

# Childbirth International

*Training that makes a difference*

## Training Syllabus: Birth Doula

*Choose Childbirth International  
to become the best that you can  
be!*

*Call us today to find out more  
about CBI's comprehensive pro-  
grams.*



# Childbirth International Courses

## Birth Doula

*As a Birth Doula you have the unique privilege of sharing the journey a woman takes when she has a baby. As a Childbirth International Birth Doula you know that you will also have a strong knowledge base, increased confidence and an incredible support network of trainers and other students to support you.*

## PART 1

### ABOUT THE COURSE

For some, the decision to become a Birth Doula comes after experiencing their own births. For others, they simply find they have a calling to work with pregnant women at such a special time in their lives. You may already be working as a Birth Doula and be looking for formal training that will provide you with in depth knowledge and skills.

Studying with Childbirth International means you will have the flexibility and convenience of being able to study from the comfort of your own home. You can choose when you study, and how long you take to complete your course.

You can study a Childbirth International course in any country. Our students are found in 59 countries across the world and every US state!

If you want to help women, believe that birth is magical, and want more than a 2-3 day introduction, this is the Birth Doula training program for you. Now is the time to realize your dreams – start training today!

### CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

*Birth Support:* support two clients and complete a self evaluation

*Reflective Assignment:* complete one reflective practice paper

*Book Reviews:* read 3 books and complete a book review on each

*Childbirth Class Survey:* submit one survey on the childbirth class options in your community

*Tests:* open book online tests (multiple choice) to cover physiology & anatomy

### Fast Facts

*How much does it cost?* US\$430

*How long does it take?* Usually takes 4-6 months but you have up to 3 years to complete

*Do you have refunds?* Yes, a full refund (less \$50 admin fee) is available within 2 days of registering

# PART 2

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

You might be wondering how you can train as a birth professional without attending a workshop? We use our own unique learning system that enables you to learn everything you would at a workshop, plus so much more!

During your training you will work with women in order to gain experience. You will use these experiences to develop and practice hands-on skills that you learn about in your study workbooks. The peer group support that you receive and the strong trainer and mentor support will reinforce your learning.

All your training materials are provided to you both online through our student website, and as paper based student manuals (optional) that become part of your professional library for future reference.

When you register for a training program you will be given immediate access to your course through the student website, enabling you to get started right away. We will then send you the complete set of study workbooks that you will use for your training (study workbooks are posted to students on the installment plan scheme once all installments have been completed. In the meantime, you have access to all course materials through the student website.) Each study workbook contains information on the topic together with activities for you to work through to grasp a better understanding of the topic.

You will be directed to online readings that give you new ideas on ways that you can support women through labor. Online videos produced by our own trainers give you a visual tool to see these skills in action. Your trainer has direct experience of flexible learning as a student herself and has developed many strategies for helping you learn the practical skills you need as a birth professional.

Do not worry about having to have in depth internet knowledge or specialized computer skills in order to complete their course. Provided you are able to send a basic email you will be fine. Our student website is very easy to use and you are guided through the course every step of the way. All of your study materials are posted to you so you do not need to have access to the Internet all the time. The website has the additional materials like online readings and with just a few clicks you can find everything you need.

If you do not have a reliable internet connection you may be worried about whether or not you can complete the course.

You will need to have intermittent internet access to look at the suggested readings online, and to submit work. Other than that, you can do everything in the written manuals. Some students use the local library for internet access on an occasional basis whenever they need to submit

*“This course goes beyond the common approach to a Doula certification. Bravo! My experience with CBI has been a truly life changing event! Thank you!” Kathy, Wisconsin*

work. Others go once a week and print off all the online readings for the section they are covering that week. Some use a friend's computer.

As soon as you register as a student, we will assign a mentor and trainer to you. She will be a certified and experienced birth professional herself, who can guide you through your training. You receive immediate access to the student website where all the student materials can be found. This means you can be up and running within 5 minutes of signing up as a student.

At the end of your training, on successful completion of all course requirements, you will be certified and be awarded your certificate. We encourage you to continually learn new skills, develop your own understanding of issues related to pregnancy and birth, and keep up to date with research. You may then choose to take advantage of the ongoing advanced training programs to focus on specific areas.

## PART 3

# HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Because we understand that you have families, jobs, and other commitments - in short, a busy life - we ensure the course is as flexible as it can possibly be. Study at your own pace. If you need a break, go right ahead. If you want to work more quickly, that's great as well.

The beauty of certifying as a Birth Doula with Childbirth International is that you have the flexibility to fit it in with your lifestyle. You can complete the course in as little as 2-3 months, or take as long as 3 years. If your family commitments change, you can take a break from studying for a while. If you have holidays coming up and some extra free time, you can pick up a faster pace.

As an estimate, if you study for 10 hours each week, the course will take you 4-6 months to complete and certify. This would include the time it takes for you to complete the study workbooks, and assumes that you attend your two certification births and complete the other requirements in that time. This is similar to other programs once you take into account attending their workshops, supporting at your certifying births, and completing their certification requirements. However, as a Childbirth International certified Birth Doula you will have completed the most comprehensive training that is available anywhere in the world! Flexibility Plus!

*"This was an excellent way to learn in a non pressured environment."*

*- Amanda, Israel*

## HOW DO PROGRAMS COMPARE?

### ***Childbirth International***

4-6 months including all learning, finding clients, assignments and completing a survey on childbirth classes.

### ***Workshop based programs***

2-3 day workshop. Home study work required which generally takes 4-6 months to complete (usually some reading, essays and an exam). Finding and working with clients. Observing classes.

A comparison page of the major training organizations worldwide can be found on the Childbirth International website.

## PART 4

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Calculating your training costs is easy. There are no hidden fees, no workshop fees, no examination or certification fees, and no costs for membership or recertification. The cost of shipping will be calculated when you order your course and is dependent on where you live. You can pay by Visa, MasterCard, Visa Delta, Visa Electron, American Express, PayPal, and bank transfer (via PayPal).

The cost of the Birth Doula Certification program is US\$430, plus shipping. You will reclaim those costs in your first 1-2 clients - most doulas charge between US\$250-\$650 for support services.

