



Go Beyond a Birth Doula; Become a Birth Coach

Prenatal coaching tools and strategies by Neri L. Choma

Introductory meeting:

1. On your first no-cost meeting with your potential client, you are not only being interviewed, you are also interviewing them. Here are some interviewing skills:
 - Decide on a meeting place that is half the way between your location and of your potential client. Arrive there a little earlier to choose a good and quiet sitting area.
 - There is no “wrong” way to do this.
 - Have a healthy sense of curiosity about your potential client.
 - Start with one open question like:
 - *“So, why don’t you tell me what brings you to look for a doula?”*
 - *“Would you like to ask me questions you have prepared?”*
 - *“Do you want me to first tell you about myself?”*
 - *What are your hopes regarding your birth experience?*
2. Practice empathetic listening. Ask for more information and clarifications: For example: ‘When you say that you want to have a natural childbirth, what does it mean? Can you describe this experience to me?’
3. Contribute some knowledge and share experiences and examples – you are becoming a resource!
4. Make sure to write important information after the meeting so that you don’t forget to be personal when she calls back to hire you.

The first coaching meeting with your birth client:

The goals of the meeting are:

- 1) To clarify your client's needs and wishes for the birth.
- 2) To find out what is her motivation.
- 3) To find out what action does she take now in order to achieve her goals.
- 4) To become clear on your working relationships; why did she hire you? What does she see as your role? What needs to happen for your relationships to be successful?

The following coaching sessions with your client:

1. The goals of the meetings are:

- 1) To deepen your relationship, and establish your leadership position.
- 2) To reduce fears.
- 3) To empower.
- 4) To distinguish truth from myth and fear from reality.
- 5) To form a positive concept of childbirth.
- 6) To address any emerging issues.
- 7) To facilitate acceptance and adjustment if needed.
- 8) To practice labor support tools.

2. Suggested structure for coaching sessions:

- 1) 15 minute check in about her week, feelings and thoughts, area of practice, need of information, medical challenges, pregnancy symptoms that needs to be addressed or updates from clinic visits.
- 2) 20 – 25 minute coaching conversation: addressing emerging issues with context or PAL exercises, asking search questions, writing an affirmation and more coaching tools for empowerment and inviting change if needed.
- 3) 15 – 20 minutes practice of hands-on labor support tools like breathing, visualization, relaxation and positions.



Coaching session with the couple for writing the birth plan:

1. The goals of the meeting are:
 - 1) To get to know her partner's response to her wishes.
 - 2) To clarify the partner's level of involvement in the birth and how you may engage him.
 - 3) To clarify your role at the birth.
 - 4) To write the birth plan document for the medical staff. (You might want to bring birth plan templates with you to the meeting).
 - 5) To talk about a back-up doula, your communication plan with the onset of labor until you will arrive at their home/hospital, and to sign an agreement and pay the retainer fee for your doula support.

2. Below is the intake form I have been using for the past ten year at this meeting, you are welcome to download it, edit as you would like, and use it or your prenatal meetings.



Birth Plan Intake form by Neri Life- Choma

1. Client's Name _____
2. Partner's name _____
3. Address _____
4. Home phone no: _____
5. Mom's Cell: _____
6. Partner's cell: _____
7. Estimated due date _____ Birth no. _____
8. Birth facility _____
9. Care giver: _____
10. Do you plan on breastfeeding? _____

Do you plan to have a postpartum doula? Who will be your support after the birth?

11. Did you take a childbirth education class? In which philosophy? Why did you choose that one? _____

12. Did you take a childbirth education class? In which philosophy? Why did you choose that one? _____

13. What are your hopes and wishes for the birth?



14. Did you already fill a birth plan template or would you like us to do it now?
15. How do you feel about sharing these preferences with your caregiver? Did you already do so?
16. What do you most wish to avoid in your birth?

17. Do you have any concerns or fears regarding your nearing birth? Repetitive thoughts?

18. Partner: Can you please share your needs, wishes or concerns with me?

19. Please describe what you see as my role in your birth:



20. Labor support tools and techniques you prefer to use in your birth?

21. Is there any additional information you wish to share with me now so that this process will feel complete?

22. Strep B: Positive/negative

23. Gestational Diabetes Yes/No

24. Medications taken: _____

25. Back - up discussion

26. Birth plan copy

27. Retainer fee of \$ _____ out of \$ _____ was paid.

