

Virtual Postpartum

Support:

What does it look like?

KATHRIN AUGER

RETIRED NICU RN, CD/PCD(DONA), PDT(DONA)



What Does a Postpartum Doula Do?

The postpartum doula offers evidence-based information and gives emotional, physical, and educational support only. The doula cares for the parents and the family in their home in the first few weeks following the birth.

The postpartum doula does not perform clinical or medical tasks.



What is the Issue?

- Getting out of hospital quickly, means
 - Less exposure to COVID-19 (which is good, but...)
 - Less education
 - Less support
 - Health care workers are overworked and tired
- No help in their home postpartum
- No family visiting
- Where to go if they need help
- Shopping, Food prep.



Virtual over No Support

How to do you explain (sell) the benefit of virtual over no support:

- 1) Everything is up in the air, bring guidance
- 2) Explain the benefits: breastfeeding, infant characteristics, physical recovery from pregnancy and childbirth, sleep, sibling adjustment, food preparation, shopping, baby laundry
- 3) Draw a picture of what virtual support looks like
- 4) Plan regular check-in times
- 5) How do we know if baby is thriving?
- 6) How can we make sure physical recovery is going well?



What Can You Do, Virtually?

- Inform about normal newborn behavior
- Educate about infant care
- Teach infant feeding
- Screen for Perinatal Mental Health Disorders
- Listen to birth story
- Check about postpartum physical changes
- Help family adjust to baby
- Food preparation, shopping, baby laundry
- Make referrals -> create the village!



NEAR

The role of the postpartum doula is to be NEAR her clients:

N – Nurture

E – Educate

A – Assess

R – Refer

Please think of ALL family members.

NURTURE

- Emotional Support
- Practical Support
 - Nutrition, drinking enough fluids
 - Provide opportunities for exercise and time for self
- Support for partner and other family members
- Sleep, what information do they need from you?

EDUCATE

- Nonjudgmental and Non-perfectionistic Attitude
- Bonding/Attachment – Comment on what you observe, teach
- Feeding, Baby Care
- Sleep: Baby and Parents

ASSESS

- Risk Factors: early identification presents opportunity to help (emotional / physical)
- Bonding (what parent does), Attachment (what baby does)
- Feeding: Baby and Family
- Support System (family, friends, spiritual)

REFER

- Therapy
- Support Groups
- Exercise Classes
- Lactation Consultants, La Leche League
- Faith Community
- Mindfulness, Self-Care
- Food / Shopping



Week by Week Support

Week 1:

- Recovery from pregnancy and childbirth
- Perineal recovery
- Recovery from surgery
- Breastfeeding -> engorgement
- Sleepy child
- Infant care skills
- Jaundice

Week 2:

- Sleep deprivation
- Physical recovery
- Older sibling adjustment
- First bath
- Self-care
- Food
- Baby carrier
- Side-lying breastfeeding

Week 3:

- Sleep deprivation
- Breastfeeding
- Bottle feeding
- Self-care
- Screen PMH disorders
- Birth story

Week 4:

- Sleep deprivation
- Screen PMH disorders
- 'Perfect Parent' list
- Breastfeeding in public

Week 5:

- Sleep deprivation
- Screen PMH disorders
- Sleep in baby
- Creating a village

Week 6:

Sleep deprivation

- Screen PMH disorders
- Sleep in baby
- Working out
- Intimacy



What Can the Postpartum Doula Say?

- What can I do to help?
- What questions do you have for me?
- How can I make this better?
- I know this is not ideal, what would be the second-best thing right now?
- I am here for you! You're not alone.
- Tell your client: "You will not always have a *3 week-old* baby"

More Tips:

- Teaching tools (videos, dolls, breast model, online links)
- Take notes while talking
- Prenatal visit -> postpartum plan
- Set times when you check in
- 'Look' professional, no distraction
- Be calm, lots of praise
- Allow time for grieving
- Go over discharge papers (any risk factors?)

Doula Self-Care

- How do you doula yourself?
nutrition, fluids, rest/sleep, easy meditation/exercise,
unplug, bath/shower, journaling, do something new, de-
clutter, pray
- Intuition, foster it in your client, trust your own
- Value yourself
- Be gentle with yourself
- Reach out to your community for support



Resources

(small collection)

DONA Int' Trainers and Leaders video, 'Doula's, you've got this!'

<https://vimeo.com/401390236/4e466239b0?fbclid=IwAR1m32dqHDYYmTZnOjBj9RaiaCDHlnWnHkT8DLFWAEtXTo-zScHaloeTU5s>

DONA International

<https://www.dona.org>

Podcast on virtual postpartum doula support:

<https://www.thebirthgeeks.com/virtual-postpartum-doulas/>

March for Moms:

<https://marchformoms.org>

March of Dimes:

<https://www.marchofdimes.org>

Postpartum Support International

<https://www.postpartum.net>

La Leche League:

<https://www.llli.org>

Global Health Media Project (educational videos):

<https://www.globalhealthmedia.org>

Contact / Support

Kathrin Auger

retired RN

CD/PCD(DONA), PDT(DONA)



www.losangelesdoula.com

kathrin@losangelesdoula.com

310.430.1113

*Disclosure Some content in this handout was adapted from the DONA Int' Postpartum Doula Workshop Manual