You can choose to pay for your course in one easy payment or alternatively pay in three or six installments. You will receive all your student manuals once your final payment has been processed but in the meantime will have access to all course materials online.

You can access all student materials through the student website once you have registered for a course. If, after looking at the materials, you decide that this is not quite what you are looking for, we offer a 2 day money back guarantee. Just contact us within 2 days (48 hours) of registering, and your payment will be refunded less a \$50 admin fee.

Registering for more than one course means significant discounts on your training costs. If you register for one course now, you can always add courses later and receive a student discount.

## PART 5

### HOW DO I BECOME CERTIFIED?

Many new Birth Doulas are concerned about what they need to do before they can become certified. No need to worry with Childbirth International - the process is simple and straightforward. There are no workshops to attend, and you do not need to obtain evaluations from doctors or other caregivers. There is no additional charge for certification and no requirement for membership or recertification. Certification as a Childbirth International Birth Doula is for life!

**NO PREREQUISITES:** Being a birth professional is about using your skills to help parents have the births they desire and communicate effectively with their caregivers.

The skills required to enable you to do this are covered in your training. You do not need to have the background as a nurse or midwife in order to be a great birth professional.

*“My trainer was a great support to me. She gave me outstanding feedback. I will continue to talk about and highly recommend CBI. I feel very fortunate that I found you.”*  
- Nancy, Idaho

Some students have had children themselves, others have not. There is no prerequisite with the Childbirth International training in regards to your particular experiences. It does not matter how many children you have had (or maybe you have not had any), it does not matter if you have never experienced a vaginal birth, or if you have never breastfed.

**NO AGE LIMITS:** Anybody can study with Childbirth International, whether they are aged 18 or 65 (or older!)

There are no age limits to training as a Birth Doula, Postpartum Doula, Childbirth Educator or Breastfeeding Counselor. For example, in the Birth Doula field, a younger doula you may be the perfect support for young women looking for peer support. As an older doula, you may be the perfect support for someone looking for life experience. Every birth professional has something different to offer.

We are often asked whether the training that you complete will be recognized by hospitals. Birth professionals may have heard from others that they have to be certified by a particular organization in order to be allowed to work in a hospital. If you are self employed, and have been hired directly by parents as an independent practitioner, this does not appear to be a problem. If you come across a hospital who requires a specific training, we can provide you with written details of the training you have undergone with Childbirth International, indicating the depth and quality of training. To date, no Childbirth International student or graduate has been denied the opportunity to work in a hospital because their training did not meet hospital requirements.

**Read your student manuals:** You will receive a comprehensive set of study guides which build up to form an impressive reference library that you can refer to again and again. Each study guide contains a variety of reading material, learning activities and exercises which you complete in your own time. The course is made up of three modules - Communication Skills, Physiology in Birth, and Birth Doula Skills. As each module is completed you simply submit an on-line evaluation form.

**Support two women through labor:** To gain experience and put some of your new found knowledge into practice, you will support two women through labor. After the birth, you will write to your trainer and tell her what you learnt

*"I've experienced total support on all issues that came up for me during my training, whether they were practical or emotional in nature. I felt like I had a good doula while giving birth to my new doula-self."  
- Meli, Cyprus*

## WHAT ABOUT RECERTIFICATION?

**Childbirth International recognizes your certification for life.**

During your training you will have worked hard at developing your skills and increasing your knowledge base through the most comprehensive training available. Your certification recognizes this achievement and does not need to be proven again in future years. We encourage all graduates to carry out continuing education and keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

Membership with Childbirth International is not compulsory. You do not need to maintain membership or pay yearly fees in order to continue your certified status. Involvement with any training organization should be because you believe in the philosophy of that group and choose to support them, not because you are required to in order to maintain your certification.

at the birth. This may be the value of some of the skills you used, the experience of working with the family and caregivers, or simply describing the heady euphoria of being at a birth! You **do not need** to provide an evaluation from the doctor, midwife or nurses caring for the mother. You can use the birth as a certifying birth even if the mother has a cesarean or births so quickly that you do not make it to her birth. These two births can take place any time after you begin your training.

**Read three books:** To broaden your knowledge and become exposed to different viewpoints, you will read three books that are relevant to doula work. You can choose any three books you like from the extensive reading list. You can view the full book list on the Childbirth International website, or contact us and we can send you a list via email.

**Complete a childbirth class survey:** To help you understand the options available for parents in your area, you will complete a short survey on the childbirth classes available in your community. This helps you to determine not only the services available, but also to see any future opportunities for yourself as you build your Birth Doula business.

**Complete two assignments:** During the course of your training you will complete the assignments at your own pace. The first, a communication assignment, is a written account of one of your own births, or an event in your life that was significant to you if you have never had a baby.

The second assignment is an open book test of multiple choice questions on different aspects of pregnancy, labor, birth and the early postpartum period. You can use any reference materials, including your student manuals, to research and find the answers to the quiz.

All work that is required for certification is submitted through the student website. It is automatically sent to your trainer who will review it and provide feedback where appropriate. Once you have completed all the course requirements you can request certification. A certificate will be available for immediate download, and a formal hard copy of your certificate will be posted to you, together with an ID card (where requested).

## PART 6

# WHO IS MY TRAINER?

All Childbirth International students receive mentoring from certified trainers who are there to guide you through your training every step of the way. Your trainer understands the challenges in training to become a birth professional and is there to guide you and assist you wherever possible. Like you, she is juggling many different roles and can help with tips on how to balance these while also building your career.

Your trainer supports you for as long as it takes you to complete your training. She will contact you at the very beginning so you can start getting to know each other. If you have any problems or questions, she is there to help. Trainers

### ABOUT CBI TRAINERS

Childbirth International trainers have all completed the requirements for certification with Childbirth International so thoroughly understand the training program. All Childbirth International trainers have been personally invited to become trainers. They have received specialist training in learning at a distance and learnt adult training techniques and are active Doulas, Childbirth Educators and Counselors themselves.

attend regular chat sessions so you can ask them questions or explore any problems you are having.

