

## Questions to ask when interviewing a Doula

Congratulations on deciding to hire a doula for your birth! Now your next challenge is to find one that fits with your philosophy about birth, pain medication, interventions, and your family in general. You need to feel comfortable with the person that's going to be a big part in a very intimate day.

Below are a number of questions you may consider asking a doula you are interviewing, both during the initial phone call or email, and then later in a face-to-face meeting. Pick and choose which questions are relevant to you and your family's priorities. Happy interviewing!

### **First contact: phone or email**

- Are you available around my estimated due date?
- Are there any birthdays, holidays or events in that month which may prevent you from attending the birth?
- How long have you been a doula for and how many births have you attended?
- What sort of births have you supported, and do you specialise in any in particular?
- Where and when did you do your training? How many hours and births did it involve?
- How many pre-natal and post-natal visits do you recommend?
- Do you offer packages?
- What do you charge and when is payment required?
- Do you have a non-refundable booking fee or 'retainer'?
- Under which circumstances do you offer a refund?
- Do you have any back-up doulas and if so, will I get to meet them?
- What happens if you don't make it in time for the birth, for example, as a result of a fast labour, or if we cannot contact you?
- What happens if we don't call you in time for the birth?
- What happens if we decide prior to the birth that we no longer want a doula?

### **During a face to face interview:**

- Why did you become a doula?
- What do you love most about being a doula?
- What skills, qualities and abilities do you feel you have to offer us?
- What are your philosophies and beliefs about childbirth?
- Have you ever experienced any tension with clients or medical professionals? If so how did you handle this?
- Do you have children?
- Do you have childcare arrangements if I go into labour at anytime of day or night?
- What were your own birth experience(s)?
- What are your beliefs about pain relief?
- What do you see as my partner's role during labour?
- Will you support my partner too? If so, how?

- How do you *not* take the place of my partner?
- What's the biggest lesson you've learned as a doula?
- What do you bring to my birth to help me with labour?
- What are your thoughts about my chosen midwife or obstetrician? Have you worked with them before?
- Have you worked in our chosen hospital or birth centre before? What are your thoughts about it?
- If needed, can you help us write our birth preferences (birth plan)?
- How do you help us achieve our birth plan?
- How many births per month do you attend?
- Do you have any other births due around the same time as us? If so, when are they due?
- How far away are you from our chosen place of birth?
- What will happen when I am in early labour?
- When should I inform you that things are happening?
- Will you come to my home in labour (if not homebirth) or will you meet me in hospital?
- Are we able to contact you anytime with questions by phone or email?
- Will you be uncontactable at any times?
- How should I contact you when I am in labour, day and night?
- How long do you stay for after the birth?
- What are your experiences with breastfeeding and what are your philosophies?
- Are there any books or workshops that you recommend to pregnant couples and/or new parents?
- What do you provide with your services?
- How can I decrease my risk of caesarean or how can doula care do this?
- What do we cover at prenatal visits?
- Do you do postpartum visits? If so, what do postpartum visits include?
- Is there a time limit to how long you will stay in labour?
- What is an example of a challenging birth and how you handled it?
- Do you have any references?