

Birth and Postpartum Doula Support

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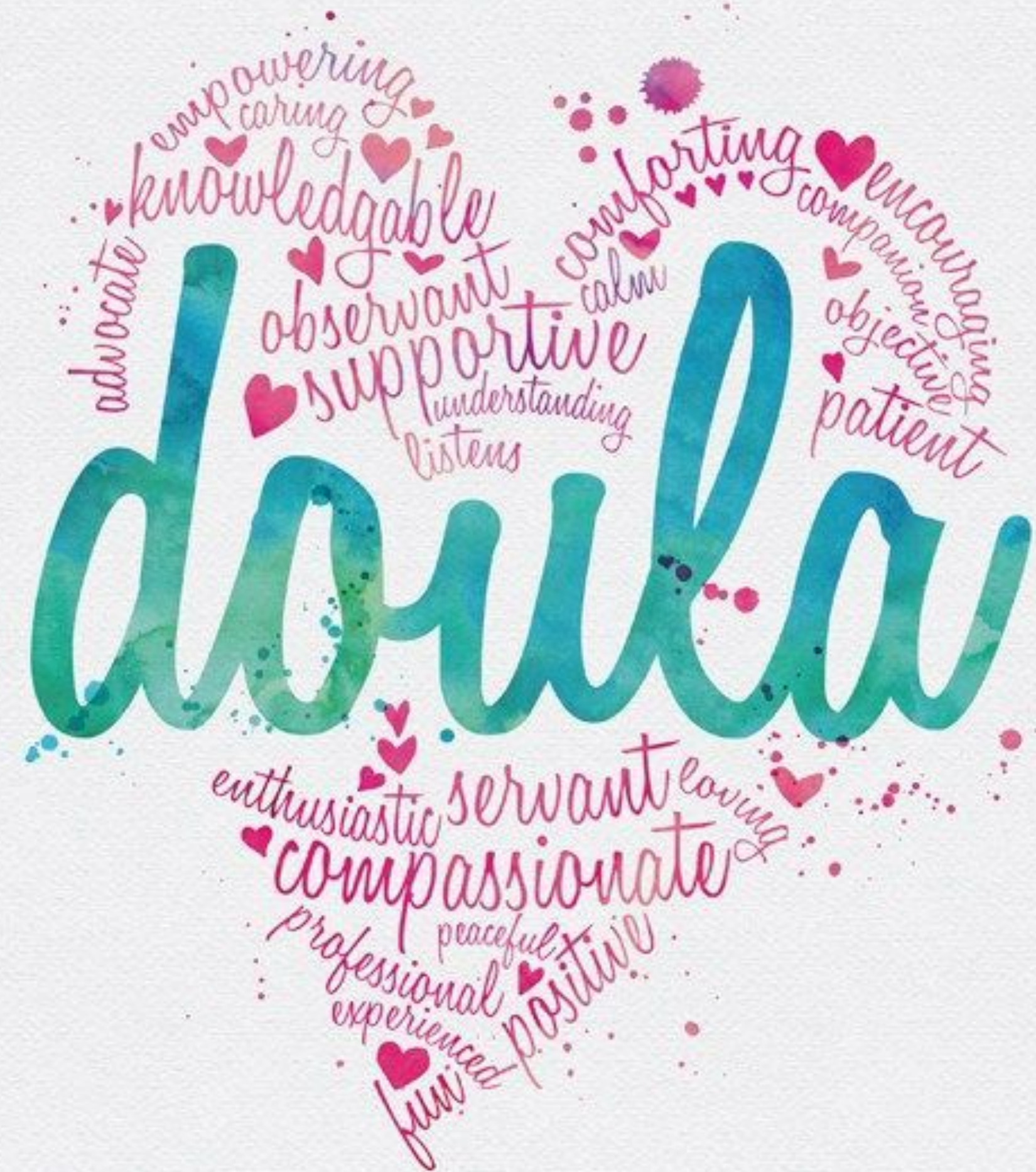
Who Am I?

Ste'Keira Shepperson



What is a Doula?

- A non-clinical support person who provides physical, emotional, and informational support during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period.
- Birth doula vs. Postpartum doula



Why is Doula Support Important?

According to research, women value and benefit from continuous labor support, including:

- Emotional Support
 - Continuous presence, reassurance and praise
- Informational Support
 - Labor progress
 - Coping techniques
 - Comfort measures
 - Speaking up when needed on behalf of the woman

“Modern obstetric care frequently means women are required to experience institutional routines. These may have adverse effects on the quality, outcomes and experience of care during labour and childbirth. Supportive care during labour may enhance physiological labour processes, as well as women's feelings of control and confidence in their own strength and ability to give birth. This may reduce the need for obstetric intervention and also improve women's experiences.”

Impact of Doulas on Healthy Birth Outcomes

Bohren, M.A., et al., 2017

Benefits of Birth Doula Support

- 28% Less likely to have a cesarean section
- 31% Less likely to use synthetic oxytocin to speed up labor
- 9% Less likely to use any pain medication
- 34% Less likely to rate their childbirth experience negatively.

Simpkins, 2016



Maternal Health

Improves with Doula Support

- Reduce the higher rates of maternal morbidity and mortality among African American women
- Decrease maternal anxiety and depression
- Reduce Cesarean-sections
 - C-sections contribute to the risk of maternal morbidity and mortality in initial and subsequent pregnancies
- Can help mitigate the effects of social determinants of health by addressing health literacy and social support needs
 - Help improve communication between low-income, racially/ethnically diverse pregnant women and their health care providers

March of Dimes, 2019



Infant Health

Improves with Doula Support

- Higher one-minute and five-minute Apgar scores
- Lower rates of preterm birth and low birthweight (Simpkins, 2019)
- Mothers experienced earlier onset of lactogenesis and were more likely to breastfeed babies at 6 weeks. (Gruber, Kenneth, J., et al., 2013)



Postpartum Doula Support

- Breastfeeding Support
- Physical and Emotional Support for recovery
- Light Housework/Meal Prep
- Newborn Care
- Sibling Care
- Encourage Self-Care
- Informational Support (referrals and resources)

Story Time

- Care Provider Options/Model of Care
- Building Social Support
 - Mom's Group
- Lack of Labor Support
 - Absent Partner, Deployment, & COVID
- Near Misses
 - Postpartum Bleeding & Pre-Term Labor
- Postpartum Support
 - Working Mom & Isolation



Barriers to Doula Support

Cost

- Doula support is not routinely covered by health insurance.
- Insurance coverage for doulas may:
 - Improve birth outcomes
 - Help close the gap in birth outcomes between African American and white women

Accessibility

- Increased training, support, and capacity development for doulas
- Diversity in field
- Cost of Training can be a barrier
- Sustainability
- Promotion from medical professionals

“If a doula were a drug, it would be unethical not to use it.”

Dr. John H. Kennell

Works Cited

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