

PCB Doula Code of Ethics

Purpose of this Code

The PA Certified Doula Code of Ethics outlined provides a framework for doulas in all capacities and employers of doulas to discuss ethical issues encountered by the profession. Employers are encouraged to consider this Code when creating Doula programs. The responsibility of every doula is to strive for excellence by providing quality service and evidence-based information available to individuals, families, and communities they serve.

The Code of Ethics is based upon our core competencies and scope of practice within the field of doula work. The Code, however, does not address all ethical issues facing doulas and the absence of a rule does not imply that there is no ethical obligation present. All doulas are responsible for following this Code of Ethics in addition to their employer's Code of Ethics. As professionals, doulas are encouraged to reflect on the ethical obligations that they have to the communities that they serve, and to share these reflections with others.

PA Certified Doula's agree to serve within expectations defined in the Code of Ethics.

Article 1: Expectations of the Profession

- The doula should strive to become and remain proficient in the professional practice and performance of professional duties.
- The doula should act in accordance with the highest standard of professional integrity.
- The doula will accompany the individual in labor, provide emotional, physical and informational support and guidance in various aspects not limited to reproductive health and family services.
- The doula will not perform medical tasks.
- The doula will treat all colleagues in an ethical, professional, and respectful manners in all situations and promote ethical conduct within the profession.
- The doula will honor agreements and contracts for professional services and provide without fail, the contracted services.
- The doula should make back up arrangements to ensure client services if the contracted doula is unavailable.
- Continuity of Care should remain priority in all situations whenever possible.
- The doula must be available to communicate at all times when contracted. Certified doulas are expected to provide timely response to all communication. Email, phone or text is acceptable when agreed upon with the client.
- The doula has a responsibility to maintain and advance their education, strategies, and resources in order to provide effective and evidence based support.

Article 2: Scope Responsibility and Conduct

Doula's build trust by improving the health and social determinants of the client they serve. Doula's should always consider all issues and give priority to those that promote the wellness and quality of care for the individual/client. The following provisions promote the professional integrity of doulas.

2.1 Honesty

Doulas are professionals that strive to ensure the best perinatal outcomes for the families they serve. They communicate the potential benefit and consequences of available services. Doula's should not give medical advice, nor practice outside of their scope, however, may refer the client to appropriate resources.

2.2 Confidentiality

Doulas respect the confidentiality, privacy, and trust of individuals, families and communities that they serve. They understand and abide by HIPAA Compliance in accordance with the requirements of their certification. The doula will respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained. Certified professionals will not divulge private information received in a professional capacity, nor compromise the clients right to confidentiality either directly or through the use of internet/social media.

2.3 Advocacy

The doula should make every effort to encourage their clients to assume responsibility for the decisions they make throughout their perinatal period.

The doula advocates for their clients wishes by encouraging them to ask questions of their provider and to express all preferences and concerns.

2.4 Education and Training

Doulas are truthful about qualifications, competencies, and limitations on services they may provide, and will not misrepresent qualifications or competencies to individuals, families, communities, or employers.

Certified Doulas will pursue continuing education to further their knowledge and provide families with accurate and up to date material.

2.5 Quality of Care

Doulas strive to provide high quality services to individuals, families, and communities. They do this through continued education, trainings, and an obligation to ensure the information they provide is up-to-date and accurate.

2.6 Referrals

Doulas acknowledge when client issues are outside of their scope of practice and refer clients to the appropriate health, wellness, or social support services when necessary.

The doula should assist each client seeking support either by providing the service or making appropriate referrals for desired services.

Article 3: Promotion of Inclusive/Equitable Relationships

A doula's primary focus is on the well-being of the client they serve. They value and respect the experience each client brings to the relationship. In turn, doula's strive to create equitable partnerships with communities to address all issues of health and well-being in order to best serve the birthing individual and their family.

3.1 Cultural Humility

Doula's should possess expertise in the communities in which they serve. They maintain a high degree of humility and respect for the cultural diversity within each community. As advocates, doulas have an obligation to inform when policies and procedures will offend or harm the client they serve.

3.2 Maintaining Trust

Doulas are often a trusted confidant and their effectiveness in providing support is derived from the trust placed in them by the families. Doula's do not act in ways that could jeopardize the trust placed in them by the families they serve.

3.3 Respect for Human Rights and Client Relationships

Doula's maintain professional relationships with clients. They establish, respect, and actively maintain personal boundaries between them and their clients.

3.4 Anti-Discrimination

Doula's do not discriminate against any person or group based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, social status, disability, or immigration status.

3.5 Inclusive and Equitable Competency Responsibility

Doula's should seek a working knowledge base of subjects including but not limited to: Health Equity, Implicit Bias, Racism (structural, interpersonal, and institutionalized), Reproductive Justice, Birth Justice, Cultural Sensitivity/Humility, Trauma Informed Care, Substance Abuse Disorders, Assessing/Accessing Appropriate Resources, and Navigating Resource Needs.

Article 4: Communication and Interactions with Colleagues

4.1 Cooperation

Doulas will work with other member of the clients family and support/healthcare team to best meet the needs of the client.

4.2 Conduct

Doulas will work to provide a professional image within the scope of their practice.

4.2 Self-Presentation

Doulas are truthful and forthright in presenting their background and training to other service providers.

Article 5: Professional Rights and Responsibilities

Guided by common values and competencies, doulas have the responsibility to uphold the principles and integrity of the profession as they assist families to make decisions. Doulas embrace the individual, family, and support community in order to improve maternal health outcomes and overall client experience. This article pertains to those doulas who wish to actively work within legislation in lobbying for the advancement of the doula profession.

5.1 Continuing Education

Doulas should remain up to date on any developments that substantially affect their ability to competently render services. Doulas strive to expand their professional knowledge base and competencies through education and participation in professional organizations.

5.2 Advocacy for Change in Law and Policy

Doulas are advocates for change and work on impacting policies that promote birth justice and hold systems accountable for equitable outcomes.

5.3 Wellness and Safety

Doulas are sensitive to their own personal well-being (physical, mental, and spiritual health) and strive to maintain a safe environment for themselves and the communities they serve.

5.4 Advancement of the Profession

Doulas are invested in the work and aim to advance the efforts of the profession.

5.5 Advocacy for the Profession

Doulas are advocates for the profession. They are leaders and active participants in the development and recognition of the profession at local, state, and national levels.

5.6 Recognition of Others

Doulas give recognition to others for their professional contributions and achievements.

Article 6: Agency Work

Agencies are bound by the guidelines outlined in this Code of Ethics. They are responsible for the quality of work and accountability for each doula employed or contracted with their agency. Doula agencies are only eligible for reimbursement when located within the state of Pennsylvania.