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Birth Doula Support Contract

WHAT I DO...

As a birth doula, **I provide emotional and physical support** to you during your labor and delivery to help you achieve the safe and satisfying birth experience you desire. I am also there **to help facilitate** communication with the medical staff to ensure that you have the information you need to make informed decisions regarding your birth experience.

I will provide **non-medical comfort techniques** to help soothe your muscles and ease your body through birth, including massage, counter pressure, positional changes and suggestions on how to maintain a positive birth atmosphere. **A relaxed body and positive atmosphere** provide the perfect environment for smooth labor progress.

I am independent and self-employed, therefore, **I am working solely for YOU**, not your caregiver or place of birth.

BEFORE LABOR...

I will meet with you and your birth partner **at least once, preferable twice**, before labor to become acquainted with you. We will discuss **your priorities** for an ideal birth experience and **any fears or concerns** you or your partner might have. We will explore **the risks and benefits of common interventions and procedures** that are used during childbirth; I will **present evidence-based information and resources** for you and your partner to review and explore on your own. Together **we will create your personalized Birth Plan** and discuss how we will best work together to make this happen.

From the moment of hire **I provide unlimited consultation** via phone or email to give you the most comprehensive support and to prepare you for your birth experience. I will also be available for communication through 6 weeks of postpartum to support you during your new journey of parenthood. See below for recommendations on how and when to best contact me.

DURING LABOR

I will be "on call" for you 24/7 from 2 weeks before your due date to 2 weeks after your due date.

I prefer that you **call me when you believe you are in labor**, even if you do not need me yet. Often in early labor I will check in with you multiple times, over phone or in person, answer questions and offer some suggestions for comfort and distraction, and then leave to allow you and your birth partner to navigate early labor together. If I am providing **primary support**, meaning you do not have another birth partner present, then I will be happy to come over whenever you feel you need me.

When you decide that you need **continuous support** from me to get through your contractions (usually going into active labor) I will meet you either at your home or place of birth. **I will always be within a 2 hour commute** of getting to you (unless you or your

birth place are located outside of my direct service area, which we will discuss at your prenatal visits).

Except for extraordinary circumstances, **I will remain with you continuously throughout your labor and delivery.**

POSTPARTUM

I will remain with you for about **an hour** after the birth to make sure you are settled comfortably with your new baby and to help initiate breastfeeding.

We will arrange **at least one postpartum visit** about one week after birth to check in with you and your new family, review the birth and your experience, and to get feedback from you about my role.

As mentioned above, I am available for **unlimited consultation** via phone or email through **6 weeks** postpartum, to answer any questions or concerns you might have. For further support during postpartum, I will be happy to connect you with a **postpartum doula** in your area.

WHAT I DON'T DO...

- **Perform any clinical tasks, such as taking blood pressure, fetal heart checks or vaginal exams.** I am there to provide physical and emotional support and to facilitate communication between you and the medical staff.
- **Give any medical advice or recommendations.** I will help you get the information you need to make an educated decisions, but I am not there to influence your decision in any way.
- **Make any decision for you or your family.** Again, I will help you get the information you need to make an educated decision. I will also help you be aware of when the situation may be veering from your Birth Plan so that you are able to make appropriate decisions that may help you stay on course.
- **Speak on your behalf.** I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, as well as encourage you to voice your opinions, questions and concerns to the staff.
- **Guarantee any specific birth outcome.** I will do my best to support you and help you navigate your birth toward a positive experience, but I have no control over the overall outcome of your birth.

HOW BEST TO CONTACT ME

I hold **“office hours”** for **non-birth-related-calls***, **Monday-Friday 8am-6pm**. During these times I try my best to respond accordingly:

By email - 72 hours

By phone call - 24 hours

By text - 2 hours

**meaning you are not or do not believe you are in labor*

For any emergency or **birth-related** issue please **CALL** me (*do NOT text or email*) regardless of “office hours” or “on-call period”. This is the best way to ensure a response from me. If you believe you are in labor and I do not pick up the first time, call back within **10 minutes**. I always encourage you to call your healthcare provider with any medical concerns. And, of course, for **true emergencies, please call 911.**

