

VOLUNTEER DOULA INFORMATION SHEET

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN VOLUNTEERING AS A DOULA WITH BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND!

Here you will find all the information you need to understand how the program runs and whether it will be a good fit for you to join our growing team of passionate, caring, professional volunteer doulas.

WHO WE ARE

Birth for Humankind is a Melbourne-based not-for-profit organisation supporting women experiencing social and economic disadvantage throughout pregnancy and birth.

Our mission is to foster healthy families and communities by providing our clients with pregnancy support, education and holistic care before, during and after birth.

WHY WE EXIST

We believe that our maternal health system and our society can be better.

Our clients experience a range of risk factors that lead to significant disparities in maternal health outcomes. Almost 60% of our clients are from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds and/or young women under 25.

Many of our clients are also experiencing homelessness, issues related to mental health, substance misuse and/or a history of trauma and family violence.

Many clients are socially isolated, experiencing a lack of familial and emotional support. They will experience barriers to accessing information, interpreters and programs that provide continuity of care.

Guided by our values of trust, respect, equity, connection and celebration, we are committed to providing wholehearted support, education and care for free to women in our community who need it most.

DOULA SUPPORT PROGRAM

In our doula support program, we match referred clients with a trained volunteer doula who provides free one-to-one support during pregnancy, birth and after the baby is born. We also offer extended postnatal support to clients.

We currently have a team of almost 70 active volunteer doulas, with a diverse range of personal and professional backgrounds including health workers, social workers, student midwives, practising or retired midwives and doulas who run their own businesses.

Supported by our Doula Program Supervisors, our doulas receive ongoing professional development so they can better respond to the needs of our clients.

WHAT DOES VOLUNTEERING WITH BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND INVOLVE?

Eligibility Criteria:

To be eligible to volunteer as a doula with Birth for Humankind, you are required to:

- Attend a 2-day volunteer induction
- Live in Greater Melbourne or Geelong area
- Have completed a comprehensive doula training program, be a midwife or student midwife
- Have attended a minimum of three births in a professional capacity (not including birth of own children)
- Have a Working with Children Check (these are free for volunteers)
- Be willing to undergo a Police Check arranged by Birth for Humankind
- Agree to abide by our policies and Code of Practice
- Be committed to providing quality, impartial support to women from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds
- Be committed to providing a minimum of primary birth doula support to three clients, and backup doula support to three clients, or extended postnatal support to a minimum of three clients over an 18-month period

Birth for Humankind is committed to child safety and wellbeing. All employees and volunteers must also abide by our Child Safe Commitment Statement and Code of Conduct.



THE ROLE OF THE BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND DOULA

Birth Support:

The role of the primary doula is to provide support to women clients before, during and after the birth. Ideally, we aim to provide:

- 2-3 visits before the birth
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- 2 visits after the birth
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- 24/7 on-call availability from 38 weeks of pregnancy until the birth

Extended Postnatal Support [EPS]:

Doulas providing extended postnatal support will provide: 12 hours of postnatal support over a 6-week period (to be negotiated between client and doula. For example, this support might include 2 x 2 hr appointments in the first 2 weeks, 1hr per week for the next 4 weeks).

WHAT SUPPORT WILL I RECEIVE FROM BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND?

Birth for Humankind will provide:

- Induction training and professional development to meet Birth for Humankind requirements in working with specific client groups and in specific environments, such as public hospitals
- Supervision and debriefing
- Buddy system where you can access support from another one of Birth for Humankind doulas or share your work with a client together if needed, providing your client agrees to this
- Templates for all required reports, including meeting notes, birth report, evaluation, during and after the service
- A guided but flexible format for service delivery and respect for doulas' skills, knowledge and time
- Networking opportunities for Birth for Humankind doulas and staff
- Independent, confidential counselling and debriefing for any doulas who have faced challenging situations in their work with Birth for Humankind clients
- Expense allowances for work with each client you have engaged with.

HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE TO COMMIT?

We respect and value your time as a volunteer and understand that it's not always easy to juggle supporting births with existing life commitments.

When you join Birth for Humankind, you become part of our Birth for Humankind family.

