Responsibilities of the Midwife Assistant

Midwife Assistants are responsible for assisting the nurse-midwife in creating a safe and peaceful birthing environment, respecting the midwifery model of care. The midwife assistant’s role consists of clinical skill within the office and client’s home, teaching, counseling, and advocacy. Midwife assistants are responsible to the immediate Nurse-midwife, who is responsible to the Senior Midwife & Administrative Director.

The midwife assistant must perform only those services for which they are qualified and (physically and emotionally) capable, and refer to appropriate specialists when work is not within their scope of practice or not in the client’s best interest.

Minimum Qualifications

1. Physical exam with appropriate immunizations and/or titers;
2. References verified;
3. Social media profiles reviewed for professionalism;
4. Confidentiality agreement signed;
5. Conflict of interest signed;
6. Job Description signed;
7. Criminal background check approved by Practice Administrator if unlicensed;
8. Basic service ability for preparing postpartum meals, laundry, and cleaning birthing environment;
9. Physical strength for carrying birth equipment up or down a flight of stairs and/or moving a laboring mother as necessary (approximately 50 pounds);
10. Physical ability to bend at the waist and obtain heart tones on a laboring mother submerged in the birthing spa and/or any other position she may assume;
11. Physical ability to provide labor support of mother, including on-going and consistent back massage;
12. Ability to count fetal heart tones while watching a second hand;
13. Basic computer literacy, including the ability to use basic desktop applications and electronic communication;
14. Ability to use IT to support clinical and administrative processes, which presumes information literacy to support evidence-based practice;
15. Ability access data and perform documentation via computerized patient records;
16. Ability to support patient safety initiatives via the use of IT;
17. Successful completion of the Midwifery Assistant Course provided by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC;
18. Successful completion of NRP in its entirety, including intubation and emergency medication administration;
19. Successful completion of provider level CPR;

20. Must believe whole heartedly in the midwifery model-of-care, the safety of homebirth and the importance of breastfeeding; and

21. Must have great respect for all medical modalities with a desire to create a safe infrastructure of care throughout the healthcare system.

**Character**

Loyalty, dependability, confidentiality, responsibility, integrity, and maturity levels of the birth assistant are vital. The assistant must respectfully communicate with the midwifery team at all times, as well as any medical personnel in the event of transport. The assistant must graciously accept responsibility for managing labor (if within her scope) when necessary to assist the midwife in her role and/or provide doula support prior to the midwife’s arrival. A servant’s heart is necessary, as the assistant will attend to not only the personal needs of the mother and newborn, but also work to create a clean home environment and provide nourishment to the family and midwifery team. The midwife’s assistant is also one that must be dependable. When a laboring client is in need of her clinical support team, the need is often urgent and the assistant will need a reliable phone to be reached, and immediate access to childcare as appropriate and transportation.

**Required Skills**

The midwifery assistant’s primary focus is to assist the Nurse Midwife. The Nurse Midwife is responsible for the birthing woman and her baby as the primary caregiver. The assistant therefore, just be humble in taking direction from the Nurse Midwife to ensure safety and comfort of the mother and baby. She must also be mindful of the multitude of tasks that are always in need of her attention.

A midwife assistant should have competent technical skills with appropriate labor and birth experience, which is ultimately determined by the senior midwife. Ideally, the person should be very comfortable in the birthing environment and in supporting the laboring woman. She should also have a personality that is complimentary to the midwife’s and the birth team, be empathetic with laboring women, and be able to anticipate the woman’s emotional and physical needs. The assistant’s belief in the ability of the woman to birth in a natural manner is not only empowering to the mother, but a basic component of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC philosophy.

These skills are detailed within the Midwifery Assistant Workshop provided by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC and evidence of competency is documented within the skills checklist maintained within each employee's file. Skills can be further enhanced through mock exercises provided at each staff meeting and through mentorship with a more experienced assistant and/or primary midwife.

