

Checklist

A “full-service” doula should be knowledgeable about the following:

Prenatal Period and Prevention

- Stages of pregnancy and reproduction in general
- Physical, hormonal and gestational changes that occur
- Range of normal emotional, psychological, and interpersonal changes
- Nutritional and medical needs and how to create an individualized pregnancy/birth plan
- How to address common worries and misconceptions of pregnant woman and family
- Risks and benefits of genetic testing

The Labor and Birth Process

- How to effectively work with “birth team”: ob-gyn, midwife, nurse, partner, and family, etc.
- Pain management options (pros, cons, and limitations of medical and alternative methods)
- Risk factors and protocols for OB complications
- Interventions: Research on reasons to avoid induction, c-section, and episiotomy, if possible

Immediate and Early Postpartum Period

- Breastfeeding benefits and methods to overcome possible difficulties with nursing
- Ways to enhance early bonding and attachment (including “the early experience”, rooming-in, etc.)
- Early infant development: stages, behavioral markers, range of differences in temperature, rhythms, etc.
- Ways to enhance healthy parent-infant interactions and attunement
- Warning signs for mother and baby during early postpartum:
How to observe and assess problems that require appropriate referrals

General Support

- Organizational skills (how to create plans for birth, postpartum care, household management)
- Communication and listening skills
- Relaxation and stress management tools, including gentle touch and bodywork
- Various emotional processing techniques and when appropriate to use:
e.g. active listening, role-playing, hypnosis, storytelling, imagery, EMDR, etc.
- Training to effectively respond to emotional crises and unexpected “eruptions”

Referrals and Resources

- Programs: lactation training, natural birth preparation, birth centers, support groups, parenting training
- Recommendations for books, web sites, and videos (i.e. *the Mother's Brazelton*)