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My passion for postpartum care traces back to my childhood in rural Eastern Washington. I grew up in a farming community made up largely of migrant worker families—hard-working people who often lived in deep poverty, spoke little English, and had almost no access to maternal health resources. Even as a child, I noticed the gaps: my mom was back to doing physically demanding farm work long before her body had fully healed, she had no follow up medical care, and they shouldered the full demands of farm life while growing their family, often without the support they truly needed. Even though I didn't completely understand it as a child, I could feel the strain it put on her and knew what I was witnessing wasn't right. Those early experiences have stayed with me, shaping both my values and the type of clinician I eventually became.

Now, nearly two decades into my career as a pelvic floor and obstetric physical therapist, and a mother who has gone through four births of my own—I can now understand more deeply than ever the complexities, vulnerabilities, and the complete transformation that comes with bringing a baby into the world. Although I had access to high-quality medical care, my four births were all different with each carrying its own challenges and took a deep emotional toll. Those experiences truly taught me humility. They also taught me how desperately parents need consistent, skilled, compassionate support in the postpartum phase. Unfortunately, even with everything modern medicine offers, there are still real gaps in care for the pregnant and postpartum parent.

In my professional work, I've built pelvic floor and OB programs in two different outpatient orthopedic clinics that have expanded into additional clinics within our organization now offering this form of care. My goal with developing these programs has always been my desire to help create long-term access to care in spaces where postpartum recovery had never been intentionally supported before. As I've expanded the programs I offer within my community, I've also recognized the need to deepen that care by providing early postpartum home visits. These visits have become one of the most meaningful parts of my practice. When I walk into a home during those early days, I frequently meet families who are struggling with fatigue, physical discomfort, and the emotional overwhelm that comes with parenthood.

With each early postpartum visit I bring evidence-based physical therapy, but I also bring a warm meal, comfort items, and time. I am able to devote time to sit, listen, and let someone process their birth. It is a time where I am present in a way that doesn't rush or dismiss how much their body and identity have just changed. Oftentimes it is the first time someone finally feels safe enough to say, "I'm struggling," or "this isn't what I thought it would be like." It's truly a privilege to witness that blend of vulnerability and strength.

Over the years, my role as a PT has evolved to include community outreach. It has allowed me to offer additional opportunities to share knowledge and support beyond the clinic walls to reach individuals in settings they frequent most. As a result I now teach educational lectures to parent groups, community organizations, doulas, and fitness instructors to increase awareness of the role of PT in pregnancy and postpartum care. Due to the online world we live in, I am also an active, steady presence on local online forums, answering questions that people often feel too vulnerable to ask their medical provider in person. I also give back to my profession through the mentoring of students and newer physical therapist**s** who want to move into obstetric and pelvic health care. Daily I see the need to increase the number of providers who understand postpartum physiology and trauma-informed support.

During this upcoming year, I am taking the next steps to expand my role in my local community and increase my understanding of birth support by pursuing DONA doula certification. After four births of my own, each of which were greatly shaped by different emotions, providers, circumstances, and recoveries—I know how powerful it is to have consistent support during labor and the early postpartum days. Through this certification and the Perinatal Health Specialist certification, I want to be able to offer that full-spectrum care to my patients and community.

My overall goal is simple, I want to be able to show up for families in a way I wished the families in my rural hometown could have been supported. I aspire to continue to provide skilled, culturally responsive, and wrap around care to people at a time when they often feel invisible. I want to continue my role in bridging the gap between medical care, emotional support, and real-life postpartum needs. No birthing person should ever feel like they have to navigate recovery alone.