

Description

Supporting Fat Birth By AJ Silver

Book Review by: Sarah Fitzsimmons – Independent Midwife

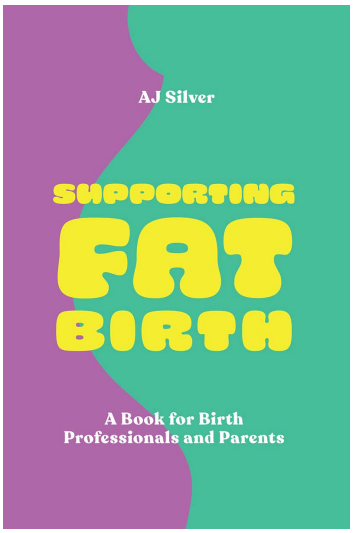
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This is the second book by AJ Silver, a self-proclaimed ‘fat, LQBTQ+, inclusive doula and gestational parent’. This book leads beautifully on from AJ’s first book, Supporting Queer Birth. The book brilliantly and gently lifts a veil on the prejudices we are taught, trained and promote within perinatal care.

From the beginning, AJ aims to disarm the language used around pregnancy with high BMI, by using the term ‘fat’ as a simple noun, to be used as freely as the words ‘tall’ or ‘short’.

When I opened the book, I expected to find facts, stats and discussion of evidence that that I could then lift and apply to

my clinical work. In fact, throughout this book, AJ manages to speak to both pregnant/gestational people and the professionals that care for them using a series of biographical interviews. Each interview acts a story of the lived experience, assumptions and prejudice that fat pregnant people have experienced and the impact of that on their lives, babies, bodies and self-image as a result.

Using humour to keep the discussion upbeat as well as discussing positive experiences and alternative options open to gestational parents, AJ manages to convey clearly the challenges faced by fat, Black and queer families that face fatphobia, and that discriminatory care begins in preconception, in accessing fertility support, right through to parenting children.

As a white, heterosexual, cis female midwife, owner of a straight-size body and someone that considers themselves to be an inclusive practitioner, this book helped me to understand where my prejudices sit, how they came about and how to confidently and actively address them going forward. This is a must read for anyone caring for fat pregnant people who wants to support them to navigate maternity services with equality and evidence-based care. **TPM**

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