



BIRTH COMPANION VOLUNTEER - POSITION DESCRIPTION

A Birth Companion is a mature adult with an interest in and/or experience in pregnancy and childbirth who volunteers her time to support a woman during pregnancy, labour and delivery, and the early postpartum period. The work of a Birth Companion is "situation responsive" and focuses on maintaining a healthy lifestyle as a woman prepares mentally, physically and emotionally for the birth of her baby.

A Birth Companion is sensitive, compassionate, flexible, dependable and non-judgmental. There are times when great patience, understanding and stamina are required.

Responsibilities:

- Meet with the expectant woman on a regular basis throughout the pregnancy.
- Provide emotional support and encouragement throughout her pregnancy.
- Provide links to other community resources when necessary.
- Meet her doctor/midwife at one of her appointments.
- Encourage her to attend prenatal classes and accompany her to classes that discuss labour and delivery.
- Encourage her to attend regularly scheduled appointments.
- Meet the other support people who will be attending the birth (where possible).
- Discuss the prevention of pre-term birth as well as other prenatal lifestyle issues.
- Support the woman in her preparations for the labour and birth of her baby.
- Provide information and support about baby care.
- Be present with the woman once active labour begins and remain with her throughout the birthing process.
- Provide physical and emotional support and advocacy during the labour and delivery.
- In cases of adoption, provide additional emotional support as necessary.
- Visit the woman and her baby shortly after birth a few more times over the next eight weeks.
- Discuss the labour and delivery with the mother and encourage her to verbalize her feelings about it.
- Discuss with the mother her plans for the future.



- Answer questions about care of mom and baby, provide information on appropriate community supports.
- Discuss birth control methods and healthy sexual practices.
- Maintain regular contact with the program coordinator.
- Complete necessary documentation and evaluation forms and promptly forward them to the coordinator.
- Maintain strict confidentiality at all times and adhere to program policies.