Your trainer will review all the work you submit and provide plenty of valuable feedback to help guide you. If you are experiencing any difficulties related to your work, your trainer can be a mentor, offering you suggestions and ideas to help you through. If she hasn't been there herself, she knows someone who has! Your trainer is part of a worldwide network of nearly 2,000 doulas so she can always find the information you need. Your trainer is there to help - she is always just a click away!

We have trainers on three continents and wherever possible you will be assigned a trainer who is in the same or similar time zone to yourself. Childbirth International trainers have all completed the CBI training programs and all trainers complete a comprehensive train the trainer program. We have trainers who are certified as Birth Doulas, Childbirth Educators, Breastfeeding Counselors and Postpartum Doulas.

## PART 7

# WHAT POLICIES DO YOU HAVE?

Childbirth International does NOT require you to agree to any policies or code of conduct. As a self-employed individual, it will be up to you to decide which births you attend, how much you charge, and what services you offer.

Working as a birth professional incurs costs - the cost of promoting and advertising yourself, childcare, the cost of equipment. Many students wonder whether it is appropriate to charge while completing training. This is an individual choice. We encourage you to look at your costs and whether or not charging is something you feel is appropriate. Remember you can explore alternative options such as barter, sliding scales and installments.

We will not restrict the types of births you can be present at – you choose whether you attend hospital births, birthing centers, homebirths or unassisted births. It is your responsibility to communicate your role with your clients and ensure they understand that you are not a medical caregiver and therefore are not qualified or certified to provide any form of medical care or medical diagnosis. Ultimately, as a self employed professional, you will decide how you run your business!

*“This training has changed the way I support people forever.” - Jamie, Maryland*

# PART 8

## REGISTERING FOR TRAINING

Registering for a Childbirth International course is done online and takes just a few minutes. Go to the Childbirth International website at [www.childbirthinternational.com](http://www.childbirthinternational.com). Click on Register Now (the green arrow on every page of the website) or the "Registration" link in the menu across the top of the page. You will be taken to the shopping cart pages. Simply choose the course you want and complete your contact details. You will then go to the secure pages to pay for your training. Once your payment has been processed, you will be sent an email confirming your registration together with a link for the student website. You can log in to the student website and get started on your training straight away.

Childbirth International uses WorldPay and PayPal to process all payments. WorldPay is a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Scotland and is a leader in online transaction processing. PayPal is recognized as a safe, secure method of processing online transactions. Your credit card and personal details are not sent to anyone, and all transactions are encrypted for your protection. If you are worried about using the Internet for making payment, you can always request us to call you and we can take your order over the telephone. If you have any questions, or would like us to call, either call us or click on contact us to send us an email.

If you do not have a credit card you can still register for Childbirth International training. Using PayPal you can choose to pay for your training with either your PayPal balance, or a bank transfer. PayPal is available in many countries and provides a safe way to transfer money from your bank account to Childbirth International.

We do not accept personal checks, bank drafts or telegraphic transfers. If you have received a grant or have a company paying for your training, please contact us to discuss payment options. If you are purchasing training for three or more people we have further payment options and discounts available - please contact us for more information.

To help students who are experiencing financial difficulties, we offer two payment plan options. This enables you to pay for your training over a period of three or six months. When you first register as a student, you choose to pay for your course either over 3 months or 6 months. The first installment is deducted on the day you register. Subsequent installments will be charged once a month after that, until the course payments have been completed. Installments are automatically deducted each month through a secure server. You will receive an email confirmation each time an installment is made. Please note, failure to make installments will result in access to the student website being withdrawn until the payments are brought up to date and an administration fee is paid.

*"Incredible!! I absolutely love the level of commitment that the staff gives to the students."  
- Kristina, California*

### CONTACTING US

**Website**

[www.childbirthinternational.com](http://www.childbirthinternational.com)

**Telephone**

USA: (415) 691-6162

UK: (020) 8144-4002

Australia (02) 8011-4177

# SYLLABUS

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Enhance your communication skills, enabling you to build strong relationships with clients and caregivers alike. Many of you will work as doulas in challenging environments. Perhaps the amount of medical intervention you see will lead you to feel uncomfortable, or those you are working with do not understand a doula's role. During the course you will explore these challenges and develop skills in building relationships with caregivers without compromising your professionalism or client's wishes.

One of the unique strengths of the Childbirth International training programs is the focus on reflective practice. In the context of your doula training, reflection means looking at choices you have made in the past and what you have learnt from those, how they apply to your work as a doula. The student manuals walk you through reflective practice and you will learn how to apply the Childbirth International model of reflective practice. Your trainer will provide you with feedback and support on improving these reflective skills.

### Effective Communication

Communication is the transfer of ideas. Communication is essential to building social relationships, and to learning and growing. The ability to communicate effectively is paramount to our ability as doulas and childbirth educators to educate our clients and support them through the perinatal period.

Communication has two parts: a message is *sent*, and is then *received* and interpreted or understood. Communication is a skill developed from the moment of birth. Newborn babies are able to communicate their needs to their parents and caregivers, and as parents get to know their baby better, they become more effective in interpreting the baby's messages. These skills develop throughout our lifetime.

Beyond the simple act of making a statement, there are a host of more subtle and sophisticated communication skills we develop as we mature. In this unit, we'll look at a range of aspects of effective communication, both in the sending and receiving of messages. You'll start off by taking a quick inventory of how you perceive your communication abilities at the moment.

We'll then start from the beginning, looking at the basic components of communication, and the things that need to be in place to foster good communication: the crucial concepts of "owning our feelings" and "walking our talk." We'll look at the value of striving for open and honest communication, both to be more effective and to foster trust and commitment in our personal and professional relationships. We'll then move on to examine communication without words -- *non-verbal* communication, and the power it holds even when we're not aware of it. We'll look at major barriers to good communication -- the things that trip us up and get our wires crossed.

