

# Doula Collective of Newfoundland and Labrador

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## Standards of Practice

### I. SCOPE

#### A. *Services Rendered*

The doula accompanies the woman in labor, provides emotional and physical support, suggests comfort measures, and provides support and suggestions for the partner. Whenever possible, the doula provides pre- and post-partum emotional support, including explanation and discussion of practices and procedures, and assistance in acquiring the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about her care. Additionally, as doulas do not “prescribe” treatment, any suggestions or information provided within the role of the doula must be done with the proviso that the doula advises her client to check with her primary care provider before using any application.

#### B. *Limits to Practice*

Doula Standards apply to emotional and physical support only. A doula does not perform clinical or medical tasks such as taking blood pressure or temperature, fetal heart tone checks, vaginal examinations, or postpartum clinical care. If doulas who are also health care professionals choose to provide services for a client that are outside the doula’s scope of practice, they should not describe themselves as doulas to their client or to others. In such cases they should describe themselves by a name other than “doula” and provide services according to the scopes of practice and the standards of their health care profession. On the other hand, if a health care professional chooses to limit her services to those provided by doulas, it is acceptable for her to describe herself as a doula.

#### C. *Advocacy*

The doula advocates for the client's wishes as expressed in her birth plan, in prenatal conversations, and intrapartum discussion, by encouraging her client to ask questions of her caregiver and to express her preferences and concerns. The doula helps the client(s) incorporate changes in plans if and when the need arises, and enhances the communication between client and caregiver. Clients and doulas must recognize that the advocacy role does not include the doula speaking instead of the client or making decisions for the client. The doula should make every effort to encourage their clients to assume personal responsibility for the decisions they make during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. The advocacy role is best described as support, information, and mediation or negotiation.

#### D. *Referrals*

For client needs beyond the scope of the doula’s training, referrals are made to appropriate resources.

## **II. CONTINUITY OF CARE**

The doula should make back-up arrangements with another doula whenever possible to ensure services to the client if the doula is unable to attend the birth. Should any doula feel a need to discontinue service to an established client, it is the doula's responsibility to notify the client and arrange for a replacement, if the client so desires. This may be accomplished by:

- Introducing the client to the back-up doula.
- Contacting the other doulas within the Doula Collective to refer client on.
- Referring the client to the Doula Collective website for a list of potential doulas.

## **III. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE**

**A. Training** – While the Doula Collective recognizes that not all members will pursue doula certification, the following are standards of practice that are expected to be followed by all active members of the Doula Collective. I.e. Minimum training is mandatory regardless of certification goals.

- i. Doulas who are certified by DONA/CAPPA will have completed all the requirements as set forth in the associated requirements for certification. This includes but is not limited to, training in childbirth and attendance at a birth doula workshop; required reading; and observance of a childbirth education series.
- ii. Doulas who are not certified with DONA, CAPPA, or equivalent will have to – at minimum – attend a doula training workshop, in person, with an approved training body.
- iii. Equivalency to DONA/CAPPA will be determined by the Doula Collective and additional training and/or reading may be required.

**B. Experience**

- i. Doulas certified by DONA/CAPPA will have the experience as set forth in the associated requirements for certification.
- ii. Equivalent to DONA/CAPPA will be determined by the Doula Collective and additional training and/or reading may be required.
- iii. Doulas will attend a minimum of two Doula Collective meetings per year and make every attempt to attend the Annual General Meeting each year.

**C. Continued Education**

A doula should pursue continuing education to update and further their knowledge in pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum.