Communication
Advice from Doctors, Nurses, and Doulas

- **Treat medical people with respect and kindness.** *"I'm a person too. Be nice to me."* Example: Introduce yourself and in a friendly way explain you're there as a doula for the emotional and physical support of the mother and her family members.
- **Remind your clients to discuss their preferences with their nurses**, so the nurses can help them get what they are hoping for.
- **Adopt a collaborative attitude.** Example: *"So we're all on the same page" "working as a team".*
- **Focus on your clients' needs,** not on enacting your own agenda.
- **State suggestion as questions.** *"I wonder what would happen if we . . . . ?" "What if we try . . . .?" "What would you think about . . . .?"*
- **Remember the nurse may be reluctant to help due to the needs of her job,** therefore, she may be unable to agree to some requests.
- **Discuss any disagreements in private -** not in front of your clients or other hospital staff. *"Could I talk with you for a minute? I noticed you said . . . . That's different from what I have been told. Do you have a minute to educate me on that?" "I didn't want to bring this up in front of Ashley and Josh, but I wonder what wold happen if we try . . . ."*
- **Guide your clients to speak for themselves.** Bring up issues with clients when nurses and doctors are out of the room. It's better for your clients self-esteem to speak up on the issues that are important to them.
- **If a medical procedure is proposed, you can ask:** "*Did you two have any questions about that?"* To prompt your clients to ask their questions, and then "*Did you two want some time to think that over?"* At a prenatal visit, set up a code word(s) or a secret signal you can use to remind clients that these are important questions.
- **Raise issues yourself only if necessary.** If the mother finds it difficult to tell her medical people something that has an impact on her labor, you might want to talk with one of her caregivers in private, outside the mother's room. "*I suspect this information isn't in Ashley's chart, and she has given me permission to tell you about it. She had traumatic experience with . . . . and as a result she finds . . . .very frightening. I wonder if there's anything we can do to support her wishes."*
- **Remember to say "Thank You."** Send a note to the nursing supervisor to applaud the nurses who were especially supportive.

Excerpt from Ruth Ancheta