Finally, we'll start to explore strategies for effective communication, including responding with empathy instead of sympathy, and asking open questions. In later units, we'll look at other communication skills to build on this introduction.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List strengths and weaknesses of your own communication skills.
- Describe components of effective communication.
- Describe 3 pre-requisites to effective communication.
- Give 10 examples of non-verbal communication.
- Identify 3 factors that inhibit communication.
- Discuss differences between empathy and sympathy and identify the advantage of using empathy instead of sympathy in client relationships.

thy instead of sympathy in client relationships.

- Explain the difference between an open and a closed question, and give examples of each.

### Topics covered will include:

- Identifying your communication skills
- Pre-requisites to effective communication
- Open and honest communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Barriers to communication
- Empathy and sympathy
- Open and closed questions

## Language and Communication

In this unit we will consider the effect of language on the perception and understanding of birth and the postpartum experience. The way people perceive language affects how they understand concepts, whether they are the speaker/writer or the hearer/reader. As doula and childbirth educators, our confidence in using explicit language, our body language, and our understanding of the cultural context of language all affect the messages we send, and can also affect the way we present "reality" to our clients.

We'll discuss all these influences, and look at how we as professionals can choose appropriate language to create the perceptions we want to convey. Through our use of language, we can present birth as either a scary, overwhelming thing, or something that women have control over and an inherent ability to do with power and dignity. Altering our language can have a significant impact on how effectively we communicate.

One important aspect of the use of language is in the distinction between providing information and support on the one hand, and offering advice or recommendations on the other. This is a crucial distinction to make, and we'll look at why it is important, and how doula and childbirth educators can alter their communication strategies to assist women in claiming their own power and responsibility – one of the most important goals in this work.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the effect language can have on caregivers, supporters, and parents.
- Explain the importance of being comfortable using explicit language in your work
- Demonstrate 3 expressions of body language that could influence communication.
- List 5 ways cultural background can influence the effectiveness of communication.
- Give 3 examples each of appropriate language for minimizing gender bias, avoiding euphemisms, appropriate use of technical language,

and employing sensitive language.

- Explain the difference between offering information and giving advice or recommendations, and describe the impact giving advice can have on the effectiveness of support and on client empowerment.

### Topics covered will include:

- The power of language
- Explicit language
- Body language
- Language and culture
- Appropriate language
- Advice, recommendations, and support

## Active Listening Skills

Listening effectively enables us to understand the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of our clients and recognize their current level of understanding. This can help us know what information or support they need, or what skills they might like to develop.

Sometimes our clients don't want information or input – they may just need a listening ear. When we allow others the space to speak freely, they may identify their own misconceptions, fears, or the steps they need to take.

Effective listening is not a passive state. It is not just the absence of speaking. Listening is not "letting others speak." Listening effectively is an *active* skill, and it takes practice and work to develop and maintain this skill!

In this unit we will look at the barriers to effective listening, including lack of awareness of listening skills, assumptions and judgment, personal baggage, filling space, misinterpreting communication, distraction, and noise. We'll explore techniques for active listening that you can use with clients and with anyone and everyone else in your life, including reflective listening, paraphrasing, using silence, and prompts. We'll also look at the four steps to developing these active listening skills.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Identify 4 indicators of effective listening.
- List 5 potential negative consequences of failing to listen effectively.
- Describe 7 common barriers to effective listening.

- Describe and demonstrate 4 active listening skills.

### Topics covered will include:

- The power of language
- Why listen?
- Barriers to effective listening
- Active listening skills

## Reflective Practice

Reflection is a process through which we look not only at *what* happened in a situation, but *why*. Reflection enables us to go beyond the surface of our experiences and to explore the reasons why we and others acted in certain ways, what influenced us, what choices we made, and whether those choices supported our goals. With reflection, we are able to see a whole range of alternatives we may not have identified at the time of the event in question, and can examine why we did not identify and/or choose any of those alternatives. Reflection helps us to be aware of our own power, even if at times we realize that we didn't use our power.

Reflection benefits us not only in our own personal and professional lives, but also leads us to begin asking different, more effective, questions of our clients, providing them with a vision of a more empowered way of acting. Many clients may never have considered this approach before. If we "walk our talk" by being willing to question our own assumptions and actions, we encourage others to do so as well, and this is a crucial step in making a difference in the world of maternity care.

As we all know, maternity care is filled with practices that are done "just because" or "because it's always been done that way." Healthcare professionals are more likely to change their own approach to care if consumers – in this case, pregnant women – are asking

good questions and refusing to do things "just because." As doulas and childbirth educators, we can be part of the movement to use those skills to make a difference.

In this unit we will look closely at what reflective practice is all about, what the benefits are of using it, and we'll explore several different methods of using reflection. The first step in making a difference in our clients' experiences, and in the world of birth and parenting, is to start within, with our own ability to reflect. The skills you will learn in this unit will also be used to complete the main assignment for the communications unit, your reflective practice essay.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the processes of recount and reflection and the differences between them.
- Explain 5 benefits of reflective practice as a professional skill for doulas and childbirth educators.
- Describe 3 frameworks that can be used for reflection.

- Write a reflective account of your own choices and decisions.

**Topics covered will include:**

- What is reflective practice?
- Why reflect?
- Recount vs. reflection
- Using a reflective practice framework
- Writing a reflective journal

## Values and Diversity

As doulas and childbirth educators, we are likely to often find ourselves working with clients and colleagues who have completely different belief systems and lifestyles from us. Depending on the family and culture a person was raised in, he or she may have very different ideas of what is "right or wrong" and "good or bad." In order to work effectively with people who are different from us, it is helpful first to have a clear sense of our own values and biases, and then to understand how we can respect the beliefs of others, even if we don't always agree with them. It is also helpful to know what our boundaries are, whether there are situations we feel we cannot support, and how we will communicate these limits to clients. We may find that in examining our own values closely, as well as considering the multicultural world we live in, we are able to be more comfortable with diversity and see it as a strength rather than a threat.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the difference between ethics and morals and discuss how they affect working relationships with clients and caregivers.
- Identify your core personal values and your biases.
- Describe the value of respecting other belief systems.

