Birth Doula Training Program Core Competencies Domains

Approved April 11, 2024

Revised Approved October 10, 2024 to add minimum training hours

Domain	Sub-Domains
Total Training Hours 45	
1. Pregnancy and Childbirth Minimum Training Hours 12	2. Understand the anatomic, physiologic, emotional, developmental changes within the pregnant/birthing person, family and fetus/newborn during all pregnancy trimesters, stages of birth and in the 4th (postpartum) trimester periods. 3. Provides education in all aspects of prenatal, birth, postpartum periods utilizing evidence based/influenced curriculum, protocols and current practice standards of care and recommendations including birth setting and care provider options. Additionally provides universal education in perinatal mental health, intimate partner violence/domestic violence that includes screening practices and recognizing indications for care provider referrals and provides pathways to accessing appropriate professional support systems of care. 4. Understands and recognizes signs and symptoms of potential emotional and mental health issues, including interpersonal violence, and perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, and connects clients to community resources and/or healthcare providers to address those issues. 5. Understands and recognizes commonly used prenatal testing and screening practices. 6. Provides emotional and informational support, non-medicated comfort measures and techniques during labor and birth. 7. Utilizing evidence based/influenced current practices, standards of care and protocols and understands how to help client evaluate medicated pain management options and medical interventions including ~~weighting~~ weighing risks, benefits, alternatives, and indications. 8. Understands vaginal and surgical birth processes and recovery expectations. 9. Understands and supports informed consent/decision making and facilitates open communication between client and caregivers. 10. Understands way to support the client's chosen support systems. 11. Recognizes and educates clients about when to seek medical and mental health evaluation in pregnancy, birth, postpartum period in the birthing family.
2. Postpartum, Recovery and Newborn Period Minimum Training Hours 10	1. Provides education and support in lactation/newborn feeding options, feeding techniques, safety, warning signs, troubleshooting and when to seek consultation. 2. Understands and recognizes preparations needed in the home for postpartum aftercare and newborn needs. 3. Educates birthing families on basic newborn care, nutritional needs, normal growth, and development changes, soothing and comforting techniques, recognizing warning signs and when to seek medical evaluation and safe sleep practices.

	4. Understands and promotes positive parental/infant attachment and bonding. 5. Promotes the birthing person/partner to reflect on the birthing experience. 6. Understands and recognizes commonly used postpartum testing and screening practices. 7. Recognizes signs and symptoms of potential emotional and mental health issues, including interpersonal violence, postpartum mood and anxiety disorders and connects clients to community resources and/or healthcare providers to address those issues.
3. Expected and Unexpected Pregnancy Outcomes Minimum Training Hours 7	1. Provides emotional support during instances of grief, bereavement, and difficult decisions. 2. Understands and supports clients through miscarriage, stillbirth, termination, infant loss, including delivery methods for miscarriages and stillborn babies in each trimester. Provides referrals and assists client in accessing appropriate community resources and/or healthcare providers when indicated. 3. Understands and support clients through physical and emotional recovery after expected and unexpected outcomes. 4. Understands and supports clients through the impact and issues related to subsequent pregnancy after a loss. 5. Understands and supports the various ways a person may experience perinatal grief and loss including termination, miscarriage, stillbirth, infant, and maternal mortality, DCF involvement/removal, insufficient parental capacity, structural racism, stigmas, and biases from pre-existing substance use disorder and mental health diagnosis.
4. Promotes Health Equity Minimum Training Hours 4	1. Understands cultural diversity/traditions within the birthing process, disrupting implicit bias(es), practices cultural humility and affirming inclusivity of historically marginalized groups and identities* 2. Recognizes, respects, and understands different aspects of community, culture, and identity and how these can influence an individual's thinking, beliefs, and behaviors. 3. Understands that organizational, systemic, and social culture and conditions can influence the way services are delivered and the way marginalized individuals and groups experience services. 4. Recognizes different forms of oppression and their impacts on historically marginalized communities. 5. Interacts sensitively and non-judgmentally with individuals from diverse cultures and identities. 6. Identifies when individuals need language assistance, translation, and/or interpretation and knows how to obtain these services and supports client choices. 7. Advocates for and promotes the use of appropriate services and resources pertaining to different identities. 8. Uses techniques for facilitating communication between providers and partners, including when working with individuals with different identities than the doula's own.

	9. Uses language and behavior responsive to the diversity of cultures and identities encountered. 10. Commits to continued learning into best cultural practices. *Historically and currently marginalized groups, communities could be, but are not limited to culture, economic status, gender, sexuality, ability/disability, religion, language, age, substance misuse, trauma histories, mental health diagnosis, survivor of intimate partner violence/domestic violence, etc.
5.Promotes Racial Equity Minimum Training Hours 4	1. Understands structural and historical racism and health inequities in maternity care. 2. Promotes health equity and anti-racism practices, maintains a focus in eliminating racial and ethnic disparities. 3. Advocates for individuals and ongoing systems change to eliminate racial inequity. 4. Continuously works toward understanding and disrupting personal racial biases and how they influence doula practice, seeking support when needed for self and for birthing families. 5. Provides trauma-informed care, understands how trauma of all types can impact maternal and infant development throughout the perinatal period. 6. Provides non-judgmental care supporting client choice. 7. Commits to continued learning into best anti-racist practices.
6.Understanding Role in Advocacy Minimum Training Hours 4	1. Works with individuals and families to understand and exercise their rights. 2. Supports the individual in their right to make decisions about their own body and/or newborn. 3. Assists individuals and families to have confidence and autonomy over decisions and resources that affect their health and well-being. 4. Encourages individuals to identify and gain access to resources to meet their specific needs and goals. Employes a variety of approaches to advocate for individuals to attain needed care, attention, resources and meet goals. 5. Understands the techniques of social, legislative, administrative and/or environmental advocacy. 6. Provides referrals and assists clients in accessing community support services and healthcare provider as requested. 7. Understand DCF mandated reporting protocols, supports clients in understanding and exercising their rights. 8. Facilitates open communication between client and medical, community and natural supports. 9. Utilizing evidenced based/influenced current practices, standards of care and protocols and understands how to help client evaluate medicated pain management options and medical interventions including weighing risks, benefits alternatives and indications.
7.Professional Standards Minimum Training Hours 4	1. Develops and maintains trust, connection, professionalism, and boundaries with clients. 2. Provides resources and promotes access to community support and healthcare services.

	3. Practices safe home-visiting protocols 4. Is self-aware of skills and limitations, emotional needs and secondary trauma and seeks support when needed. 5. Practices HIPAA compliance and standards and maintains client confidentiality. 6. Maintains a professional code of ethics, scope, and standards of practice as a doula providing non-medical care and education. 7. Knows how to facilitate open communication between client and caregivers. 8. Maintains accurate documentation. 9. Is reliable and committed to families who agree to receiving services and support from them. A clear scope of services must be defined and agreed to and if the provider is unable to complete those services, they will offer a back-up provider at the family's request. 10. Pursues continuing education to further knowledge in maternal/child/family health wellness. 11. Maintains certification in and performs, when needed, adult/infant CPR and Basic First Aid as defined in their certification parameters.