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LABOR SUPPORT SERVICES, LIMITS AND FEES

What is a doula?

As a doula, I accompany women in labor to help ensure a safe and satisfying birth experience. I have received education for the doula's role from Seattle Midwifery School (now part of Bastyr University). I am a **certified doula**, with DONA International (DONA). Additionally, as a **Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator**, I teach a variety of childbirth classes, including an out of hospital series, VBAC YOUR Way, Cesarean YOUR Way, Labor YOUR Way, private customized classes and others at the Muza Education Center in Ballard. I am on the faculty at Bastyr University, where I teach the Birth Doula Skills Workshop to new doulas and am a **DONA approved birth doula trainer**. I draw on my knowledge and experience to provide emotional support, physical comfort and as needed, assist you with communication with the staff, to make sure that you have the information you need to make informed decisions as they arise in labor. I can provide reassurance and perspective to you and your partner, make suggestions for labor progress and help with relaxation, massage, positioning and other techniques for comfort. I am independent and self-employed. As your doula, I am working for you, not your caregiver, hospital or birth center.

Choosing a doula

I offer a no obligation "meet and greet" where we can get together and see if our styles are a good fit. After we have committed to working together, and I have received a signed contract and retainer, (see fee section below,) I prefer to meet with you and your partner once, (second visit at your request provided for an additional \$100 fee), before labor to become acquainted, to explore and discuss your priorities and any fears or concerns, and to plan how we might best work together. I will want to become familiar with your birth plan, including your preferences regarding management options and the use of pain medications. I also want to know your own best way of coping with pain and fatigue, and how you and your partner foresee working together.

After you hire me, I am available 24 hours a day either by phone or email to answer any questions or discuss concerns you may have. I have a large resource list at my disposal and I may offer you suggestions and materials that you may find useful. At the minimum, checking in after each doctor/midwife appointment is a good routine to establish. I also am happy to share my large lending library of books and DVDs.

I will also inform you of times when I am unavailable for labor support. To cover those times, I will arrange one or more back-up doulas that you may also meet. Of course you have as much choice over your back-up as your primary doula. I may use my back up doula if I am teaching and am unable to stop the class to immediately leave and will arrive as soon as possible to continue your labor support.

When you are in labor

I prefer that you call me when you think you are in labor, even if you do not yet need me. I can answer questions and make suggestions over the phone. We will decide if I should come right then or wait for further change. I usually need **at least 60-90 minutes to get to you from the time you ask me to come**. We will also decide where to meet; at your home, the hospital or the birth center. Except for extraordinary circumstances, I or my back-up will remain with you throughout your labor and birth.

After the birth

I usually remain with you for one to two hours after birth, until you are comfortable and your family is ready for quiet time together. I can also help with initial breastfeeding. I will continue to be available for phone/email contact to answer questions about the birth or your baby. I will usually contact you by phone every day after your baby is born until I see you and that visit usually occurs sometime between day 3-5 postbirth, where I can assist with lactation and newborn care, discuss your birth and make any appropriate referrals.

What I do not do

- Perform clinical tasks, such as blood pressure, fetal heart checks, vaginal exams and other. I am there to provide only physical comfort, emotional support, and advocacy.
- Make decisions for you. I will help you get the information necessary to make an informed decision. I will also remind you if there is a departure from your birth plan.

- Speak to the staff instead of you regarding matters where decisions are made. I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, but you or your partner will speak on your behalf to the clinical staff.

Failure to provide services

I will make every effort to provide the services described here. Sometimes this is impossible (for example, with a rapid labor). If my failure to attend your birth is due to my error, there will be no charge for my services and I will refund the retaining fee. If it is due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, such as rapid labor, the full fee is due as stated in my contract. If you choose not to call me for labor support, the full fee is due as stated in my contract, for I will have turned away other potential clients in order to fulfill my commitment to you.

In the event that an induction or Cesarean is planned for your birth, I respectfully request that you coordinate the scheduling with my schedule. Of course, when you go into spontaneous labor, I will cancel any other commitments I may have to be with you, but if it will be scheduled, I appreciate being able to work around my teaching schedule.

Fees

The fee for my services described is \$2000

The fees are to be paid as follows:

1. \$1000.00 as a non-refundable retainer fee, when you hire me as your doula
2. \$1000.00 due at the first prenatal visit.

I frequently work with an apprentice doula, who will accompany me at all times, offering support to you and your partner under my supervision. Please let me know if you would like an apprentice doula at your birth, at no additional charge.

It is my commitment to provide services to any family in need of them. I am willing to discuss an alternative financial arrangement if the one outlined above is not feasible for you.

I/We have read this letter describing the doula's services and agree that it reflects the discussion we had with her.

Client

Client's Partner

Doula

Date