**Topics covered will include:**

- Ethics and morals
- Evaluating our values and biases
- Ethics and our culture
- Respecting other belief systems
- Gender roles in different cultures
- Embracing difference

## Grief and Loss

Supporting families through loss and grief is one of the most challenging areas of both childbirth education and doula support. This is one area that students and experienced practitioners alike often dread. In this unit we'll explore theories of grief to give you an

overview of the ways the grief process can be understood, and we'll look in some detail at individual forms of loss, such as miscarriage, stillbirth, illness, or infertility. We'll examine how families experience such losses, and the issues they may face in the aftermath. We'll also look at how you can support clients in maintaining control over their decisions and making their experience a positive and empowering one, before, during, and after a loss, even if their experience is one they would never have chosen. And finally we'll talk about the importance of looking after ourselves during such a time.

#### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Explain 3 theories of the processes of grief.
- Identify relevant issues for parents facing major forms of loss such as miscarriage, stillbirth, or subfertility.
- List things a doula or childbirth educator can do to help grieving parents before, during, or after the loss.
- Describe ways that men and women differ in their expression of grief.
- Identify sources of community and other support available for clients.

#### Topics covered will include:

- Theories of grief
- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth and neonatal death
- Disability or illness in a child
- Infertility and subfertility
- Termination of pregnancy
- Other forms of grief and loss
- Men and grief
- Providing support for grieving families
- Caring for yourself following grief

### Communication Assignment

Once you have completed the communication module you can write and submit your communication assignment. This assignment is common to all Childbirth International training programs so if you are doing more than one course you will only need to submit it once.

You are required to write a reflective account of a challenging experience.

***If you have given birth:*** you are required to write a reflective account of the birth of one of your own children, or of a postpartum experience. Some students feel that a postpartum experience is more relevant to them - for example, if your baby spent time in special care, breastfeeding was particularly challenging, or you struggled with postpartum depression. You may choose either a birth reflection or a postpartum one, whichever you feel is more appropriate.

***If you have adopted a baby:*** if you have not given birth but adopted a child, you can choose to write about the experience of adopting or of any parenting experiences that were particularly challenging.

***If you have never given birth:*** You are required to write a reflective account of an event in your life that was particularly challenging for you: for example, a career change, whether or not to stay in a relationship, a decision that went against the status quo or issues with relatives, friends or business partners. Students who have not had children often find it more difficult to come up with an appropriate topic. The following list may provide you with some ideas.

- The death or illness of a loved one

- Miscarriage, termination or infertility
- Deciding whether or not to stay in a relationship
- Major career change
- Abusive relationship
- Decision whether or not to end a business partnership
- Significant difference of opinion with a close friend
- Decision to move to a new area or country
- Crime committed against you
- Strained relationship with a parent or a sibling
- Discovering something in your family that shocked you (e.g. that a parent had previously had an affair, or a sibling was adopted)
- Difficulty in coming to terms with your own, or a close friend/family members sexuality
- Something that happened that caused you to question your faith

You **MUST** use the Childbirth International reflective practice framework or model to write your paper. Using a model is absolutely key to this assignment. Following the model when you are writing your paper will help to ensure you cover each area required for reflection. It is helpful to lay the assignment out so the stages or steps of the model you choose become subheadings - this way you cover all the steps in a logical sequence and it is easier to focus on each step.

### **Step 1 : Description**

The beginning of the paper should include a description of the event you are writing about. Do not talk about how you felt or other choices you could have made at this stage. Simply describe what happened.

Explain what your goals or expectations were at the time. What did you hope would happen? Did you expect everything to go smoothly? Was your only goal to avoid a cesarean or to breastfeed your baby? Were you hoping to have a home birth, or expecting to parenting a straightforward process?

### **Step 2: Feelings**

At the time, what were you feeling? What about others? Your family, partner, caregivers? Immediately after the event, what were you feeling? What do you think caused these feelings? Think about the events or people that led you to feel the way you did. For example, perhaps you were feeling angry. Who were you angry at and why were you angry at them? What had they done or said that led you to feel angry?

### **Step 3: Actions**

Your actions are the things that you did, or the choices you made. In what way did they meet your goals? Look back at the goals and expectations that you listed in step 1. Then think about the things you did. Do you think the choices you made were aligned with your

goals or were they different? What reasons were there for the differences? What other choices were available to you and why do you think you did not choose them? There are almost always other choices available to us. They may not be acceptable at the time but it is important to recognize that they were there. For example, you may have chosen a caregiver who had an active management approach and a high rate of interventions. At the time, you could have explored an alternative caregiver. This may not have been an attractive option if your insurance only covered one caregiver and you did not have the finances to choose another, but it was still an option.

#### Step 4: Learning

What do you feel now, looking back on the event? If your feelings have changed, how have they changed and why do you think that is? What have you learnt about yourself and others as a result of this experience and the way you have chosen to feel about it?

#### Step 5: Application

How has the process of reflection helped you? In what way will the event and your subsequent reflection of it change the way you work as a doula or childbirth educator?



# SYLLABUS

## PHYSIOLOGY IN BIRTH

Gain a thorough understanding of the anatomy and physiology of pregnancy, birth and the early postpartum period.

All student materials are focused on evidence-based care. Evidence-based means medical practice that is based on research. The opinions and thoughts of experts on pregnancy and birth are referred to throughout your student manuals - it is important to hear the views of others in the field to build your own knowledge base.

### Physiology in Pregnancy

Having a good understanding of the normal processes that surround pregnancy and childbirth is imperative for both childbirth educators and labor supporters. It will enable you to better comprehend when abnormal events occur and develop your skills in assisting clients to care for themselves during the childbearing year. During this unit you will cover the physiology of normal pregnancy. You will develop a thorough understanding of the development of the fetus from conception through to term, the anatomy of a woman's body and the changes that occur to the woman during pregnancy.

#### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the physiology of normal pregnancy.
- Describe the process of human reproduction.
- Identify features of the female pelvis.
- Explain the role of the pelvic floor.
- Explain the role of the placenta in pregnancy

#### Topics covered will include:

- The female pelvis
- Female reproductive organs
- Menstruation & conception
- Normal fetal development
- Development of the placenta
- Changes in the mother during pregnancy

### Physiology in Labor and Birth

Understanding the physiology of labor and birth is fundamental as part of the knowledge base of childbirth educators and labor supporters. Recognizing the stages of labor, how a woman may respond to labor and the different patterns that labor can take all help you to communicate and support your clients effectively. During this unit you will cover the physiology of normal labor and birth. You will develop a thorough understanding of the processes and mechanisms of labor.

#### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the stages of labor.
- Recognize indications of labor progress.
- Identify normal labor patterns.
- Explain the process of labor in relation to the baby.

#### Topics covered will include:

- The female pelvis
- Initiation of labor
- Stages of labor
- Indicators of progress
- Emotional responses to labor
- Variations of normal labor
- The baby during labor

## Physiology After the Birth

During this unit we will explore the normal physiology of the early postpartum period -- the first few weeks after the birth of a baby. We will discuss the events that are normal for this period of time, recovery of the mother and the emotional changes that typically occur. We will also learn about the complex process of respiration in the neonate as the baby is born.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the physiology of the early postpartum period.
- Explain the sequence of events in the postpartum period.
- Explain the physiology of the delivery of the placenta.
- Describe respiration in the fetus and the neonate.

- List normal feelings of the mother after the birth.

### Topics covered will include:

- The female pelvis
- Physiological changes in the mother
- Physiological changes in the newborn
- Psychological changes in the mother
- Newborn in the postpartum period
- Maternal recovery

## Healthy Eating and Exercise

We put a lot of emphasis in Childbirth International courses on physiology because a woman's physical changes and adaptations both in pregnancy and in the postpartum period are so fundamental to a whole family's experience during the perinatal year. For similar reasons, we now turn to look at the role of healthy eating and exercise because nutrition and physical activity are cornerstones of a woman's physical and emotional wellbeing at any stage of life and perhaps most especially at a time of such great change as the birth of a baby. A woman's nutrition also has an impact on the health of her baby, and can even influence the health of her partner and other children. When the mother in a family eats more healthfully, the rest of the family are likely to follow!

While the specific links between diet and pregnancy outcome are not always simple and clear, many of the complications that can arise in pregnancy, such as diabetes, are made worse by poor nutrition and lack of exercise. Research shows benefits to women who adopt a healthy diet early in pregnancy. In her book *Safer Childbirth: A Critical History of Maternity Care*, epidemiologist Marjorie Tew explains that while reductions in maternal mortality rates are often said to be due to the fact that birth now takes place in hospital, it is actually more likely that these health improvements resulted from the fact that women began to have access to healthier foods and better living conditions.

We use the term "diet" to mean the range of foods a woman eats in a day or a week, not "diet" in the sense of a structured weight-loss plan. A woman's activity level also ties into her physical and emotional health. In this unit we'll look at what is "healthy eating," the nutrients that are the building blocks of nutrition, how diet affects the health of the mother and baby, and what happens when the diet or level of exercise may be contributing to ill health. We'll also look at the benefits of exercise and tips on getting active.

An understanding of these principles is helpful for you as a birth professional so that you can support women who may lack basic information about healthy eating and its role in wellbeing, or who may feel overwhelmed at the idea of making changes in their diet or

level of activity.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the basic principles of how what the mother eats affects her health and the health of her baby during pregnancy and in the postpartum period.
- List the basic elements of healthy eating and describe their functions.
- Describe 2 functions of each nutrient.
- List 5 food sources for each nutrient.
- Identify risks of a poor diet.
- Explain how nutrition affects and pregnancy, fetal growth, and maternal wellness, and discuss nutritional guidelines for pregnancy.
- Explain how nutrition affects and supports breastfeeding, and discuss nutritional guidelines for breastfeeding.
- Explain how diet plays a role in several illnesses and complaints a woman may experience in pregnancy and in the postpartum period.
- List 3 strategies woman can use to improve their

diet in general and to address diet-related illnesses and complaints.

- Discuss benefits and disadvantages of measuring maternal weight gain and fetal growth during pregnancy.
- List special dietary needs for specific groups of people such as vegetarians, adolescents, or diabetics.
- Describe the basic principles of how exercise affects a woman's health and wellbeing during pregnancy and in the postpartum period.

### Topics covered will include:

- Elements of healthy eating
- Overview of nutrients
- Health and diet in pregnancy
- Teratogens and toxins
- Food and drink while breastfeeding
- Diet-related illnesses and complaints
- Special dietary needs
- Exercise

## Pain in Labor

For many women, the fear of pain during labor is their major concern throughout their pregnancy. Understanding why women experience pain during labor, the options available for managing the pain and the benefits and disadvantages of each option, is important if you are to help your clients be truly informed during labor. During this unit we will explore the concept of pain itself and develop a deeper understanding of options available. We will also discuss in detail the pharmacology of each pain relief method available in the hospital environment and learn how they provide pain relief in the body.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List the reasons for pain in labor.
- Identify options available for pain relief in your community.
- Identify pros and cons of pain relief options.
- Explain the pharmacology of pain-relieving drugs used in labor.

### Topics covered will include:

- Understanding pain
- The physiology of labor pain
- Attitudes to pain
- Management options for pain relief in labor
- Non-pharmaceutical pain relief options
- Pharmaceutical pain relief options

## Management of Labor

Active management of labor has become the typical approach in most health care units around the world. During this unit we will explore the concepts of active management and how it differs from an expectant approach. We will consider the different components of active management, the reasons they are utilized and the potential consequences they can have on a woman in labor and her baby.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List the reasons for pain in labor.
- Discuss the differences between active and expectant management.
- Describe the processes of active management.
- Explain the potential consequences of active management.
- Describe the concept of "cascade of intervention."

### Topics covered will include:

- Active management versus expectant management
- Expected due dates
- Electronic fetal monitoring
- Time limits during labor
- Induction of labor
- Augmentation of labor
- Episiotomy
- Third stage management

## Routine Procedures During Labor

During this unit we will consider the standard routines that many women experience when they choose to have their babies in a hospital or birthing center environment. We will explore the reasons for routine procedures and the potential consequences of these. We will also discuss alternatives to routine procedures.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List the reasons for pain in labor.
- List routine procedures for pregnant and laboring women.
- Explain the reasons for routine procedures.
- Explain the potential consequences for routine procedures.