Minimum clinical skill level for the midwifery assistant includes:

1. Ability to perform and record maternal and newborn vital signs;
2. Use of the fetal Doppler to assist with the audible acceleration test;
3. Palpating uterine contractions;
4. Drawing up injectable medications for administration;
5. Administering herbal tinctures and homeopathic remedies;
6. Labor support, providing comfort needs;
7. Assisting the midwife with suturing, handling of sterile equipment;
Believe Midwifery Services, LLC

8. Assigning APGARS;

9. Care and disposal of placenta;

10. Recording first bowel and urine of the neonate;

11. Obtaining weights/measurements;

12. Assessing newborn jaundice;

13. Use of bulb syringe and administration of oxygen to mother and newborn;

14. Assisting mother to the bathroom and providing perineal care;

15. Offering the 24-hour phone call and antepartum home risk assessment;

16. Providing basic education to parents (enforcing information provided within the childbirth education curriculum of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC);

17. Supporting skin-to-skin contact;

18. Assisting with optimal latch;

19. Assessing resources and social needs of family;

20. Performing the newborn hearing screening;

21. Professional accountability in following clinical practice guidelines as they apply to the midwife assistant’s role;

22. Demonstrated ability to manage the office during office days including following the task list without direction and warmly responding to clients in person and on the phone; and

23. Willingness to accept any other responsibility requested of your associates and/or the midwives.

As clinical skill develops, and higher levels of academic education and licensure are earned, the Midwifery Assistant gains greater autonomy in her role. Competency in all skills detailed above are required as a minimum standard for the Midwifery Assistant. Those below are competencies in which Believe Midwifery Services expects as the Assistant advances in her role and pay grade.

1. Successful completion of Advanced Birth Attendant Course provided by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC;

2. Nursing license in good standing, Paramedic credentialing, or CPM credentialing in good standing with criminal history background check approved by Practice Administrator;

3. Proficiency with fetoscope and/or pinard horn; sterile technique, veni-punctures, IV placement, cervical exams, fundal massage, assessing postpartum bleeding, newborn metabolic screenings, newborn exams (per license), postpartum perineal assessments, and audible acceleration testing (per license);

4. Administration of intramuscular, subcutaneous, vaginal, rectal and topical medications;

5. Assessing newborn transition and use of the DeLee suction;

6. Skilled and competent with handling triage phone calls (per license), and both antepartum and postpartum/newborn home visits (per license);
7. Thoroughly, accurately and professionally documents any and all client care and correspondence;

8. Certification as a Lactation Counselor or completion of the 18Hr Breastfeeding Course or equivalency, ultimately successfully earning international certification as a board certified lactation consultant;

9. Assisting in obtaining an optimal latch, identifying common breastfeeding challenges, referring appropriately to the lactation consultant;

10. Assisting the Nurse Midwife in facilitating the homebirth preparation course;

11. Directing, delegating and supervising less skilled healthcare personnel; and

12. Willingness to accept any other responsibility requested of your associates and/or the midwives.

**Professional Equipment**

The midwifery assistant is in large part provided the basic supplies needed to perform her job; however, as a professional standard, healthcare providers increase their proficiency when their tools are familiar. Believe Midwifery Services, LLC therefore, requires that each assistant have available to her while on the job:

1. An adult stethoscope;

2. A neonatal stethoscope;

3. A sphygmomanometer, both adult and large adult;

4. Clean gloves;

5. Black pen;

6. Spare set of clean medical scrubs;

7. Flashlight; and

8. Infant scale and sling.

All midwifery assistants will be provided a Newborn Resuscitation Bag and Mask. These are to be kept with the staff member at all times while on the job, in a sealed bag in the event resuscitation is necessary before the midwife’s supplies have arrived.

Midwifery Assistants with advanced training will have greater clinical responsibility and therefore, require additional equipment and supplies, such as:

1. Fetal Doppler;

2. Umbilical clamp remover; and a

3. Gestational wheel.

Materials for obtaining labs will be provided by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC. A fetal doppler can be loaned to the assistant as available, but must be returned immediately upon discharge from employment or $700 will be reduced from final wages.

**Servant’s Heart**
Believe Midwifery Services, LLC

It is important for the midwifery assistant to have compassion and empathy for the midwife. The assistant needs to be open and honest in her communications to maintain a trusting relationship with the midwifery team, midwife, administrative director and family. Assistants must work well with each other avoiding conflict that could compromise the safety or alter the peaceful environment of the birthing family. As a servant, you may be responsible for:

1. Preparing, cooking, and serving family (mother and father) with meals, as well as the birthing team;
2. Cleaning, organizing, and restocking birth equipment;
3. Assisting with stain removal in laundry, carpet and mattress;
4. Emptying tub and/or reminding parents to clean prior to 48 hour visit;
5. Ensure stock is maintained and working order of clinical equipment;
6. And any other task the midwife or birth team may ask of you.

