Sexual Health and Doula Work

LRC is all about reflecting, respecting, and connecting through conversations. It’s New Beginnings hope that through these conversations we can grow as a community of doulas and bring that growth to our local communities as well.

*Introductions*

Ask each party to take a minute to state their name and where they are from and what is your favorite fall activity?

*Conversation Agreements*

* **Be curious and listen to understand.** Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. You might enjoy exploring how others’ experiences have shaped their values and perspectives.
* **Show respect and suspend judgment.** People tend to judge one another. Setting judgement aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated. Try to truly listen, without interruption or crosstalk.
* **Note any common ground as well as any differences.** Look for areas of agreement or shared values that may arise and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.
* **Be authentic and welcome that from others.** Share what’s important to you. Speak from your experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.
* **Be purposeful and to the point.** Do your best to keep your comments concise and relevant to the question you are answering. Be conscious of sharing airtime with other participants.
* **Own and guide the conversation.** Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and the conversation as a whole. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed. Use an agreed upon signal like the “time out” sign if you feel the agreements are not being honored.

What Is Sexual Health Defined As: “The World Health Organization defines sexual health as a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. “

*Round one*

What does sexual health mean to you?

*Round Two*

* Oftentimes the stigma behind STI’s/STD’s stops people from getting the help they need, in what ways would you reassure a client to seek medical attention?
* Clients disclose so much information to us, how do we help them when they are concerned about STI’s/STD’s that they have or are scared of contracting from their partner?\*
* 2SLGBTQIA+ Clients are often overlooked when it comes to sexual health needs, in what ways can you help them navigate a heteronormative medical system so that they can feel empowered throughout their pregnancy and childbirth?
* Sexual health also means dealing with the hard things like sexual harassment and r\*pe and sometimes the outcome of this is patterns and behaviours that may not be the best for us. How can you support your client's mental state through this?\*
* What does sexual health look like for you within birthwork?\*
* How do you approach the topic of sex and intimacy for a PP (Post Partum) client?
* Feeling sexy plays a part in sexual health, how do/can you as a doula support your client when they begin feeling less than?
* How do you talk to clients about being sexually safe?
* Some people are sex workers and continue this work through out their pregnancy, how do you as a doula be supportive and attentive to a client like this, while also helping them to ensure that them and their baby stays safe?\*

*Round Three*

What is the most meaningful take away for you, from this conversation?

Do you feel like you have more or less to contribute to this topic within your local community?

Is there anything that you would like to change going forward?

Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/sexualhealth/Default.html>

<https://mamaglow.com/sexual-health-intimacy-self-love-from-the-mama-glow-doula-perspective/>

<https://perchmagazine.com/meet-the-sexual-health-doula/>

<https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/sex-work-is-real-work-and-its-time-to-treat-it-that-way/>

[https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/08/07/why-sex-work-should-be-decriminalized#](https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/08/07/why-sex-work-should-be-decriminalized)