



Code of Ethics for Sacred Space Doulas

Sacred Space Doulas follow a high standard of personal integrity and group ethics whereby they serve clients, encourage fellow doulas and uphold the doula profession with the utmost respect, honour and integrity possible.

1. RULES OF CONDUCT

A. Propriety

The Sacred Space Doula continuously strives to maintain a high standard of personal conduct through respectability, decency, courtesy and civility in the capacity as a support provider through the childbearing years.

B. Competence and Professional Development

The Sacred Space Doula should aspire to continuously advance and become more proficient in the profession through continuing education in the field of childbirth and all related topics associated with childbearing, personhood and parenthood.

C. Professional Integrity

The Sacred Space Doula should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.

2. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS

A. Client's Interests

The Sacred Space Doula's primary responsibility and priority is to their clients.

B. Rights of Clients

The Sacred Space Doula should make every effort to foster and encourage maximum self determination on the part of their clients.

C. Confidentiality and Privacy

The Sacred Space Doula should respect the privacy of each client and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.

D. Obligation to Serve

The Sacred Space Doula should assist each client seeking labour support either by providing agreed upon services or making appropriate referrals to other local doulas.

E. Reliability

When the Sacred Space Doula agrees to work with a particular client, their agreement is to do so reliably, without fail, for the term of the contract undertaken.

F. Fees

The Sacred Space Doula should ensure that their fees are fair, reasonable, considerate, and commensurate with services performed. The doula must clearly state their fees to the client before a contract is signed, describing the services provided, terms of payment and refund policies.

3. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES

A. Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy

The Sacred Space Doula should treat the birth team, all childbirth related caregivers and colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.

B. Dealing with Colleagues' Clients

The Sacred Space Doula has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

C. Dealing with Conflict

The Sacred Space Doula should maintain a professional demeanour when dealing with conflicts of interest, differences in opinion and any other disputes that arise in their engagement during service. All matters are to be resolved outside of the birthing space and not during the labour process.

4. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LABOUR SUPPORT PROFESSION

A. Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession

The Sacred Space Doula should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge and mission of the profession.

B. Community Responsibility and Awareness

The Sacred Space Doula is encouraged to find ways to enable every person who wants a doula to have one by creating awareness and whenever possible considering a payment plan for fees in addition to their regular fee structure

5. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

A. Promoting Pregnant People's and Child Welfare

The Sacred Space Doula should promote the general health and wellbeing of pregnant people and their babies, and whenever possible, that of their family and friends as well.



Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice for Sacred Space Doula

Sacred Space Doula Standards of Practice help doulas to play a valuable and appropriate role during birth and the postpartum weeks.

1. SCOPE

A. Services Rendered

The Sacred Space Doula accompanies the pregnant person in labour, provides emotional and physical support, suggests comfort measures, and provides support and suggestions for the partner. Whenever possible, the doula provides pre- and postpartum emotional support, including explanation and discussion of practices and procedures, and assistance in acquiring the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about their care. Additionally, as doulas do not “prescribe” treatment, any suggestions or information provided within the role of the doula must be done with the proviso that the doula advise their client to check with their primary care provider before following suggestions or advice.

B. Limits to Practice

Sacred Space Standards and Certification apply to emotional and physical support only. The Sacred Space certified doula does not perform clinical or medical tasks such as taking blood pressure or temperature, foetal heart tone checks, vaginal examinations, or postpartum clinical care. If doulas who are also health care professionals choose to provide services for a client that are outside the doula’s scope of practice, they should not describe themselves as doulas to their client nor to others. In such cases they should describe themselves by a name other than “doula” and provide services according to the scopes of practice and the standards of their health care profession. On the other hand, if a health care professional chooses to limit their services to those provided by doulas, it is acceptable according to Sacred Space’s standards for them to describe themselves as a doula.

C. Advocacy

The Sacred Space Doula advocates for the client’s wishes as expressed in their birth plan, in prenatal conversations, and intrapartum discussions, by encouraging their client to ask questions of their caregiver and to express their preferences and concerns. The doula helps the pregnant person incorporate changes in plans if and when the need arises, and enhances the communication between client and caregiver. Clients and doulas must recognise that the advocacy role does not include the doula speaking instead of the client or making decisions for the client. The advocacy role is best described as support, information, and mediation or negotiation.

D. Referrals

For client needs beyond the scope of the doula’s training, referrals are made to appropriate resources.

2. CONTINUITY OF CARE

The Sacred Space Doula should make back-up arrangements with another doula to ensure services to the client if the doula is unable to attend the birth. Should any doula feel a need to discontinue service to an established client, it is the doula’s responsibility to notify the client in writing and arrange for a replacement, if the client so desires. This may be accomplished by:

- Introducing the client to the back-up doula.
- Suggesting that another doula may be more appropriate for the situation.
- Contacting a local doula organisation for names of other doulas in the client’s area.
- Following up with client or back-up doula to make sure the client’s needs are being accommodated.

3. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

A. Training

Doulas who are certified by Sacred Space will have completed all the requirements as set forth in the Sacred Space Requirements for Certification. This includes training in childbirth and attendance at a birth doula workshop; completion of a breastfeeding requirement; required reading from the Sacred Space Reading List; development of a resource list for their clients and themselves; completion of a self-assessment feedback essay that demonstrates understanding and growth of their doula self; completion of all requirements set out by Sacred Space with regards to course and home-study tasks; to complete and obtain a minimum of 75% pass mark in a Basic Knowledge Test.

B. Experience

Doulas certified by Sacred Space will have the experience as set forth in the Sacred Space Requirements for Certification. This includes provision of support to a minimum number of clients; positive evaluations from clients and health care providers and records of at least three births, including a summary, observation form and account of each birth; completion of the required reading list with accompanying summaries of each; attendance of a complete series of antenatal education classes offered in the area; regular continuing education opportunities and local doula gatherings.

I,agree to bind myself to the above CODE OF ETHICS and STANDARDS OF PRACTICE for the duration of my Sacred Space membership and certification.