Emergency Management

The assistant must remain calm and effectively perform necessary skills needed in any situation. Words and actions in a crisis situation will leave an indelible imprint. What you say and how you say it will remain with the client and her family for life. The Nurse Midwife shall have the responsibility of communicating sensitive information. Skills the midwife assistant must continually sharpen for appropriate emergency management include:

1. Basic NRP skills such as stimulating and drying infant, setting up and administering oxygen, PPV, chest compressions;
2. Recognition of emergency scenarios and awareness of basic care procedures;
3. Maintaining accurate and timely documentation;
4. Notifying emergency team for transfer; and
5. Any other task the Nurse Midwife or birth team may ask of you.

Believe Midwifery Services, LLC will offer periodic peer review sessions and skill review workshops that each midwife assistant actively employed with Believe Midwifery Services, LLC are expected to attend.

Professionalism

High standards are expected regarding professionalism. Your appearance, communication skills, and loyalty to homebirth, midwifery, and the practice are paramount. The Nurse Midwife is unable to fulfill the role of the midwife assistant; therefore, your absence when needed will require the client be transferred to the nearest hospital. Clearly this would be detrimental to both the family and the practice. It is vital each midwife assistant give this responsibility serious consideration. Each midwife assistant should discuss with her partner and her children the responsibility required of them.

It is important for the midwifery assistant to understand that the client and the Nurse Midwife have built a relationship throughout the pregnancy. A great deal of discussion has occurred between the Nurse Midwife and the client regarding the type of care and choices best for their individual birth. The midwife assistant must respect these decisions.
1. Midwife assistants are expected to respect all clients regardless of their age, gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, body type, political affiliation, state of health and personal habits.

2. Midwife assistants are required to wear clean medical scrubs to each birthing event. This immediately establishes our team as healthcare providers to the family, their visitors and in the event of a transfer, credibility is obtained with greater ease.

3. Name tags are provided and are asked to be worn while attending births, home visits, and/or representing Believe Midwifery Services, LLC at professional meetings, workshops, conventions, and/or seminars.

4. Outside shoes should not be worn in the client’s home. Either clean socks or shoe covers are expected to be worn at all times. Feet should never be bare within the client’s home.

5. Nails should be clean and trimmed. No false fingernails or large rings with stones that may scratch clients and their newborn are permitted.

6. Hygiene is exceptionally important as not only does your appearance make a strong impression about our profession and homebirth, but it impacts the credibility of the practice and the safety of our care. Birthing mothers have hyper-sensitive olfactory senses. Unpleasant odors can disrupt their ability to relax in their birthing event. This is true too of the Nurse Midwife. Her awareness of your hygiene will cause her distraction that could jeopardize optimal care to the birthing family.

7. Hair should clean and pulled back to prevent contamination of the sterile field.

8. Any cuts, wounds, or lesions the midwifery assistant may have should be covered. If open areas are on the hands and arms, participation in waterbirth is not permitted.

9. Business casual is required at all office and home visits (only dark jeans without stains or fraying at the hem allowed, all other denim is too casual for the business environment).

10. Midwifery assistants are required to bring their birth bag to each birth with sufficient supplies to perform their role.

11. Team work is expected at all times, including covering call times for each other when in need, being flexible with your schedule and realizing at some point you will have to take a shift that wasn’t desired (holidays or weekends) to meet the needs of the practice.

12. Six twenty-four hour call shifts each calendar month is required by each midwife assistant.

13. Complete understanding and adherence to all of the clinical practice guidelines is the responsibility of each midwife assistant.

14. Cell phone numbers, home numbers and pager numbers, must be up-to-date with charged batteries and within a service range while on call. The midwife and family depend on your availability.

15. Childcare should be prepared in advance so the attendant is able to respond promptly.

16. Transportation must be secured at all times you are on-call, including a sufficient amount of gas required to attend a speedy birth.

17. If the midwifery assistant becomes ill, she must arrange for another assistant to cover call during her illness. It is not acceptable to call the Nurse Midwife to inform her you are unavailable.

18. Midwifery assistants are expected to remain within a two hour radius of the Thorntown office.
Believe Midwifery Services, LLC

19. Current copies of directions to each client’s home and/or GPS systems, as well as phone numbers and notes from the antepartum home visit assessment, should be maintained at all times.

