

DNB Standards of Doula Practice

DNB doulas are resource persons who provide continuous non-medical, emotional, physical support and evidence-based information to expectant families during the prenatal, birth and postpartum periods. This definition includes but is not limited to fertility doulas, labour and birth doulas, postpartum doulas and bereavement doulas.

The DNB doula:

- Provides clients with time-tested, evidence-based information from up-to-date research and reliable sources to enable expectant families to make informed decisions regarding their pregnancy, birth and baby care.
- Assists her clients in formulating realistic birth preferences that match their values and needs to their chosen place of birth.
- Supports families during labour and birth by:
 - helping with logistics of birth preparation,
 - setting up of birth environment at home or hospital,
 - offering physical support and suggesting comfort measures (*previously discussed with her clients*),
 - reassuring parents during uncomplicated birth,
 - empowering them to follow their birth plan or to revise it if the need arises,
 - reminding them of pros and cons of medical procedures,
 - enhancing positive communication between them and their caregiver by encouraging them to ask questions and express preferences and concerns.
 - encourages skin to skin and breastfeeding soon after birth if it is her client's desire.
- Provides continuity of care by:
 - nurturing a professional, caring relationship with her clients during the prenatal period in order to bring familiarity during the birth, especially in hospitals of New-Brunswick where continuity of care is not the norm (rotation of doctors on-call, nurses working shifts...);

- discussing her availability ahead of time with her clients and being reliable for the term of the agreement. Should an unforeseen event prevent her from attending the birth, the DNB doula does her best to make back-up arrangements with another doula to ensure the expectant family is not left unsupported.
- Offers appropriate referrals when a situation arises that requires support that falls outside the doula's scope of practice.
- Does not displace existing support persons but rather facilitates their full participation in supporting the client.
- Does not speak for her clients nor make decisions on their behalf, as to respect their rights to self determination.
- Does not diagnose or perform medical procedures such as assessing fetal heart tones, taking blood pressure, performing vaginal exams, reading and interpreting medical tests and diagnosis, temperature taking...
- Does not attend births that are intentionally unassisted (births that do not have a trained and certified medical professional (certified midwife or medical doctor) in attendance.
- Recognizes that responsibility for clinical management belongs to the health care provider and the client. The doula does not interfere with clinical management beyond making suggestions to or asking questions of the health care provider and the client, based on their knowledge of the client's birth plans.
- Assists the profession in making doula support services known to the general public in a constructive, positive and ethical manner.
- Clearly states her fees to her clients and through a written contract or invoice describing the services to be provided, terms of payment and refund policies.
- Strives to become and remain proficient in the professional practice of a doula through continuing education, affiliation with related organizations and association with other doulas.
- Informs the Organization of the anticipated duration of her cessation of doula practice if she expects to be inactive. During this period of inactivity, she may retain her membership by transitioning to Associate Member status.