### Topics covered will include:

- Vaginal examinations in pregnancy
- Vaginal examinations during labor
- Eating & drinking during labor
- What a woman wears during labor
- Limiting mobility
- Breathing and pushing techniques
- Separation of mother & baby
- Vitamin K administration

## Cesarean and Vaginal Birth After Cesarean

Cesarean rates continue to increase in most countries around the world despite the risks to the mother and the baby. During this unit we will consider the reasons for the increasing cesarean rate and possible indications for cesarean birth. We will also explore the consequences of cesarean and the alternatives available. We will look at vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC), the true risks and benefits and under what circumstances a VBAC may not be available.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List the indications for a cesarean.
- Discuss the differences between planned and unplanned cesareans.
- Explain the procedures of a cesarean.
- Discuss the typical recovery process after a cesarean.
- Identify risks of VBAC.
- Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of VAC.

- Explain contraindications for VBAC.

### Topics covered will include:

- Indications for cesarean birth
- Planned cesarean versus elective
- Benefits and disadvantages of cesareans
- Pain relief options for cesareans
- Understanding the procedure of a cesarean
- Recovery after a cesarean
- VBAC and uterine rupture

## Introduction to Lactation

Research evidence is very clear: breastmilk is the best form of nutrition for babies. Not only is breastmilk best for babies, *breastfeeding* is also healthier for their mothers. Breastmilk is the most perfect form of food, providing exactly the right balance of nutrients a baby needs, available round the clock with no preparation, and breastfeeding has the capacity to prevent disease and illness in woman and infants both in the short term and many years later in life. In some parts of the world breastfeeding can often mean the difference between life and death.

We recognize that for some women breastfeeding is difficult. Others prefer not to try breastfeeding at all, as they do not like the idea of it. There is no doubt, however, that breastfeeding is the healthiest choice and formula-feeding introduces a wide range of health risks – even the expensive “high-end” brands of formula available in the developed world. But *why* is breastfeeding so healthy? What are the risks of formula feeding?

As a provider of childbirth classes or postpartum support you will often be called upon to provide information on breastfeeding. You may also be asked to answer questions or provide support to women who are experiencing breastfeeding problems. During this introduction to lactation unit we will discuss how the woman's body makes breastmilk and how the process of lactation works. We will also explore the more common problems that women experience, and understand what causes these problems. Finally, we will consider formula feeding market and the effect on breastfeeding.

This module provides an introduction or overview of lactation. It is **not** designed to prepare you to work as a breastfeeding counselor.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the benefits of breastfeeding to mother and baby.
- Explain the anatomy of the breast.
- Explain the physiology of lactation.
- Describe positioning.
- Discuss techniques for supporting a woman with

problems.

### Topics covered will include:

- Why Breastfeed?
- Breast anatomy
- Lactation physiology
- Establishing breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding problems

## Prenatal Testing and Screening

Prenatal tests have quickly become a routine procedure for pregnant women with few questioning the tests themselves. In this unit we will discuss the various tests available and explore the effectiveness, accuracy and risks associated with each of them. We will also consider the impact on families who choose to have prenatal tests and identify some of the ethical issues relevant to this topic.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the different prenatal tests available.
- Explain the benefits and disadvantages of each test.
- Explain the difference between screening and diagnosis.

- Discuss the ethical issues related to testing.

### Topics covered will include:

- The implications of testing
- Screening tests
- Diagnostic tests
- Ultrasound scanning
- Ethical issues with testing and screening

# SYLLABUS

## BIRTH DOULA SKILLS

Develop your hands-on skills as a Birth Doula, enabling you to provide the best care possible, and identify strategies for establishing and developing your business.

Childbirth International is the only doula training organization to have developed models and tools that can be used in your work as a doula. Many doulas become frustrated when clients make choices that are inconsistent with what they have said they would like for their births. The strong focus on understanding perspective is a core component of the Childbirth International doula training program. You will learn how to use these models and tools to enhance your relationships with clients and increase your enjoyment in your work.

### Becoming a Birth Professional

This unit on becoming a birth professional is included in all CBI courses. Whether you are studying to be a birth doula, childbirth educator, postpartum doula, or breastfeeding counselor -- or all four -- this material is for you. We'll refer to all of you as "birth professionals."

Childbirth educators, labor supporters, postpartum doulas and breastfeeding counselors have the privilege to share a very special time with a family, the time around the birth of a baby. This privilege comes with unparalleled rewards but also intense challenges. In this unit, we will explore the roles and responsibilities of birth and parenting professionals, and discuss the benefits to the family of support at this time. We will also explore the stresses you may confront, and how these can be managed. Finally, you'll have the opportunity to explore your own personal goals and begin to plan how you will reach them.

#### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List 5 types of support available to families.
- Describe the role of each type of birth professional.
- List the responsibilities each type of birth professional.
- Explain the benefits of support in the perinatal period.
- Identify typical areas of stress for birth professionals, and identify the unique stresses you personally may be likely to encounter.

- Identify your personal goals for your work.
- Write a 3-point plan for achieving each of your goals

#### Topics covered will include:

- Types of support available to families
- Roles and responsibilities
- Benefits of support during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum
- Family and work stresses for birth professionals
- Recognizing your personal goals
- Achieving your goals

### Establishing Your Practice

This unit on establishing your practice is included in all CBI courses. We again refer to all of you together as "birth professionals."

When you start out as a birth professional, you may have passion and commitment to the work, but feel unsure about the "business" end of things. How will you find clients? How will you keep a steady stream of work coming in? What sort of paperwork will you need to

do? Are there legal matters you have to attend to for setting up a business? You may find that word of mouth is already bringing you clients and feel that you could manage on an informal basis without much in the way of business "planning." However, in the longer term, your business is more likely to be successful if you have a plan in place for marketing it (getting the word out) and for supporting the administrative side of things. You may also save yourself a lot of headaches down the road by attending to these details from the start.