20. Your participation within the staff communication group is expected. At least once each week, each employee is asked to visit and “like” all discussion points to maintain up-to-date with practice changes.

Your role with Believe Midwifery Services, LLC is important. You are valued immensely. The service you provide each family may often go unrecognized, as their gratitude supersedes their ability to thank-you.

If at any time the midwifery assistant becomes concerned about the care provided the laboring mother or newborn by either the Nurse Midwife or another assistant, your responsibility would be to respectfully and discreetly ask the Nurse Midwife if you can talk to her in private. Share your concerns in a non-threatening way. Offer rationale and your suggestions. If your concerns are not relieved, feel free to make immediately aware the Senior Midwife. If in fact, your concern is with the Senior Midwife and speaking to her directly did not resolve your concern, notify an alternative Nurse Midwife. However, at all times, no matter the circumstances, you are expected to maintain the utmost of respect for each and every staff member and continue to encourage confidence in our care to the family wherever possible. The Nurse Midwife’s education and decision making skills far exceed those of the support staff. It is not her responsibility to always rationalize her decisions to her support team.

Immunizations

The Centers for Disease Control recommends the following vaccinations for healthcare personnel. While we respect your convictions regarding immunizations, your potential to expose our pregnant clientele is a liability to the practice. Therefore, a history of chickenpox as evidence by titer or the varicella vaccination is required. The full hepatitis B series is required. Evidence of immunity to MMR is required, specifically because Rubella can cause fetal anomalies if an infected medical provider were to expose the pregnant mother. And finally, the annual influenza vaccine is NOT required by our practice, but recommended by the Centers for Disease Control as healthcare workers are in fact the key cause of influenza outbreaks among patients.

Reimbursement

The midwifery assistant is in large part paid per job duty, rather than the more standard hourly wage. During the assistant’s call shift, when need of assistant’s attendance is notified by the midwife, such employee is expected in a timely manner as determined by the distance of your home to the client’s. The goal is to arrive at the onset of active labor, staying through all of the intrapartum period, and remaining through at least three hours postpartum or as long as necessary for mother and newborn to demonstrate stabilization (or transfer as appropriate).

In the event of a transfer, the midwifery assistants are responsible for coordinating labor support of the couple through birth of their newborn. Transfer management is a component of the birth wage, and do not offer additional pay.

Home visits are an additional responsibility of each midwifery assistant. Unlicensed attendants conduct the antepartum home risk assessments, and licensed nurses provide postpartum home visits on mother and newborn. Antepartum home risk assessments are $35 per home visit and postpartum home visits are $50.

Travel expenses are part of the package fee for home visits and/or birth pay.

The office is staffed by a regular clinical team; however, due to vacation or illness, coverage may be needed on rare occasions. During such time, clinical staff may be asked to coordinate coverage which is an excellent opportunity to meet clients, gain additional clinical skill and better witness the midwifery model of care. These responsibilities are not required; however, are appreciated.
Advocacy work and annual celebration picnic are offered as a volunteer and greatly appreciated by the Administrative Director, Senior Midwife and our clientele. In-service training, organizational meetings, or additional mentorship with the Practice Administrator or other staff members in effort to enhance one’s skills in any specific area related to your professional role will be provided at no additional charge to you if your learning would benefit Believe Midwifery Services, LLC. Examples of such training include: hearing screen administration, sterile water papule administration, breastfeeding counseling, filing birth certificates, use of TENS unit, raindrop therapy, prenatal care, childbirth education, specimen handling, mock codes, vaginal breech birth workshops, NRP practice, etc.

Staff meetings specific to practice administration or company procedure, or orientation specific to a new role within the clinic is paid at an hourly rate determined by the Administrative Director.

Physical Demands

This role requires sitting and standing associated with a normal office environment, as well as strength and endurance to physically support the laboring woman and carry heavy clinical equipment. Manual dexterity, perceiving attributes of objects by means of skin receptors, fingers and hands is required. Transportation and lifting of both mom and baby, usually by hand, arm or shoulder is necessary. Moving on foot on uneven surfaces and raising or lowering an object approximately 25-50 pounds may be required, even carrying such load up a flight of stairs. Perceiving the nature of sounds by ear and expressing self though the spoken word is vital. Bending at the waist to obtain fetal heart tones on a laboring woman within the spa, or in any other position she may assume, or offering physical support during labor such as consistent back massage is a requirement of this job position. This description is intended to provide only basic guidelines for meeting job requirements. Responsibilities, skills and working conditions may change as needs evolve.

