

## POSSIBLE QUESTIONS WHEN INTERVIEWING A DOULA

Does the doula you're considering offer a free initial meeting to find out about her services? If so, here are some questions you can ask her at the interview.

### **BACKGROUND, EDUCATION, PHILOSOPHY**

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How much experience do you have?

- How many births have you attended?
- How long have you been in practise?
- Where have you worked? (Hospitals, birth centres, homes. Which ones?)
- With which primary practitioners have you worked? (Midwives, doctors).

What education and training do you have?

- What's your educational background in general?
- What's your specific training in childbirth education, birth support, breastfeeding, and newborn care?
- Do you have complimentary training e.g. natural remedies, modalities for pain management & comfort measures?

What is your philosophy about pregnancy, birth and support?

- Are there limitations of support based on these beliefs? E.g., natural vs. medicated birth, time-lines for gestation & labour, home vs. hospital birth.

Have you given birth? If not, what compelled you to start doing this work?

### **LOGISTICS AND PRACTISE ORGANIZATION**

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What are you affiliations?

- Professional associations
- Community links and resources
- Relationship with other practitioners with skills who may benefit me

What's your offer, in detail?

- # of prenatal visits
- On-call schedule
- Post-partum support and schedule
- Availability for extra meetings, questions, phone calls; is there a fee?
- Cost, payment schedule, and return policy

How does dad fit in?

Do you have privileges in all or limited birth centres & hospitals? All or limited primary practitioners?

Do you work with back-up?

- Who and can I meet her if I wish?
- Under what circumstances would the back-up attend?

What if you miss the birth?

What if I go into labour before on-call dates?

Can you provide references / testimonials?

## **PRENATAL CARE**

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What information is covered in prenatal meetings?

- E.g. birthplan, birth-bag, what to expect, ways to help contribute to my ideal birth.

Are there extra perks? Are they included or do they cost extra?

- Lending library of books, DVDs, informational resources
- Information handouts
- Other health related therapies
- Workshops or classes

## **LABOR & DELIVERY**

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When do you try to join women in labour?

- At home or place of birth?
- For how long?

What are your methods or tools for support during labour and delivery?

- Pain management techniques such as massage techniques & knowledge of positions; complimentary therapies such as homeopathy, acupuncture, aromatherapy.
- Skills for difficult labours (long, stalled, and/or back labour)
- Skills to support labour with interventions (e.g. epidural, Pitocin, amniotomy)

How do you work with my partner or anyone else I might wish to be part of my labour?

What if I have a Caesarean birth?

What if I'm transferred to (another) hospital or city?

## **POSTPARTUM & NEWBORN CARE**

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Do you help with breastfeeding?

- How?
- When? Immediately after birth or at home in the following days too?
- What if I need specialized help with nursing?

Are you still available for the early postnatal days?

- What are the parameters? (Length of time or time of day.)
- With what kind of issues can you assist?
- How can you help?

## **MOST IMPORTANT NOTE FOR PARENTS-TO-BE:**

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Do you feel comfortable enough with this doula to share your baby's birth?

- Is she kind, warm, enthusiastic?
- Is she knowledgeable about your particular concerns?
- Does she listen and communicate well?
- Is she comfortable with your choices or does she have her own agenda?

## **HOW TO PROCEED - NOTE FOR PARENTS-TO-BE:**

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Wondering how to say, "No, let's not work together" after the interview?

- Simply call or e-mail that it's not going to work out. Declining won't be taken personally. Reasons aren't necessary but if it makes you feel better, then feel free to share.

Wondering how to say, "Yes, let's work together" after the interview?

- Just call or e-mail your wish to work together.
- Most doulas won't reserve your dates until the contracts are signed, cheques are written and the official stuff is taken care of. Request a meeting to get the process started.