



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM PROPOSAL



PREPARED BY:

DOULA ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND CLG

WWW.DOULAS.IE

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BACKGROUND

The Doula Association of Ireland CLG is a not for profit membership organisation that promotes, develops and supports doulas and the doula profession. The Doula Association of Ireland is an inclusive organisation, welcoming Doulas providing range of supports, including, but not limited to: Antenatal, Birth, Postpartum, Fertility, Abortion, Pregnancy and Infant Loss, Menopause, End of Life.

Every type of company - from SMEs to large multinationals - are beginning to offer greater range of wellness programmes as a part of their overall employee benefits package. Traditionally, workplaces concentrated their resources for workplace health on physical or safety benefits. Today though, the need for initiatives focused around mental health is becoming vital. Research shows that promoting workplace wellness benefits such as physical and mental health has significant benefits for both employers and employees.

Family planning can be a stressful and anxious time, and our aim is to ensure help is available so every unique journey into parenthood is safe, healthy and most importantly - happy.

The primary mission of the doula profession is to positively impact the childbearing experience for individuals and their families. Fundamental to doula care is the understanding that continuous emotional support and reassurance during labour, birth and postpartum improves and enhances maternal satisfaction.

Our member doulas offer emotional support, information resources and practical help. Doula services include both in person and online support, as well as workshops. Members can offer tailored packages for employers to facilitate the provision of support services as part of Employee Assistance Programs and Wellness Initiatives.

ABOUT THE DOULA ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND CLG

Our association is dedicated to providing support and resources to doulas in Ireland. We believe in the power of doulas to provide compassionate care to expecting and new parents. Our association offers a variety of services, including training and development, networking opportunities, and advocacy for the doula profession.

The aims of the Association are to:

- Provide for education, research, communication, networking and mutual support among Doulas in Ireland and other health care workers concerned with the prenatal, birth and postpartum period. The term health care worker is used to describe any person working in any capacity within the health system, whether in private or public services, education including students, research, employed, self-employed or volunteer.
- Foster Universal Awareness of Doula Association of Ireland Membership as the necessary requirement for Doulas in Ireland, practicing in the Irish Health Care Services, either in Hospital settings, Community settings, or in Private Practice in Ireland.
- Act as the advisory authority on issues relating to Doula support services.
- Raise awareness of Doula support services as complementary components for health and well-being.

Doulas provide continuous support for the whole family through pregnancy, birth, in the early days of parenthood and at many other stages of life. Filling a role that new parents and families have always needed, Doulas are there to listen, give confidence and evidence based resources in a non judgemental environment.

Doulas provide help to all families: new parents, existing parents, single parent, adoption, fertility challenges, IVF, surrogacy, LGBTQ+, preterm baby, multiple births, homebirth, whatever the circumstances, Doulas can help.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

A member of Doula Association of Ireland CLG:

- Has completed a Doula Association of Ireland Approved course which follows the Doula Association of Ireland core curriculum. Or have joined Doula Association of Ireland as an experienced doula or birth worker and completed Doula Association of Ireland alternate pathway workshops.
- Is Garda vetted
- Has completed the Tusla Children First course
- Is continually learning and developing through the membership community and support network of Doula Association of Ireland
- Is required to have appropriate insurance and to provide clients with a clear, written agreement.
- Is recommended to be tax compliant
- Is committed to abiding by Doula Association of Ireland policies and procedures and Code of Conduct.

Doulas are trained professionals who provide non-stop, unbiased and compassionate support throughout a family's journey. After assessing needs, doulas create a personalised plan to support each growing family. Doulas provide a variety of personalised services that will accompany a family during pregnancy, labour and the early days of parenthood.

Offering flexible, practical and emotional support in homes as well as in hospitals throughout Ireland. Doulas may also offer support through other significant life experiences such as miscarriage, fertility, termination, menopause, adoption, surrogacy, debilitating illness, or end of life.

Our members can provide workshops for employers on the Antenatal Journey and Preparing for Postpartum. Doulas also offer Birth and Postpartum Support packages. Our members offer support sessions for all budgets and needs, flexible hours, to help families as and when needed.

Research shows that no matter where or how a person gives birth, doulas help make that experience a more positive one.

WHAT IS A DOULA?

A doula is a professional, non-medical companion trained in the needs of the family. They provide clients with continuous support during pregnancy, labour and birth, and the postpartum period.

Doulas may also offer support through other significant life experiences such as miscarriage, termination, debilitating illness, or end of life.

What is a Postpartum Doula?

A Postpartum Doula provides in-home support, primarily for the mother, in the first three to six months post birth, and beyond when needed. This can be as little as one session of 4 hours a week, or multiple sessions a week for a number of weeks, depending on family needs.

Our members can help each family unit with the adjustment to this new life, and are aware that everyone's needs are different.

With the support and knowledge from a Doula, parents will soon feel confident, rested and empowered in their parenting role.

What Does a Postnatal Doula Offer?

- * tips on baby care, soothing baby, winding, feeding positions and techniques
- * care of baby while parents rest, shower, go for a walk, etc
- * prep or cook meals in your home
- * laundry and organisation of baby items
- * light household tasks
- * interaction and play with older siblings
- * babywearing, sling demonstration
- * tips for bonding for other family members
- * provide evidence based information
- * a listening ear, and reassurance on what is 'normal'
- * peer support in breastfeeding
- * support with combination feeding and formula feeding
- * non judgmental support for parents and family unit

What is a Birth Doula?

