

I. Scope of Work

- A. **Services Rendered.** The DONA International birth doula, provides emotional, physical, and informational support, advocacy, and partner support to birthing families during pregnancy, labor, delivery, and immediately post-partum whenever possible. This support is non-medical and shall not be construed as medical advice; the client retains all autonomy in decision-making.
- B. **Practice Parameters.** DONA International Standards and Certification apply to emotional, physical, and informational support and advocacy only. DONA International birth doulas do not perform clinical or medical tasks. The DONA International doula will not diagnose or treat in any modality.
1. If the doula has qualifications in alternative or complementary modalities (such as aromatherapy, childbirth education, massage therapy, placenta encapsulation, etc.), the doula must clearly indicate that these modalities are an additional service.
 2. If the doula has qualifications in the medical field (such as a nurse, chiropractor, acupuncturist, physical therapist, etc.), the doula must make it clear that these modalities are an additional service.
- C. **Advocacy.** The DONA International birth doula upholds the fundamental belief that the individuals and families they serve must remain at the center of their perinatal care experience. In every setting, the DONA International birth doula fosters client autonomy and supports informed decision-making, encouraging the client to express their values, preferences, and goals. With deep respect for the client's hopes, needs, and choices, the doula actively listens, honors their voice, and amplifies it within the broader care team. DONA International birth doula advocacy includes speaking up when it is safe in the best interests of the client and when obstetric violence is witnessed. This commitment to dignity, respect, safety, and agency is essential for ethical, person-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant care. The DONA International birth doula should stay informed about the disparities that affect marginalized communities and prepare to recognize, advocate, and support families whenever such inequity and harm occur during their service.

1. When mistreatment or harm is witnessed, including but not limited to obstetric violence, physical, verbal, emotional, and/or financial abuse, neglect, etc., the DONA International birth doula should center their client's experience, and support their processing of the information, including but not limited to understanding their rights and providing guidance on how to report the incident through appropriate channels.
 2. DONA International birth doula advocacy includes speaking up in the best interests of the client, clearly and respectfully, to acknowledge what has occurred. This advocacy may occur in the moment or at a later date, when it is safe to do so, when mistreatment, obstetric violence, and/or harm is witnessed. The doula may also retain a written record of the incident.
 3. The DONA International birth doula is encouraged to participate in local, regional, national, and global advocacy efforts to promote respectful, person-centered care practices in all perinatal settings and contribute to a culture of accountability and dignity in perinatal care.
- D. **Referrals.** For client needs beyond the scope of the doula's training and capacity, referrals are made to appropriate resources.

II. **Continuity of Care**

- A. The DONA International birth doula should make reasonable efforts to provide services as outlined in their contracts. The DONA International birth doula should make back-up arrangements whenever possible in the event that the doula cannot provide services or must leave during childbirth. Should any DONA International birth doula feel a need to discontinue service to an established client, it is the doula's responsibility to notify the client in writing and refer to potential replacements, if the client so desires. All backup arrangements, including if a backup is not an option, should be clearly stated in the contract/letter of agreement.

III. **Applicability**

The DONA International Birth Doula Standards of Practice guide the:

- DONA International Birth Doula Certification Candidates (all those within three (3) years following their DONA International-approved birth doula training workshop who are pursuing DONA International Certification); and
- DONA International Certified Birth Doulas.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

By signing this document, I agree to abide by DONA International's Birth Doula Standards of Practice.