



The scope of practice of a birth doula

The objective of a doula

A doula is a support person for birth that offers emotional, physical and informational support to the birthing person and to other possible support persons according to their wishes during pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period.

A doula's objective is to cultivate the feelings of safety and trust. A doula encourages their client to be informed about their own care and to bring forth their worries and wishes to the medical staff. A doula does not make decisions for their client.

A doula can be of support e.g. in the following ways:

- Meet the client before and/or after the birth
- Be present at the birth
- Be a constant support during the birth
- Offer different kinds of alternative pain relief and endurance methods
- Help the birthing person to trust their own body and to achieve birthing peace
- Encourage and guide the support person in helping the birthing person
- Help the birthing person to realise their birthing plan according to their wishes and the available possibilities
- Support emotionally in changing situations

Limitations to the role of a doula

A doula will not involve themselves in any medical procedures such as internal- or external examinations or monitoring fetal heart rate. A doula does not diagnose or prescribe drugs. A doula is not responsible for the progress of the birth or the well-being of the birthing person or the baby even though he/she works for their benefit.

Informational role

A doula supports the communication between the client and the medical staff. If needed, the doula can initiate the communication in order for the client to be able to advocate their wishes.

If the needs of the client surpass the know-how of a doula, a doula will help the client acquire more information and refer them to other professionals.

Offering a doula service

A doula and a client have to agree upon the content, the price and the terms of service. A doula has to inform the client clearly and truthfully about her own background (education, experience).

Education of a doula

A doula is not a regulated profession, so anyone can define themselves as a doula. There are different kinds of introductory, basic level, certification and vocational training courses with varying scope and content available both in Finland and internationally.

A doula in their role

A doula must act respectfully towards all the clients, doulas and other professionals and work according to this mission statement.

If a doula offers other services beyond this mission statement, they must inform their client in a clear manner and agree on the terms separately.

A doula must maintain confidentiality regarding the information they have acquired in the relationship with the client both during and after providing the service unless they have obtained a written permission from the client to share the aforementioned information.