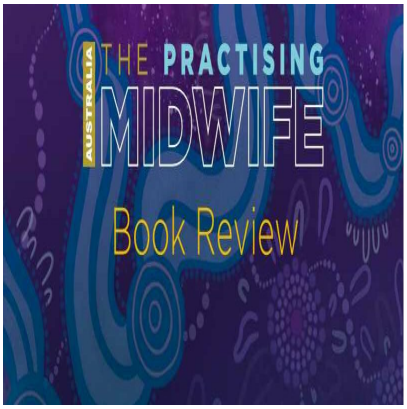

Description

Book Review: The Clinician’s Guide to Better Birth After Caesarean by Dr Hazel Keedle

Review by: Sheena Byrom OBE – Midwife Leader and Director

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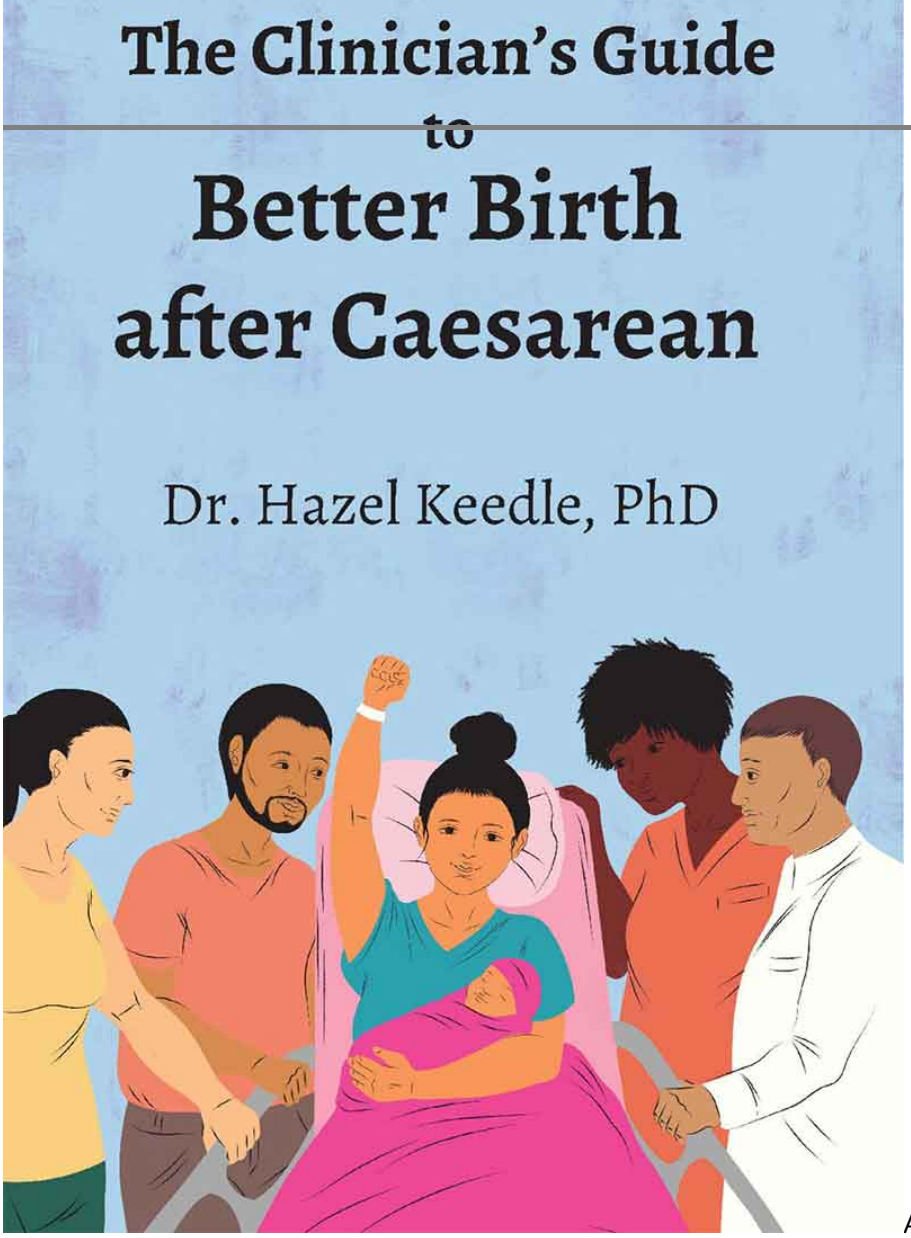

A transformative and profoundly necessary text that bridges the gap between clinical practice and the lived experiences of women navigating birth after a caesarean. Dr Hazel Keedle combines the depth of academic rigor with the sensitivity of a midwife and the empathy of someone who has personally walked the Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (VBAC) journey.

What makes this book so powerful is its multi-dimensional approach grounded in robust research, enriched with qualitative insights and centred unwaveringly on the voices of women. Hazel's Four Factors' framework (control, confidence, relationship, and staying active in labour) offers clinicians a deeply human and evidence-informed lens through which to support those in their care. It challenges the medicalised, risk-averse narratives that often dominate post-caesarean care and instead advocates for shared decision-making, respectful language and trauma-informed practice.

The inclusion of real-life stories from women, midwives and doulas spanning continents and cultural contexts adds authenticity and richness. These narratives are not just illustrative; they are facilitative, demonstrating the profound impact that continuity of care, active listening and belief in women's capabilities can have on birth outcomes and emotional well-being.

As a professional resource, this guide is equally practical and visionary. It confronts systemic issues such as obstetric violence, racism and the misuse of tools like the VBAC calculator with courage and clarity. Yet it always returns to a place of optimism and possibility: that birth after caesarean can be better, and that clinicians can be the key to making it so.

This book is essential reading for any health care provider working in maternity care – midwives, obstetricians, GPs, doulas and students alike. It equips professionals with not just knowledge, but with tools to advocate for change, foster trust and ensure every woman feels seen, heard and empowered in her birth journey.

An inspiring, compassionate and evidence-rich guide that has the power to change both practice and lives. **TPM**

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