

Before you share a story, ask:

- ☐ Have I added context, not just drama?

- ☐ Do I have clear permission to tell this story?

- ☐ Have I scaffolded the emotional content for my audience?

- ☐ Am I showing what's possible, not just what went wrong?

- ☐ Is this story likely to soothe or spike the nervous system?

- ☐ Have I given follow-up support or resources?

The RAD Creator Pledge

I pledge to...

- tell stories with context, not chaos
- honour consent, always
- scaffold emotion, not suppress it
- include possibility, not just pain
- consider tone, breath and body, not just clicks

I understand that stories shape the nervous system.

I choose to be a steward, not just a sharer.

I am RAD Responsible.

SIGNED

DATE

The RAD Responsible™ badge



Display the badge once you've taken the pledge and you're actively aligning your content with the five principles. Link it back to fearfreechildbirth.com/rad-responsible.

USE IT IF...

- you've taken the pledge
- you're actively aligning your content with the five principles

WHERE TO USE IT

- podcast episodes and YouTube intros
- course pages and blog articles
- Instagram reels or highlight covers
- about and bio pages
- client or student welcome guides

WHAT'S NEXT

Ready to go further?

Want to keep aligning your content with RAD? Here's what's next.



Use the RAD Content Checker

Paste your content into our AI tool and get instant feedback based on the five principles. Get your link at fearfreechildbirth.com/rad-responsible



Use the badge

Add it to your website, podcast or course materials to show your commitment to stories that heal, not harm.



Share the manifesto

Use your platform to amplify the movement. Post the manifesto, or display your pledge in your content.



Invite Alexia onto your podcast or to your event

For a conversation about healing-centred storytelling and nervous-system-safe media.



Join the RAD Responsible™ directory

So people looking for healing-centred voices can find your work.

SOMETHING ELSE IN MIND?

Get in touch to collaborate, or to bring RAD into your programme: hello@fearfreechildbirth.com

OUR CREDO

The manifesto

Stories shape the nervous system. They don't just inform, they imprint.
Content lands in the body: it calms, or it activates.

We believe every piece of content about pregnancy, birth and reproduction has power.
And we believe it's time we used that power with purpose.

We reject shock as strategy. We reject fear as entertainment.

We reject stories that decontextualise, dehumanise or disempower.

We honour the truth, even when it's raw. We honour emotion, even when it's intense.
But we choose to share with care, courage and containment.

Context creates
clarity

Consent is sacred

Containment
heals

Possibility matters

The nervous
system is our
audience

We are not here to sanitise stories. *We are here to humanise them.*

We are RAD Responsible™.