

## **CHOOSING PROFESSIONAL LABOR SUPPORT**

What is your educational background?

How did you receive your training as a Labor Support Person?

Are you certified? Through what organization? (Remember that having certification does not mean that a doula is particularly skilled and that not having certification does not mean that a doula lacks skills.)

Do you give care for births in the hospital? Birth Center? Home?

Do you do prenatal visits?

Can you give information on birth options in our community?

Can you help me with visualizations?

What is your philosophy of birth and childbirth education? Do you provide childbirth classes or can you provide referrals to other teachers you like in our area?

How many births have you attended? Over what time span? What is your average number of births per month?

Are you committed to a particular method of labor support or labor coping techniques? Specifically, what do you do when you provide labor support?

Will you bring anyone with you to my birth?

Discuss the husband/partner's role at the birth. Are you respectful of his role and experienced at offering your skills, while simultaneously supporting and enriching the husband's role?

What type of clients have you cared for?

Who is your backup? When might she care for me?

What are your fees? When do I need to pay the fee? Do you have a sliding scale? Will you barter for the fee?

Will I be able to get third party reimbursement for your services?

Do you restrict your practice in any way? Would you leave my birth for any reason?

When would I call you? Can I reach you 24 hours a day?

What is your availability? What will be the travel time from you to me? What kind of time is necessary to make child care arrangements if you have children?

Will you come to my home when I am in labor or will you meet me at my birthplace?

How will you know if a complication arises when I am laboring at home?

Do you listen to and interpret fetal tones? Do you do vaginal exams? How do you determine maternal well-being during labor?

If I desire, will you take photographs of my birth?

What is your relationship with hospital/birth center personnel?

Have you ever worked with my physician/midwife? What was that experience like?

If someone suggests an intervention that I have told you I wish to avoid or that you feel is contradictory to my goals, what will you do or say?

If I need a cesarean will you be able to accompany me?

Have you ever cared for anyone with a poor outcome? What was the situation?

Why did you become a professional labor support person?

May I have references of others you have cared for?

Can you help me get started breastfeeding?

Are you available after the birth for referrals to other professionals (such as lactation consultants) or other support?

Do you do postpartum visits? What is involved in a postpartum visit?

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Consider how well you get along with any potential doula. Make sure personality conflicts with you or your partner do not bring negative feelings to your birth. How do you feel when you are with her? Confident, positive? Is she enthusiastic about your birth or do you sense fatigue? Labor support can be stressful- be aware of signs of burnout.

Compiled from experience and several sources, primarily  
Special Women (by Paulina Perez)  
Debbie Hull 7/2014

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