As a volunteer doula, you will be expected to provide primary doula support to a minimum of three women and secondary/backup support to a minimum of three women through their pregnancy and births over 18 months.


If providing postnatal only support, you will be expected to support a minimum of three women during the postnatal period.

From the time that you are informed you have been accepted into our volunteer doula program, we make a financial investment in your training and professional development. It is therefore essential that you commit to the above expectations.

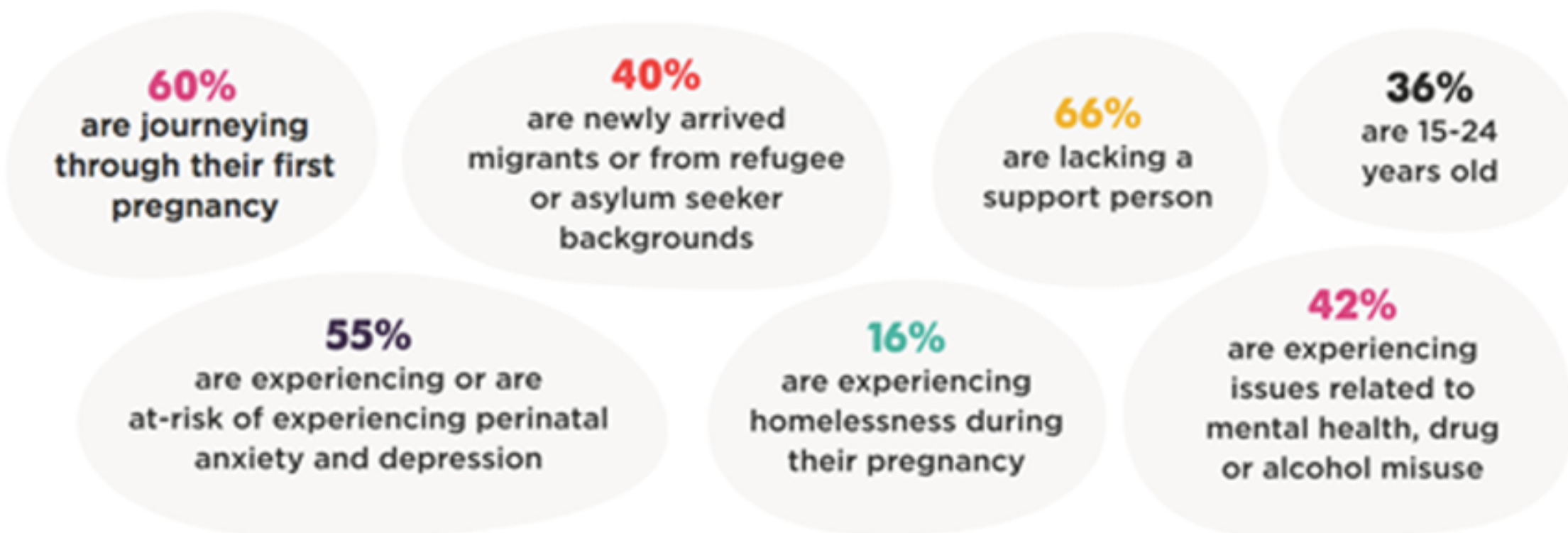
WHAT KIND OF CLIENTS WILL I BE SUPPORTING?

Approximately 50% of our client referrals come from hospitals and healthcare providers, with the remainder coming from a range of sources, including community support services, migrant and refugee support agencies, and self-referrals.





OF THE WOMEN WE HAVE SUPPORTED IN OUR DOULA SUPPORT PROGRAM THIS YEAR



This is not your average doula work. It has unique challenges and huge rewards. It requires an open heart, an open mind, and all of the skill it takes to be an effective, compassionate doula.

We provide you with specific training in working with these client groups, and you are also able to specify what type of clients you would prefer to work with.

We provide high level support, professional development, opportunities for growth and input to the development of the organisation.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

If you have any other questions, please email our Doula Program Supervisors

kristine@birthforhumankind.org and/or
cath@birthforhumankind.org

If you would prefer to talk over the phone, please provide your phone number, and one of our staff will call you.

We look forward to talking to you soon!