In this unit, we'll show that the mysteries of setting up and running a business are not so hard to crack after all. We'll help you get ready to build your business step-by-step, including using marketing strategies to find clients, dealing with paperwork, and handling the legal side of things (taxes, liability, insurance, etc.). We'll look at the importance of establishing a support network for yourself to help meet your needs for professional feedback, discussion, and emotional support. Finally, we'll explore ways you can continue your learning and skills development.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Identify the specific services you will offer, based on an analysis of the market in your area.
- List 5 strategies for marketing your business and building your client base.
- Design and write the forms and documents you'll need for your business.
- List the equipment and supplies you'll need or want to start your business.
- Identify the facilities you'll need to offer your services.
- Describe the payment policies you will adopt, and identify any challenges you expect you might encounter in dealing with payment issues.
- Identify the legal requirements and options for setting up a business and arranging liability insurance in your area.
- Identify sources of professional and personal

support.

- Identify avenues for continuing your learning.

### Topics covered will include:

- Developing a marketing plan
- Promoting your business and developing promotional and identity materials (website, business cards, etc.)
- How clients will contact you
- Handling business paperwork, including administrative records, business expenses, and taxes
- Equipment and supplies
- Facilities
- Charging fees (fee structures, payment options, asking for money, etc.)
- Legal requirements and insurance
- Support and networking
- Continuing your learning

## Developing Your Doula Skills

This unit will assist you in developing techniques that help you to support a woman during labor and birth, as well as the early postnatal period. We will look at massage techniques, positioning and relaxation methods. We will identify the types of labor's that can be challenging to both the parents and the doula such as precipitate birth and posterior babies. During the unit we will consider the different roles of each person supporting the mother and how a doula can help during an emergency situation. Finally, we will briefly overview complimentary therapies and how a doula can utilize these to help clients.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List techniques that help to support a woman during a normal labor, including massage, positioning, and relaxation methods.
- Identify types of labor that may be more challenging for a doula.
- Explain the different roles of the supporters at a labor.
- List ways that a mother may want support in the

early postpartum period.

- Identify the doula's role during an emergency.

### Topics covered will include:

- Physical techniques
- Difficult labors
- Other supporters and their role
- Postpartum support
- Coping during an emergency
- Introduction to complimentary therapies

## Recognizing Perspectives on Birth and Parenting

This unit is one that is studied by all CBI students, in all our courses, because the topic of recognizing perspectives is essential to the work of birth doulas, childbirth educators, postpartum doulas, and breastfeeding counselors. (We'd argue it's essential for doctors, midwives, and nurses too!) We will refer to all of you reading this as "birth professionals," whether you intend to work with parents primarily in pregnancy and birth, or primarily postpartum, or both.

One of the most important skills in supporting parents during pregnancy, birth, and parenting is to be able to recognize the perspective our clients have on their own experiences, and to understand how that perspective affects her choices and her chances of reaching her goals. Understanding clients' perspective is also crucial in knowing how to effectively support clients. The first step in recognizing a client's perspective is to listen and *hear* her. Echoing the work we did on active listening in the communication units, we'll again look here at how to focus on what the client needs, not what we are eager to offer. One of the primary orientations of our work is that it is about the *client*, not about us!

CBI has developed a tool called the Hierarchy of Birth and Postpartum Experience to help you identify where your client is "at," to understand what she is looking for (even when her words may not match her actions), and to understand in turn what you can do to support her most effectively. Working with this tool helps you to meet your clients' needs but also to avoid the burnout and frustration that so many birth and parenting practitioners face, especially when they see their clients making choices that lead to intervention they said they didn't want. In addition, CBI has provided a tool called WIGWAM – another way of looking at what a client *says* she wants, and what she is willing to *do* to make it happen. Understanding these tools and how they apply to your clients can help prevent you from becoming frustrated when a client's actions are inconsistent with her expectations or preferences.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Describe characteristics of the 5 levels of birth and postpartum experience
- Explain how to determine the client's position on the Hierarchy
- Describe how you can support a client at each level of the Hierarchy
- Give 3 examples of unrealistic expectations cli-

ents may have and describe how to alert the client in a sensitive way that she may need to adjust her expectations.

### Topics covered will include:

- Hearing what our clients are saying
- Separating our own perspectives from our clients'
- Hierarchy of Birth and Postpartum Experience
- Managing expectations

## Using Doula Skills to Help Malpositioning

Malpositioning commonly leads to prolonged and difficult labors. During this unit we will explore the common causes of malpositioning and the effect it can have on labor. You will learn how to recognize malpositioning based on simple markers and how to most effectively support a woman in these circumstances. We will discuss optimal fetal positioning, how it is thought to be beneficial, and how you can most effectively teach it to your clients. Finally we will discuss rotational positioning, a technique developed by Childbirth International, to help encourage a baby to adopt a more effective position once the mother is already in labor.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- List common causes of malpositioning.
- Explain the potential consequences of malpositioning for the mother and the baby.
- List markers to identify malpositioning.
- Explain optimal fetal positioning.
- Explain rotational positioning.

### Topics covered will include:

- Causes of posterior positioning
- Consequences of posterior positioning
- Recognizing posterior positioning
- Optimal fetal positioning
- Rotational positioning
- Supporting in a posterior labor

## Why cover these topics?

Many doula training programs focus on doula skills - the kinds of things you can do to help women during labor such as massage and a double hip squeeze. Why does CBI feel it is important to cover so much more?

Being a birth doula is more than just rubbing a woman's back during labor. Most of the hard work is done well before labor ever starts. Choosing the right caregiver, preparing physically and emotionally for the arrival of a baby, dealing with unexpected events - all of these are things that a doula can help with. At CBI we make sure you have a thorough grounding in all these areas and more.

There are two things that seasoned doulas will tell you is tough about this work - coping with situations that you feel uncomfortable with, and struggling with the business side of being a doula. We have these both sorted! As a student you will develop strong communication skills, learning the important skills of reflective practice and effective listening. You will also cover all the business aspects - how to build your client base, paperwork, forms and legal issues, advertising and promoting your business.

**There is no doubt, Childbirth International can provide you with the most comprehensive training available!**