

The Code of Ethics of Estonian Childbirth support Persons Association

The objective of Estonian Childbirth Support Persons Association is to promote support given to families during maternity and childbirth and after childbirth. This can come about through informing the public of childbirth support persons' activities, educating and practical use of childbirth support persons.

Guided by the support of women as one of our main objectives and focusing the attention to childbirth support persons, the Association has developed the code of ethics guiding the activities, training and practice of childbirth support persons.

In the code, equal justice and health care is claimed for all members of society, that would rely on mutual respect, trust and dignity.

The code of ethics helps us to act uniformly, having clearly determined the ethical responsibility of childbirth support persons to clients, colleagues, the profession of childbirth support person and the society. This requires keeping the high levels of personal honesty, professional competence and activities by the childbirth support person.

The code is approved.

I Relationships in childbirth support

- Childbirth support persons respect their client's right to informed choice and promote the client's understanding that the client is responsible for the consequences of their choice.
- Childbirth support persons work with families, supporting their right to active participation in decisions regarding the family.
- Childbirth support persons is ready to listen the needs and worries of the woman/family, offering them help according to one's own competence and possibilities.
- Childbirth support persons respect the client's privacy and handle the information given to them according to the valid Personal Data Protection Act.
- Childbirth support persons support each other in professional activities.
- Childbirth support persons cooperate with representatives of other health-care professions, consulting or referring clients in cases the client's nursing needs are beyond childbirth support person's competence.
- Childbirth support persons are open to cooperation with midwives, gynecologists and other health-care professionals.

II The practice of childbirth support

- The childbirth support person of Estonian Childbirth Support Persons Association may only practice after passing a training where all necessary knowledge and skills for childbirth support are acquired.

- Childbirth support persons actively develop their individual, mental and professional skills, belong to organizations related to the profession, and promote cooperation with other childbirth support specialist throughout the entire professional activity, using their knowledge and skills in their work.
- Childbirth support persons use their professional knowledge to support the woman and the family in their chosen conditions.
- Childbirth support persons take care of pregnant women, women giving birth and after the childbirth, and their families, respecting their cultural differences. ^[1]_[SEP]
- Childbirth support persons encourage the realistic hopes of the family regarding pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium, pursuing that the woman's and other family members' health is not harmed during this period.
- Childbirth support persons support women and families emotionally, informatively and practically during the pregnancy. They may offer the woman/family individual meetings, phone or video consultations and/or preparative group lessons that help to adjust to the pregnancy and prepare for the childbirth.
- Childbirth support persons support women and families emotionally, informatively and practically during the childbirth. For that the childbirth support person concludes an agreement with the family beforehand, and acts on the clearly expressed wishes of the mother/father. Childbirth support person offers the mother/father empathic support and presence, encouraging and helpful care, despite the woman's choice of the place and method for giving birth. Childbirth support person is present due to clearly expressed request by the mother/father. Childbirth support person supports the whole family by helping to find the partner's/support person's role during the childbirth. Childbirth support person joins the childbirth process and leaves according to the wishes and needs of the family. By the request of the parturient, the childbirth support person may offer support verbally or silently, with breathing and positions, by the use of voice, concentration, visualization, relaxation techniques or other acquired skills. Childbirth support person is constantly present during the childbirth, according to the woman's and family's needs. Childbirth support person does not get involved in the medical course of the childbirth and respects the medical staff.
- Childbirth support persons support women and families emotionally, informatively and practically during the puerperium. For that the childbirth support person offers non-medical help that relies on the agreement between the parents and the childbirth support person. Childbirth support person may offer individual meetings or group lessons on recovery, becoming a family, child care and other similar subjects.

III Professional responsibility of childbirth support persons

- Childbirth support person does not carry out medical procedures.
- Childbirth support persons may refuse to carry out procedures that are ethically unacceptable to them, and refer them to respective specialist.

- Childbirth support persons know their boundaries and look for professional and/or emotional support if they experience an oppressive situation. Estonian Childbirth Support Persons Association gives its best to help them and gives a signal if childbirth support persons need psychological help. In addition, the members of the Association are given an opportunity to participate in supervision and covision groups.
- Childbirth support person actively supporting families is obliged to attend a personal supervision or supervision organised by the Association at least once a year.
- Childbirth support persons participate in the development of health-care politics.
- In determining the fee, the childbirth support person must assure that the fee is fair, reasonable, calculated and proportional to the services rendered. The childbirth support person must clearly inform the client of the amount of the fee and describe the service, terms of payment and refunding.
- Childbirth support persons hold out on the information about the client, protecting everyone's right to privacy, and issue information according to the requirements provided by the law.

IV Development of knowledge and practice in childbirth support

- Childbirth support person of Estonian Childbirth Support Persons Association is obliged to continue with self-improvement. One constantly continues expanding one's competence, in order to take better care of the mother's and the family's needs.
- Childbirth support persons ensure that professional knowledge and practice support women's personal rights and improve the families' healthy functioning.
- Childbirth support person help to develop and distribute professional knowledge and the whole branch according to their abilities. For example, by organising trainings, seminars, workshops, by writing relevant and science-based articles, or by gathering adequate statistics.
- Childbirth support person participate in training doula-students and other members of the Association, and in cooperation projects with other health-care organizations.

Every childbirth support person that signs this code of ethics, is obliged to respect it and act accordingly.