**Dad's and Doulas: Working together**

Many dads-to-be worry that a doula will replace them at the birth. A father may worry that his partner doesn’t trust him enough to be a support for her during labor. He may also be concerned that a doula’s presence at the birth will remove the intimacy of the moment.

But a doula can never replace the father’s role, which is to be there to love and support his partner. Plus, he also experiences the birth of the child, in his own way. As far as the doula interfering with the intimacy of the moment, the doula is only one member of the birth team, which includes nurses, a doctor or midwife, and sometimes other specialists. In fact, a doula can often help create that intimate feel by helping shoo the nurses or doctors out of the room for a moment, so the about-to-be-new-parents can be alone for awhile.

A doula is there to help the father, as much as she helps the mother. The fact of the matter is, our society places a great deal of pressure and responsibility on the father-to-be during labor. A childbirth class isn’t enough to prepare a new, nervous dad to support his wife through what may be one of the most difficult and challenging moments in her life. Is it fair to expect the father to remain 100% focused and calm, when his wife is struggling?

A doula can help support the father, so he can concentrate on his wife. Here are some of the many ways dads and doulas work together.

**Behind the Scenes Birth Coach**

For the father who wants to really be active and provide all the physical and emotional support, the doula can help with hints, reminders, and advice during the birth, so he can just focus on his wife.

Is the mother having back labor? The father may not recognize this, or even know what to do. But the doula is trained to figure out what’s bothering the mother the most, and all the possible ways to help her feel more comfortable. The doula can tell the dad what she thinks would help his wife best, while he does the actual work and support.

The doula can also bring drinks and snacks to the father, so he can keep up his energy during the long labor. She can take the time to speak with nurses or seek out extra pillows, allowing the father to stay with his wife without interruption.

**Tag Team Birth Support**

Most labors last several hours, sometimes lasting 12 hours and longer. A doula’s presence allows the father to take guilt free breaks. He can go get a bite to eat, or take a nap, without feeling that he left his wife alone.

Whether he needs to take just a few breaks during labor, or he prefers to switch every hour with the doula to keep his energy up, it will allow the mother to feel supported and cared for continuously.

**Chance to Just Experience the Birth**

As mentioned earlier, society places a lot of pressure on fathers to provide the sole support for their partner’s during labor. But many fathers would prefer to just experience the moment with their wives, without the pressure to perform.

A doula can provide full support for the mother, allowing the father to take a back-seat from active support, and give him the chance to experience the birth along side her.

Before the birth, it’s important that the doula, mother, and father all sit together and talk about how they envision the childbirth. It’s also important that the father participate in choosing and hiring the doula, since they should both feel comfortable with whomever they choose to attend this special moment in their lives.

http://www.doula.com/dads\_and\_doulas.shtml

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