

## **Position Paper: The Birth Doula's Contribution to Modern Maternity Care**

In my learning about the "origin" of the doula role, I have realized what an important and needed cultural tradition this work is. From early "Granny midwives" to the modern Doula, birthing people and their families have benefited from this emotional usher. The Doula provides them a constant presence that they may tether themselves to.

In the context of the American healthcare system, Doulas serve as one of many people on the birth team. They have a unique, but complementary role. They contain the deep knowledge of childbirth, which tends to be more than the family has built over the course of the pregnancy. They contain the love of a family member, who can watch over them during their transformation into parenthood. Most importantly, in my opinion, they can restore a connection between the family and their community by connecting the two during times of need. The Doula does not seek to replace anyone; not the partner, not the midwife, not the nurse. They find a gap between all of these, which allows the birthing person to feel complete.

## **Position Paper: The Postpartum Doula's Role in Maternity Care**

Families are primed to make drastic preparations for their new babies. They buy strollers, develop a relationship with their medical team, and maybe hire a Birth Doula. However, few are advised to prepare for what life will be like after birth. The intense transition into early parenthood is emotionally draining, and usually coupled with drastic changes to sleep schedules. This is where the Postpartum Doula comes in.

In the context of American society, quickness is expected. It is easy for new parents to slip into the mindset they have been conditioned with, in approaching this new phase. However, this period of time should be slow. The Postpartum Doula allows the family to transition slowly, providing assistance with breastfeeding, meal preparation, sleeping, family task delegation, and more. Postpartum Doulas help new parents rest, increasing their sense of calm and patience during this difficult phase.