Proprietary Information and Non-Disclosure

The midwife assistant shall not use to their own advantage or the advantage of any other person, business or entity, except as specifically provided in this job description, either during their association or at any time thereafter, any information gained for or from business, files, and/or records of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC. The midwife assistant shall maintain all confidential information disclosed to him or her hereunder by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC in strict confidence. The midwife assistant agrees that all documents, drawings and writings of any kind provided to him or her by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC are the sole property of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC. The midwife assistant acknowledges that such information is proprietary, and that in the event of an unauthorized disclosure and/or use of such information, significant damages may be incurred or suffered by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC. The midwife assistant will destroy all copies of the confidential information once it is no longer required by them to perform work for Believe Midwifery Services, LLC, or as directed by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC.

Non-Compete

The midwife assistant shall not now or at any time thereafter, become employed by or contracted by any of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC direct out-of-hospital competitors, including other Nurse Midwifery birth center and/or homebirth practices within a 150 mile radius. The midwife assistant will not establish, own, organize, or manage their own women’s health practice within 150 mile radius of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC. Written permission by the Administrative Director may be granted on an individual basis which will make null and void the non-compete clause.

Conflict of Interest

Believe Midwifery Services, LLC’s mission is one that promotes, supports and protects the midwifery model of care, women’s health, breastfeeding, holistic healthcare, and respectful parenting. Believe Midwifery Services, LLC is also a faith-based practice that upholds to the best of its ability teachings from the Holy Bible. Employment by or
Believe Midwifery Services, LLC
active participation in agencies, organizations, or corporations that directly oppose such philosophy and demonstrate to impact the services provided by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC would be a direct conflict of interest to your position here at Believe Midwifery Services, LLC and are strictly prohibited. This is extended to social media including for example, Facebook, Pinterest, blogging, listservs, etc.

Quality Review

The midwife assistant is an interdependent member of the midwifery team. Care management is expected to be carried through completion with substantial independence, yet the midwife assistant remains the direct responsibility of the Nurse Midwife. The Midwife Assistant shall share a self-evaluation with one of the office managers at their annual anniversary date. That same Nurse Midwife or office manager will provide a written and/or verbal evaluation regarding the assistant’s positive attributes, along with any beneficial critique. The Nurse Midwife will also respectfully request any comments or suggestions for improvement regarding the practice management of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC.

Termination

Believe Midwifery Services, LLC has the right to terminate employment, at-will, without notice.

No Tolerance Rules Include:

1. Not being available while on-call with prior knowledge of competing commitments is grounds for immediate termination.

2. Drugs or alcohol so that the assistant is unable to provide immediate and safe clinical judgement while on-call or working within the office is grounds for immediate termination.

3. Refusing to care for any one particular client because you disagree with the Nurse Midwife’s care management (abandonment) is grounds for termination.

4. Speaking disrespectfully to associates or clients at any time is grounds for immediate termination.

In the event of termination related to anyone of the above scenarios, or circumstances with equal or greater severity, the Administrative Director is at liberty to report such negligence to the Indiana State Board of Nursing. At no time will the Administrative Director tolerate endangerment to the clientele of Believe Midwifery Services, LLC, and at no time will she tolerate behavior that reflects poorly on our profession.

It is otherwise expected that the Midwife Assistant will fulfill each agreed upon commitment stated within the aforementioned job description. The Administrative Director respects greatly that each assistant’s commitment to their profession, particularly as mothers, is seasonal. Some seasons of life we are able to commit more fully and at other times, less responsibility is necessary. However, if the assistant is in need of decreased commitment or a leave of absence, it is paramount that the midwifery assistant manage this scenario with great integrity and professionalism, respecting the limited resources of the practice and vital role the assistant provides. Please offer as much advance notice as possible and trust that circumstances beyond your control are appreciated by the Administrative Director; however, abrupt abandonment otherwise will eliminate any possibility of future employment or positive recommendation.

Finally, upon termination by either party, the assistant will be required to return all equipment owned by Believe Midwifery Services, LLC without damage or neglect.

I agree to the terms of this job description and accept the responsibilities of the midwifery assistant role.
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