



February 2003

## **Grievance Policy**

### **General:**

The Doula C.A.R.E. Grievance Policy has been designed to ensure the highest quality of service and professionalism for Doula C.A.R.E. members. This Grievance Policy abides by Doula C.A.R.E.'s Mission Statement, Code of Ethics, Statement of Goals and Standards of Practice. All Doula C.A.R.E. members are subject to the Doula C.A.R.E. Inc. Grievance Policy. Discussions of the grievance/incident by the committee are confidential.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Grievance Policy is to provide a vehicle in which a Grievance, or Incident, may be brought a fair and complete investigation, and appropriate action taken. The Grievance Policy will also provide, in case of professional misconduct by a Doula C.A.R.E. member, a mechanism through which the public and community of doulas may be protected. In the case where a grievance is lodged against a non-Doula C.A.R.E member this Grievance Policy will also provide procedural guidance.

### **Definition of Grievance Categories:**

#### **1. Grievance:**

A Grievance is an objection lodged with Doula C.A.R.E. against a Doula C.A.R.E. member in which she is accused of behaviour that violates Doula C.A.R.E.'s Standards of Practice and/or Code of Ethics and policies. The client, her significant other, her family, a nurse, the client's care provider, a hospital administrator, another doula or doula trainee may submit the grievance. If the objection is deemed to be a grievance against a Certified Doula, Doula C.A.R.E. may also forward it to the appropriate Certification Organization for additional processing.

#### **2. Incident:**

An Incident is any potentially negative occurrence arising in prenatal, labour support or postpartum situations that involve the doula as the provider. The incident is usually submitted by the doula herself.

**Procedure:**

The grievance will be reviewed by the committee and determined to be (1) Grievance, or (2) Incident, investigated, and sanctions or follow-up actions will be recommended by the committee and be approved by the Doula C.A.R.E Board of Directors.

**1. Committee Composition**

- A. The Chair of the committee will be the Immediate Past President.
- B. The Standing Committee members will include the:
  - a. Vice President
  - b. Regional Representative

**2. Ad Hoc Participants:** (not as standing committee members and may change per grievance)

- A. A Doula C.A.R.E member from the community who is chosen by the doula under review (or someone from the Doula under review's community who is familiar with the community's common practices) as the ADVOCATE for the Certified Doula.
- B. A Doula C.A.R.E member chosen by the Grievance Committee.
- C. The Certification Committee chair or member of that committee.
- D. An Advisor from the Certifying Organization's Board of Directors.

**3. Process:**

- A. The first step is to determine whether the matter brought forth to Doula C.A.R.E is a Grievance or an Incident, using the criteria presented heretofore.
- B. The Grievance Committee Chair designates a committee member to interview the complainant and the doula under review orally and report back to the committee. (Other committee members may choose to speak to the complainant and/or doula under review also.) This discussion may be tape recorded for the grievance proceedings, with the knowledge of the complainant and the doula under review.
- C. Documentation will be assembled and written copies provided to all the standing and Ad Hoc committee members and to the doula under review in advance by the Grievance Committee Chair. Examples of documentation include a report, letter, written complaint, or evaluation form sent to Doula C.A.R.E. The documentation and any other information will be distributed by email, Mail or Fax (accompanied by a transmission confirmation slip) to the committee members.
- D. The Doula under review will be informed of the grievance in writing within 30 days. The doula under review is given an opportunity to respond to the committee a) In writing b) In a meeting or c) Both written and meeting formats.
- E. A time is set when all members of the committee can discuss the grievance. The meeting/s may take place face to face or via tele-conference at the discretion of the Grievance Committee Chair.

- F. The doula under review has the option to attend the meeting, as does the complainant. These participants will be responsible for their own travel arrangements and expenses if a face-to-face meeting is decided upon.
- G. After the committee hears from the complainant (if present) and the doula under review (if present), the committee will meet privately to discuss the circumstances, evaluate the matter and make recommendations to Doula C.A.R.E Board of Directors. Once a sanction has been approved the Grievance Committee will initiate action, if appropriate.
- H. All involved parties will be notified in writing by the Grievance Committee Chair of the findings of the investigation and informed of any resulting action. Grievance committee deliberations will remain confidential and only the matters discussed in the letter to the involved parties will be disclosed. The documents gathered for the investigation will remain on file with the Grievance Committee Chair, and the Doula C.A.R.E Board of Directors will be notified of the action taken.

### **Sanctions:**

#### **1. Grievance:**

Actions that may be taken by the Grievance Committee include, but are not limited to:

- A. No action
- B. A letter of reprimand
- C. A period of probation and recommendations to be determined by the committee.
- D. Withdrawal from the Referral Line.
- E. Withdrawal of membership from Doula C.A.R.E.
- F. Notification of grievance findings to Doula C.A.R.E membership.
- G. Notification of grievance findings to other Doula Membership Organizations.
- H. Notification to Certification Organization of Grievance and Committee findings.

#### **2. Incident**

- A. Advice to the complainant is given in communication techniques to resolve conflict and in other ways the complainant may attempt to resolve the conflict.
- B. The Doula C.A.R.E member making the incident report will be contacted by the Grievance Committee Chair or a designated Doula C.A.R.E volunteer (i.e. Board

member, Committee member) and notified that the incident has been received with the committee's suggestion of resources or recommendation on how to rectify the matter.

- C. Appropriate sanctions, per the Grievance Policy, may be imposed on the doula under review by the Doula C.A.R.E Grievance Committee.
- D. The Incident Report will be kept on file by the Grievance Committee Chair for two years.
- E. The complainant will be notified of the action and recommendations of the
  - i. Grievance Committee.
- F. The Grievance Committee will notify the Doula Certification Organization of any findings and the resolution, if appropriate.

### **3. Non-Doula C.A.R.E Member**

If the public, the medical community or another doula lodges an objection against a Non- Doula C.A.R.E member, the matter will be reviewed to determine the appropriate procedure.

- A. The complainant will be informed that the doula is not a Doula C.A.R.E member and Doula C.A.R.E can do nothing about her actions within our scope.
- B. If deemed appropriate, by the Grievance Committee, the same actions, including advice on resolving conflict, will be taken as outlined above for a Doula C.A.R.E member with emphasis on the quality assurance provided by the Doula C.A.R.E membership.
- C. The objection and information may be forwarded to the appropriate Doula Organization for action.