The body can display an endless range of release behaviors

Women may use several styles of coping with pain in labor, sometimes switching between them. Usually these spontaneous rituals include rhythm in some form.

**Sounds or verbalization**
If left to uninhibited expression, many women will make some sound during labor: Deep sighs, groans, moans, grunts, laughing, growling, nonsense syllables

**Movements**
Contortions, clenching, quivering, shaking, pounding bed with fist, grimaces

**Somatic and kinesthetic**
Other may squeeze a pillow or the partner’s hand or want to move around as a way to “meet” the contraction.

**Touch**
During labor, some women need extra quiet, gentler touch, or more physical space to move around. For some, touch can feel invasive. Others need to be constantly held.

**Visualization or imagery**
During labor, some mothers may prefer to use internal or external visual images for moving through the contraction.

**Emotional expression**
Calling for her mother, crying, sobbing, heaving, keening, angry outbursts, cursing. In some cases, the woman may get angry, yell, call for help, etc.

An experienced doula witnesses every variation of coping mechanism:

The doula must remember that she is not the target of the woman’s distress and should not take these expressions personally.