



2016/02/26

To SWEAT
Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce
021 4487875

The Compassionate Birth Project

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To Whom It May Concern,

Report on Compassionate Birth Project Doula Training for SWEAT mothers.

Doula trainers from the Compassionate Birth Project (CBP), Ruth Ehrhardt and Robyn Sheldon, have created a training programme for sex worker mothers from SWEAT. Certified CBP doulas will be resourced to support their fellow pregnant sex workers and other women in their communities to birth more safely and with less fear.

Women in labour are extremely vulnerable. Sex workers in labour are even more vulnerable than most, as they are often treated with disregard by maternity staff. They report a high degree of mistrust of medical institutions because of previous abusive treatment as a result of their status.

Pregnant sex workers therefore sometimes give birth on their own, and sometimes on the streets, with obviously poorer outcomes.

Doulas are professional birth support companions who provide stability, encouragement, birth knowledge and wisdom, comfort and love to women who are pregnant, labouring and giving birth.

The SWEAT student doulas have thus far completed a 5 day intensive training with the Compassionate Birth Project in November 2015.

The training is continuing throughout 2016 with one day per month allocated to on-going supervision and further training.



The dates for these sessions for 2016 will be held at the Observatory Community Centre and will take place on the following dates between 9 am and 4 pm:

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9 March, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June, 13 July, 10 August, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November (the second Wednesday of each month from March to November).

The students are expected to attend births under supervision with CBP staff over and above this commitment.

They are expected to receive full certification on completion of the training programme at the end of 2016.

The Compassionate Birth Project envisages a cadre of birth support professionals who will offer assistance to their sisters during pregnancy and birth, and simultaneously envisages that the programme will uplift the women themselves and give them the opportunity to find funding to support their employment as doulas for sex workers in the future.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our work with the CBP/SWEAT doulas thus far and look forward to the year ahead completing and mentoring their training.

Should you have any further enquiries in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind Regards,

Ruth Ehrhardt CPM (USA) and TM (SA)
Robyn Sheldon CPM (USA) and RM (SA)