

Purpose of Doulas of Singapore

DoS is a society officially registered with ROS, UEN T16SS0070K.

DoS provides a network for birth and post-partum doulas working in Singapore, and encourages dialogue and a good working relationship between doulas and the medical profession.

DoS is a network of doulas run by doulas on a voluntary basis and is a non-profit-making organisation.

DoS doulas adhere to group's philosophy of a positive birth experience and comply with the standards, rules of conduct and ethics set out below.

DoS will communicate with hospitals and caregivers to keep up-to-date with their standards and procedures and make this information available to its members.

DoS will strive to increase awareness of doulas within the general public as well as caregivers in Singapore.

DoS will provide a platform for doulas that allows for communication, support, exchange of information, and social interaction.

DoS provides a registry of doulas which allows expectant couples to find a doula to support them before, at and after birth.

DoS will strive to offer a growing resource of information for birth professionals, links to relevant articles, events calendar etc

I. Scope of Practice

Training and experience

Doulas registered with Doulas of Singapore (DoS) are professional birth workers who have achieved certification with internationally renowned institutions like CBI (Childbirth International) and DONA (Doulas of North America).

These courses involve intensive study of the physiology of pregnancy, birth and early post-partum period, as well as essential practical skills needed to support labouring couples and new parents.

Graduates from other certifying institutions are welcome to apply for membership, providing details of their course content and certification requirements, and individual cases will be assessed by a dedicated committee. Please email info@doulasofsingapore.com

The role of a doula

Doulas are birth professionals who provide continuous emotional and physical support to a labouring woman and her partner, at home as well as at the hospital. They work with a couple prenatally to identify their individual goals, needs and expectations in order to help them achieve the birth experience they desire. They may also offer various levels of support immediately after and the days following birth.

Doulas work independently or as part of a collective, and they may have different levels of engagement with their clients, offering varying degrees of support. However, all services offered adhere to the standards and scope of practice as outlined in this document.

As such, a doula **MUST**

- support her clients' choices, but never impose her personal views or beliefs,
- offer comfort measures and coping strategies during labour and birth as appropriate,
- provide information that allows the client to make an informed decision, without trying to influence them in any way,
- recognise that she is part of a team the client has chosen to support them throughout their birthing experience and always encourage the client to consult the medical professionals if there are any concerns,
- strive to maintain a professional and respectful relationship with the rest of the support team, ie hospital staff, primary care providers etc,
- endeavour to provide support depending on the parents' needs and wishes, be it emotional, physical or practical,
- recognise that it is only the clients who can take decisions and make their preferences or concerns known to the hospital staff,
- follow the client's wishes as outlined in their birth plan and help the client make informed choices should changes to this plan be necessary,
- refer the client to qualified practitioners for any needs that fall outside her scope of practice.

Limitations of practice:

A doula **MUST NOT**, however,

- provide any kind of medical advice or diagnosis,
- make any decisions for the client or negotiate with the medical staff on the client's behalf,
- perform any clinical assessments (such as vaginal exams, taking blood pressure, monitoring contractions or baby's heartbeat, etc),
- liaise or negotiate with the primary caregivers on the clients' behalf,
- provide any kind of prescription or advice, including alternative medicine, if they are not qualified to do so,
- attend planned unassisted home births without the presence of an obstetrician or a certified midwife.

2. Rules of conduct

The doulas registered with Doulas of Singapore pledge to maintain high standards of professionalism and personal conduct. They are responsible for keeping up with their respective certifications and must not make false claims with regards to their training and/or experience. They must endeavour to keep up-to-date with developments in our professional practice.

DoS doulas strive to promote evidence-based care to the best of their abilities, trying to provide their clients with a variety of sources to enable them to form their own opinions. It is the doula's aim to support her clients' informed decisions without judgement.

3. Professional ethics and values

DoS doulas strive to be honest, courteous, respectful and professional in all their dealings with clients as well as their clients' families and caregivers. It is our belief that a professional relationship with medical staff is of utmost importance in achieving a safe, calm and harmonious birthing environment for our clients.

Responsibilities towards clients:

- DoS doulas must sign a contract with their clients.
- The doula is only responsible to her clients. She will have outlined her scope of practice, limitations and rules of engagement in her contract.
- Doulas make themselves available continuously for their clients while they are on call, and are responsible for assigning a back-up in case of emergencies.
- Doulas are careful to ensure their clients' privacy at all times and agree to keep their clients' information completely confidential, except if disclosure is required by law.

Relationship with medical staff:

- Doulas will strive to remain professional at all times.
- Doulas endeavour to maintain a friendly and courteous dialogue with the care providers.
- Doulas are not medically trained and will not make any assessments or decisions, but will instead ask the hospital staff for assistance if and where required.
- Doulas will familiarise themselves with the in-house rules at each of the hospitals they register with, and will do their utmost to comply with those standards.

Responsibilities towards colleagues:

- Doulas must treat their colleagues with fairness and respect.
- Should a doula seek advice or support from colleagues, those should apply the same standards of privacy and confidentiality as for our clients.

Social Media:

- DoS doulas who are using or planning to use their clients birth stories, photographs etc on their website or any social media platform must develop a social media release form for their clients to sign.
- Carefully consider which information you should share on social media and how you present it.
- Always ask yourself how your clients, their families, the health care providers, hospitals and colleagues will feel about the information you're sharing.
- Remember that you cannot control what happens to information and images once you have posted them on the internet, even in seemingly "confidential" and "restricted-access" electronic forums.
- Do consider the consequences of "friending" clients.

4. Grievance policy

DoS is in the process of developing a grievance procedure that applies to all members. Clients, hospitals and caregivers can contact DoS if they have any feedback on a DoS member.

A dedicated team within the committee will seek dialogue with all parties involved with the aim to resolve any issues.

If a member of the group is seen not to comply with our standards of practice or code of ethics, the committee reserves the right to terminate their membership.

Hospitals, care givers and clients are encouraged to give their feedback in writing to the following email address: info@doulasofsingapore.com

Once received, the responsible committee members will discuss the issues and propose a course of action in their next meeting.