BIRTH DOULAS offer constant, non-medical support to the birthing person and their birth partner/s. They help families during pregnancy, labour, and birth by providing informational, practical, emotional, and physical support.

Birth Doulas offer packages consisting of Antenatal visits, Birth support and Postpartum sessions.

What does a Birth Doula Offer?

- Have no agenda other than using their extensive knowledge of the process of childbirth to support the needs and choices of their clients.
- Make sure evidence-based information is available so clients can confidently draft a Birth Plan or Birth Preferences.
- Support and strengthen the birth partner's role (if a birth partner is present).
- Stay with their clients throughout labour, providing continuous support.
- Are objective in supporting their clients, providing emotional support and physical comfort measures.
- Facilitate communication between clients and medical care providers, helping clients advocate for themselves.
- Doulas will get to know you and your birth preferences when you meet before your baby comes. They will help educate you on any pregnancy complications that may come up and will be a sounding board to provide you with up-to-date, evidence-based information that you can use to make decisions along with your trusted care provider.
- Their job is not to replace a medical professional's advice but to help guide you along in the decision-making process, so you are the primary decision-maker of your care.
- They will connect with you and learn more about the birth partner(s), to help them feel comfortable and involved on the birthing day. They will also help you mentally prepare for labor, teaching you useful coping tools.
- They will educate you on what is expected during labor and what you can expect to happen next.

At an Antenatal visit, Doulas can help you set up the baby's cot/side sleeper, assemble the buggy for you, set up nappy change areas and give you tips on baby care for when you get home. At antenatal support visits a Doula can also batch cook for you and provide practical help. They can accompany you to medical appointments. Doulas can also go through information resources on labour, comfort measures, breastfeeding, and the post birth experience.

BENEFITS

A Cochrane review on continuous labour support with a Doula shows the following results happen during labour and birth for those who have a Doula with them:

- 39% decrease in the chance of having a C-section
- 15% increase in the chance of having a spontaneous vaginal delivery (non-induced)
- 10% decrease in the need for any medication for pain relief
- 41-minute average reduction in the length of labour
- 38% decrease in low 5 minute APGAR score
- 31% increase in satisfaction with the overall birth experience

“With the support of doulas, many women are able to forego epidurals, avoid c-section births, and have less stressful births.”

Impact of Doulas | Gruber et al. 49, Impact of Doulas on Healthy Birth Outcomes

“Overall, people who received continuous support were more likely to have spontaneous vaginal births and less likely to have any pain medication, epidurals, negative feelings about childbirth, vacuum or forceps-assisted births, and Cesareans. There is a smaller amount of evidence that doula support in labor can lower postpartum depression in mothers. There is no evidence for negative consequences to continuous labor support.”

Evidence on: Doulas, Updated on May 4, 2019 by Rebecca Dekker, PhD, RN

Our members wellness programmes can benefit employers by:

- Lowering health care costs
- Reducing extended leave and incidence of unpaid leave
- Providing employees with knowledge and support to thrive in the postpartum period, allowing them return to work with greater confidence and resilience
- Achieving higher employee productivity
- Improving employee morale and loyalty

SAMPLE PROPOSALS

Our members offer a range of services for employers to provide to staff, for example:

Half day Workshops, for groups of up to 12: €750

- The Antenatal Journey
- Dads to Be
- Preparing for Postpartum

Pregnancy & Birth Journey Package: €450

- 2 Prenatal inhome visits of 3 hours each, to discuss your Birth Plan and preferences for comfort measures, and get your home set up for early labour and bringing baby home
- 2 Postpartum visits of 3 hours each to help you settle in at home

Single Support Sessions (Antenatal or Postpartum), 4 hours €150

Postpartum Package of 20 Hours (5 visits of 4 hours each): €700

Birth Support Package: €1,200

- 2 Prenatal inhome visits of 3 hours each, to discuss your Birth Plan and preferences for comfort measures, and get your home set up for early labour and bringing baby home
- On Call with your Doula from week 37
- In home support during your early labour
- Virtual support or in-person support once you transfer to the hospital, depending on your preferences and hospital guidelines/restrictions at the time
- 2 Postpartum visits of 3 hours each to help you settle in at home
- Unlimited text and call support

CONSULTATION

To find out more about members Corporate Packages, get in touch with our Association by emailing info@doulas.ie or call 01 556 3033

Gift vouchers are offered, and can be redeemed with any member of the Doula Association of Ireland CLG.

Employers need simply commit to a sum to be available through Remuneration packages, when an employee avails of Maternity or Paternity leave. The employee books the Doula, the employer pays the sum to the Doula. Alternatively, an employer can present a Gift voucher for the Doula Association of Ireland to the employee.

www.doulas.ie

STUDIES

Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews
"Continuous support for women during childbirth",
Meghan A Bohren, G Justus Hofmeyr, Carol Sakala,
Rieko K Fukuzawa, Anna Cuthbert
Version published: 06 July 2017

Evidence on: Doulas

Updated May 4, 2019 by Rebecca Dekker, PhD, RN

Impact of Doulas | Gruber et al. 49, Impact of Doulas
on Healthy Birth Outcomes

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD003766.pub6/full>

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647727/pdf/JPE22-1_PTR_A10_049-058.pdf

<https://evidencebasedbirth.com/the-evidence-for-doulas/>