

## Living Well Dying Well and LWDW Training Ltd End of Life Doula Code of Practice

An End of Life Doula, whether in training, volunteering or fully certified, who is a member of the Living Well, Dying Well network agrees to adhere to the following guidelines:

### **Accountability**

- A Doula is accountable for his/her own practice in whatever environment they choose to work. In all circumstances the wishes and welfare of the client/family must be of primary importance. Trainees or Doulas are accountable to their LWDW mentor/supervisor.
- They will represent their education and experience truthfully and will not mislead other Doulas, clients or other health professionals (i.e. websites, leaflets, emails interviews, etc.) as to their level of Doula education or experience.
- They are honest and show integrity and respect at all times, towards their clients, Doula colleagues and the other professionals with whom they may be working alongside.
- They are advised to have clear written agreements with their clients.
- A Doula is advised to keep records of their activities e.g. of dates and times attending, deaths attended and in pre- and post-bereavement support roles.

### **Scope of Practice**

- Doulas offer 'counsel' and support, but not advice, to the client and family members.
- Their role is to explore various options, enabling them to make their own decisions about the appropriate course of action, and support them to act upon those decisions e.g. a Doula supports the client wherever and however they choose to live their last months or weeks, with or without medical intervention.
- They work to maintain the highest level of care and support possible, all the time striving to be sensitive, nurturing, empathic, non-judgemental, knowledge-based, flexible, reliable, well organised, practical and supportive of the client and family environment.
- Doulas do not perform clinical or medical tasks, diagnose medical conditions or give medical advice, even if trained as a health professional prior to becoming/or whilst working as a Doula.
- Likewise if the Doula is also qualified as a therapist in some other field and wishes to apply this skill in his/her practice, it must be made clear that they do this within the codes of professional practice of the therapy.
- Doulas signpost clients to other appropriate resources/professionals should their needs go beyond the scope of their Doula role.
- Doulas are aware that LWDW is unable to support them, should they choose to be present at a planned assisted death and should recognise in these circumstances they will be acting outside this Code of Practice.
- Where a Doula feels any uncertainty about their role, requests made of them by clients, families or other professionals or issues related to their own or others' practice, they should contact their nominated mentor/supervisor as soon as possible.

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### **Confidentiality**

- Doulas do not discuss personal and confidential information which has been disclosed to them by their clients in the course of their Doula work with them, without the express permission of those clients, except in situations as outlined in LWDW "Confidentiality" policy.

### **Maintaining Practice**

- Certified Doulas or trainees strive to develop and maintain positive work relationships within the LWDW Doula community.
- Doulas respect the values of the family or organisation and the environment in which they practice.
- They are sensitive, mindful and professional in their dress code.
- They make it their own responsibility to maintain/enhance their skills and education by being informed of End of Life Care matters and through attending courses, workshops and lectures, as Continuing Professional Development
- The Doula is committed to ongoing supervision and reflective practice.
- Takes responsibility for obtaining Professional Indemnity Insurance, when not covered by Living Well Dying Well's Volunteer Insurance.
- Will ensure they renew and maintain DBS status.

Reviewed: 5 April 2017

By A Davies

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