



Doula UK

Positive birth.
Supporting families.

Core Curriculum

In order to be a **Doula UK Approved Course** you will need to ensure that your training follows the core curriculum as set out below. The length of time accorded to each subject depends entirely on the main emphasis of the individual course. ie. if it is aimed more at birth doulas, postnatal doulas or both.

1. Birth physiology

Understanding normal physiology from conception to weaning, with particular attention to the interplay of hormones during these processes.

2. Anatomy

Understanding and discovering the birthing body, including breast/chest feeding and natural changes until weaning takes place.

3. Loss

- To acknowledge miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death.
- To discuss how it may impact the role of a doula, how it impacts the clients and how it may impact future pregnancies.
- In the pre-course module – to state that when writing/debriefing about own births this includes losses.

4. Foetal positioning

Exploring posture and positions conducive to progressing labour with different foetal presentations.

5. Commitment to the natural physiological process of birth with respect for and acceptance of the mother/parents and their decisions

- Empowering parents to make informed choices about their rights, birth setting (home, hospital, BC's etc)
- Feeding options.
- Signposting parents towards relevant information as requested.
- Committing to support informed decision-making.
- Facilitating a 'safe space' for the birth process to unfold, what are the practicalities of doing this?



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- 'Being' rather than 'doing'.
- Encouraging instinctive postures and movement.
- Accessing appropriate physical and emotional comfort for labour and birth if requested by the mother/parents.
- Helping with advocacy and during crisis management. Explore how this might unfold.
- Being led by clients in order to support their wishes on an individualised basis.
- Addressing father/partner's needs. (what is the role, issues of control).

6. **Knowing when to call for medical help in unexpected developments, emergency and crisis situations.**

- Observing normal physiology of intrapartum and postpartum period, including infant feeding.
- Behaviours and demeanour of mother/parent and infant, infant feeding patterns.
- Providing appropriate positive emotional and physical comfort.
- Counselling to support informed decision-making.
- Knowing when to signpost for specialist support.
- Recognising sudden emergency and knowing who and how to call for medical assistance.

7. **Birth preferences**

Helping mothers/parents to write a wish list of birth preferences, providing examples.

8. **Bonding-physiology**

Understanding the third stage, babies' survival instincts/reflexes and care immediately after birth and during the postnatal period.

9. **Innate needs of baby and mother or parent for first six weeks**

- Nurture and development. Creating space inside and outside for the baby, including feeding cues and normal newborn behaviour and patterns.
- Provision of practical help to empower the parent.

10. **Infant feeding**

- 'Mothering the mother' to enable self-sufficiency in the parents, however they chose to feed their babies, whilst achieving a basic awareness of the politics of breastfeeding and chestfeeding.
- Signpost to resources including the [WHO Breastfeeding](#) and [The Unicef Baby](#)



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[Friendly Hospital Initiative](#) and the campaigns to protect breastfeeding and formula feeding parents [Baby Feeding Law group](#) and [Baby Milk Action](#).

- Raising awareness of opportunities for further breastfeeding and chestfeeding studying.

11. Communication and Listening skills

Grounding in listening and reflecting skills to enable opportunities for the mother/parents to discuss their hopes and fears around the experience of birth and early parenting.

12. The Power of Language

- Sensitivity to the language used by all those involved.
- Cultural competency.
- Being mindful of and sensitive to the circumstances, abilities, background, race, religion, gender identity or orientation throughout.
- How discrimination impacts the parents and their birthing experience.
- Signpost to further training available including [The Queer Box](#), [Breaking Breastfeeding Barriers & Uplifting Education](#), [Understanding Racism](#)

13. Addressing issues of support and reflection for the doula and for parents

- Providing opportunities for voicing, discussing and debriefing personal experiences (birth and postnatal) with mentor support.
- Other sources of support for the doula - Doula UK's Area Reps, Doula UK Mentoring and Recognition Process, The Doula Support Network, local Doula UK groups, personal support structures - pairing up, the doula community, family support, friends etc.
- Provision of sources of social and professional support for parents once doula has left.

14. Working within the NHS

Understanding hierarchy, structures and policies and how to go about this.

15. Researching and knowing local protocols and policy of service providers

- Research, networking, 'advice', advocacy, providing alternatives.
- Communication tools for parents to use with care-providers.



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16. Common sense, diplomacy and boundaries

- Impact that doula work has on our lives.
- Being responsible for and reflecting upon our own conduct and working.
- Boundaries relating to Doula UK's Code of Conduct.
- Understanding the midwife's role.
- Keeping safe and spotting fake personas.

17. Relationship between doulas and midwives

Touching the human within. Mindfulness of working boundaries, co-operation, reflection, evaluation and sharing.

18. Relevant Literature

Share websites, reading lists, online resources and promote peer support and attitude of sharing.

19. Negotiating contracts

Do's and don'ts, examples and general guidelines.

20. Marketing your business

Getting started. Promoting doula work, profile, charges, advertising, social media and making contacts.

21. Joining Doula UK

- Course leaders and facilitators must be a member of Doula UK.
- The practicalities of [how to join Doula UK](#).
- The benefits of being a member of Doula UK. Share the Doula UK membership handout.
- Share the Doula UK video (when available).
- Explain to graduates that their name and email details will be shared with Doula UK so that we may invite them to become a member.
- On course completion, register all graduates with Doula UK using the password protected web form.