

## The Interview

*"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."*

- Laozi, philosopher

One of the biggest and most empowering steps in your pregnancy and birthing journey, is hiring the right care provider. Someone that **will** hear you. Someone who **will** educate, not judge, respect, and support YOU. This human is going to be in your intimate space and help you bring another human into the world. As you begin your interviewing, consider some basics about your own birth philosophies and views. *Listen* and *trust* how you feel, as you meet these care providers. You are hiring this person! If this potential care provider makes you feel dumb, uneducated or fearful of the birth process, simply say: "Thanks for your time-NEXT!"

Depending on what you find online and what type of care provider you are seeking, choose the questions that are most applicable to your situation. Prioritize a few things that are the most important to you (insurance coverage, a woman, convenient office, natural & low-intervention approach, etc.)

- What is your birth philosophy?
  - A medical process which needs to be monitored and managed continuously?
  - A process which is fraught with potential minefields and requires preventative procedures?
  - A natural process where nature should take its course before interfering?
- How much choice do you see me having in the decision making process?
- What are your thoughts on pain relief during labor?
  - Do they assume you'll have pain relief like everyone else, or will they support and encourage natural pain relief methods?
  - Will they fully inform you about any side effects for you as well as your baby?
  - Will they encourage you to accept pain relief, or recommend against it if you are close to birthing your baby?
- How long have you been in practice?
- What hospitals and/or birth centers are you affiliated with? Where would I deliver?
- Is this a private or group practice? If it's a group practice, who will I meet with throughout my pregnancy, and who will deliver my baby? If it's a private practice, who is on-call when the doctor is not available?
- How many babies do you deliver each month?
- How much time do you allot for prenatal visits?
- Do you provide nutritional support during pregnancy and birth?
- How do you prefer to communicate? What are the after-hours policies? Are you available by phone or email for questions between visits, or is there a nurse who can provide advice?
- How do you accommodate patients' birth plan preferences?
- Thoughts on going over 40 weeks of pregnancy?
- What is your induction rate and when do you think it should be used?
- What is your c-section rate?
- Do you perform VBACs (vaginal birth after c-section)? What's your VBAC success rate?

- Do you perform episiotomies as a matter of course?
- How do you manage the third stage of labor (the placenta)?
- Do you have experience with high-risk pregnancies?
- What are your thoughts on waterbirth (if your birth place has that option)?
- What are your thoughts on Doula support during labor?

*If interviewing a Midwife, see additional questions at the bottom.*

### **Questions to Ask Yourself after the Interview**

- Did you like the doctor's style of communication and bedside manner?
- Did the doctor listen to your concerns and answer all your questions?
- Did you feel rushed during the interview?
- Did the doctor's views on pregnancy, childbirth, and medical care align with your own?
- Was the office clean?
- Were the nurses and office staff friendly and helpful?
- How long did you wait before being seen?
- Was the office conveniently located?
- How did I feel?

*If hiring a Midwife, here are a few more to add to the interview...*

- What is your training? What led you to becoming a Midwife?
- How many home births have you attended?
- What are your fees? What is included?
- What is your experience with herbs, homeopathy, and alternative medicine as pregnancy and labor support?
- Do you provide a birth kit or a place I can purchase?
- What kind of medication or tools do you have available in case of an emergency?
- What kind of intervention or treatments do you NOT have available?
- What is your transfer rate during labor?
- What hospital and care providers have you had positive experiences with?
- Do you offer or suggest taking childbirth preparation classes?