International Childbirth Education Association

Postpartum Doula Program
Part 10: Replenishing the Doula Spirit –
Maintaining the Passion
Objectives:

- State reasons for including self-care in doula training.
- Discuss why doulas are set up for burnout.
- List ways to replenish the doula spirit and maintain the passion.
Self Care

- Doula self-care and a sense of well-being are critical to the quality of care she offers.
- Through attention to her own care, the doula models stability, confidence and a sense of calm to better support a new family in transition.
- Emphasis on self-care balances stressful workload of assisting new families and increases efficiency/satisfaction in her work.
- Replenishment efforts are mutually beneficial - everyone wins.
Burnout

- State of mind and body that results from cumulative effects of unrelenting stress
- Accompanied by physical/emotional/psychological exhaustion
- Negative attitudes about ourselves, clients, life in general occur
- Feel helpless, hopeless and apathetic about work
- Compassion fatigue – case specific burnout unique to those caring for others on the “front lines”
Doulas must constantly provide energy / expertise / compassion

Negative coping methods

- Tantrums
- Swearing
- Worrying
- Indulging
- Eating / drinking excessively
- Shopping / spending
- withdrawal
A multi-faceted support system is part of the answer
- those who listen
- give honest feedback
- challenge you
- provide unconditional support
- ground you in reality
- keep you on track
Examples of ways to nurture the doula spirit

- Talking with other doulas
- Talking to family/friends but always maintaining confidentiality
- Journaling
- Art therapy
- Visiting house of worship
- Meditation / prayer
- Visualization / imagery
- Relaxation techniques
Personal pampering - hot bath, walking, jogging, dancing, singing, music or artistic pursuits, tai chi, yoga, gardening, organizing, cooking, hobbies, etc.
- Get a massage / chiropractic care
- Playtime with partner or own children, or pets
- Attend periodic workshops for doulas or other retreats which focus on replenishing and building spirit
- Create and enjoy a special space, file or box of mementos, thank you notes, photos and letters from favorite clients, or any favorite items which remind her of why she is doing this important work.
- See a mental health expert
Ten Gentle Reminders
A doula’s self-care and sense of wellbeing is critical to the quality of care offered to others.

A doula models and projects calm, strength, wisdom, support and competency.

A doula’s strength is not due to endurance she can exhibit but to awareness of her own well-being in order to show this to others.
A doula’s support is intended to EASE the transition to new life and parenthood.

A doula supports normalcy even in the face of societal/cultural changes and the resulting lack of support.

A doula is a trusted, objective and non-judgmental guide for new parents.

A doula becomes relied upon for her calm and knowing demeanor.
A doula identifies needs for assistance outside her expertise and helps a family acquire this assistance when necessary.

A doula has a responsibility to herself and to her clients to model the self-care and self-worth that she promotes in new parents and babies.

A doula should know her limits, how to prioritize and manage time for herself.
Thank you for attending the ICEA Postpartum Doula Training

Questions????