

DONA International
Doula Code of Ethics**I. Rules of Conduct**

- A. ***Propriety.*** The doula will maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as a DONA International doula.
- B. ***Competence and Professional Development.*** The doula will strive to become proficient and grow in the doula profession through recertification, continuing education, affiliation with related organizations, and networking with other perinatal professionals.
- C. ***Integrity.*** The doula will act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity and ethical conduct.

II. Ethical Responsibility to Clients

- A. ***Primacy of Client's Interests.*** The doula's primary responsibility is to their clients.
- B. ***Rights and Autonomy of Clients.*** The doula will make every effort to foster maximum self-determination on the part of their clients.
- C. ***Confidentiality and Privacy.*** The DONA International doula will respect the privacy of clients and maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional services, in accordance with the client contract. In all communications, including but not limited to social media, written documents, and verbal interactions, the doula will maintain client confidentiality and privacy with respect, courtesy, and fairness. The doula must be aware that social media content is permanent and public.
- D. ***Obligation to Serve.*** The doula should assist each client seeking doula support either by providing services or making appropriate referrals.
- E. ***Reliability.*** When the doula agrees to work with a particular client, their obligation is to do so in accordance with the terms of their contractual agreement.
- F. ***Fees.*** When setting fees, the doula will approach pricing with honesty and transparency. The doula must clearly communicate their fees to the client and describe the services provided, terms of payment, and refund policies.

- G. **Advocacy.** The doula upholds the fundamental belief that the individuals and families we serve must remain at the center of their perinatal care experience. In every setting, the doula fosters client autonomy and supports informed decision making, encouraging them to express their values, preferences, and goals. With deep respect for the client's hopes, needs, and choices, the doula actively listens, honors their voice, and amplifies it within the broader care team. Doula advocacy includes speaking up in the best interests of the client.

III. **Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues**

- A. **Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy.** The doula will treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith. DONA International does not tolerate discrimination (including age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, disability, or marital status or any other legally recognized protected group) and will uphold all relevant laws, regulations, or ordinances.
- B. **Interacting with Colleagues' Clients.** The doula has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.
- C. **Confidentiality and Privacy.** The DONA International doula's influence extends beyond the time of pregnancy, birth, postpartum care, education, and professional settings. When engaging with others, the DONA International doula agrees to clarify that any opinions are their own. Each communication will respect the privacy of clients and colleagues and maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional services. The doula must be aware that social media content is permanent and public, and should obtain permission before sharing colleague information and images.

IV. **Ethical Responsibility to the Doula Profession**

- A. **Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession.** The doula will uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.
- B. **Community Service.** The doula is encouraged to promote the DONA International vision and mission by supporting efforts that expand equitable access to care. This may include community education, mentoring, collaboration with local and global partners, and promoting the role of doulas within diverse cultural and healthcare settings.

V. Ethical Responsibility to Society

- A. ***Promoting Perinatal Health.*** Doulas have a responsibility to contribute to a more just and equitable society by advocating for respectful, culturally-relevant, trauma-informed, and person-centered care. This includes addressing systemic barriers that impact perinatal health, amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals, and supporting initiatives to expand access to doula services. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, doulas help advance human rights and promote the well-being of families and communities across diverse global contexts.
- B. ***Education and Equity in Perinatal Health.*** The DONA International doula has a responsibility to expand their knowledge about the disparities that affect populations made vulnerable during the perinatal health period within their community, and around the world. The DONA International doula will continue this learning throughout their career as a DONA International certified doula.

VI. Ethical Responsibility to One's Self

- A. ***Professional boundaries.*** Doulas support the client's right to make their own decisions while maintaining their professional boundaries. These boundaries should be indicated in the letter of agreement/contract when possible.
- B. ***Safety.*** The doula's safety is paramount in any circumstance. When the doula's safety necessitates ending services, the doula should make referrals for alternative care or resources when possible.

VII. Applicability

The DONA International Code of Ethics guide:

- DONA International Certification Candidates (all those within three (3) years following their DONA-approved birth and/or postpartum doula training workshop who are pursuing DONA Certification); and
- DONA International Certified Birth and Postpartum Doulas.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

By signing this document, I agree to abide by DONA International's Code of Ethics.