



INTERNATIONAL END OF LIFE DOULA ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS

Purpose:

The International End of Life Doula Association (INELDA) is committed to a set of ethical standards it expects INELDA-trained doulas to follow and advocates for establishing these standards as a baseline for the profession. These standards are relevant for end-of-life (EOL) doulas or death doulas who work in private practice, in a hospice, hospital, assisted living facility, or other such settings—regardless of the populations they serve.

These standards give the public and healthcare organizations an understanding of the ethical principles and practices to hold the INELDA-trained EOL doula accountable. They will also help guide the EOL doula when ethical uncertainties arise in the performance of their services to a dying person and their loved ones.

Commitment to a Dying Person & Loved Ones:

The EOL doula's primary commitment is to the dying person; loved ones may be included to the extent desired by the person dying throughout the EOL doula's involvement in the case. The EOL doula will make every effort to help the dying person maintain their sense of dignity in the face of decline.

Competence:

- The INELDA-trained doula will only represent themselves as competent within the boundaries of their training and knowledge, acquired through INELDA classes and other related education, and the scope of practice as defined in the accompanying document titled: *Scope of Practice*.
- The EOL doula will only use techniques that they have been educated in and/or been supervised in by people who are competent in those services or techniques.
- The EOL doula will continue to improve their competence through formal and informal education of all kinds and by working in the field to better serve the dying.

Privacy & Confidentiality:

- The INELDA-trained doula will respect and protect the privacy of the dying person and their loved ones by carefully guarding any materials that contain personal or health-related information.
- The EOL doula will maintain the confidentiality of all information shared by a dying person or their loved ones, unless disclosure of that information is necessary to prevent serious and imminent harm to any individual.

- The EOL doula will share any other confidential information only with the permission of the person in question or a person legally authorized to consent on their behalf, and then only to a particular person, professional, or care organization. If feasible, the EOL doula will inform the person in question about disclosing confidential information, and the consequences of disclosure, prior to that disclosure.
- The EOL doula will discuss the nature of confidentiality with a client and others involved and the limitation of the client's rights to confidentiality.
- The EOL doula will notify a client about any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.

Conflicts of Interest:

- The INELDA-trained doula will avoid conflicts of interest that might interfere with the exercise of their role as an impartial, nonjudgmental companion, support, and guide through the dying process. Such conflicts of interest may involve direct family, loved ones, friends, social or work relationships, or anyone else involved in the dying person's care.
- If the EOL doula, the dying person, or any other person directly involved in the care of the dying person feels that the doula will not be able to maintain objectivity and serve in a professional capacity, they will resolve the issue in a way that satisfies all involved. That may mean the doula will refer the case to another impartial doula, seek direct supervision from an experienced doula or end-of-life clinician, or discontinue their involvement in the case.
- The EOL doula will not exploit the relationship with a client and their loved ones to promote their own personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- The EOL doula should not engage in multiple relationships with a client or former clients that may risk exploitation or potential harm to the client. If multiple relationships are unavoidable, the EOL doula will set clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- The EOL doula should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate multiple relationships, or harm to clients.

Respect:

- The INELDA-trained doula will treat all people—clients, loved ones, caregivers, and colleagues—with respect.

- The EOL doula will honor the dignity of every individual involved, their personal opinions, orientation to care, style of interaction with others, the choices they make, as well as their race, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, lifestyle, and mental or physical disability.
- The EOL doula will avoid unnecessary negative criticism or demeaning remarks.

Cultural Sensitivity:

- The EOL doula will respect and support the role of culture in the dying process and its implications for the dying person’s idea of a “good death,” and the cultural needs of loved ones around the dying person.
- The EOL doula will make every effort to seek information about the cultural orientation and needs of the dying person and their loved ones by asking them directly or seeking outside sources of information.

Discrimination:

- The INELDA-trained doula will not discriminate against people based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, economic status, or other personal characteristics or life circumstances.
- The EOL doula will not condone discrimination by others who work alongside them.

Incompetent or Unethical Behavior of Colleagues:

- The EOL doula who becomes aware of or witnesses incompetent or unethical behavior of another EOL doula, or others directly involved in caring for a dying person and their loved ones will take appropriate actions to make sure that unethical behavior is reported and not try to protect that other EOL doula or caregiver from the resulting consequences.

Sexual Relationships:

- The EOL doula will not engage in sexual activities, communication, or innuendo with a client, loved ones, or professional caregiver during the time that EOL doula is serving a dying person and loved ones, even if that behavior is consensual.
- The EOL doula will not work with a dying person or loved ones with whom they have had recent sexual involvement.
- The EOL doula will not engage in a sexual relationship with family or friends of a person they served throughout their time of grieving after the client has died and for a reasonable amount of time after that.

Dishonesty, Fraud, & Deception:

- EOL doula will not take part in or condone or turn a blind eye to dishonesty, fraud, or deception of any kind that they become aware of or witness during their time of service to a client.

Solicitation:

- EOL doula will not solicit the dying person or loved ones' in any way that would involve payment of any kind for services or products beyond their function or role as an EOL doula.

Integrity of the EOL Doula Role:

- The INELDA-trained doula will uphold the values of service excellence, advocacy for dying people and their families, and high standards of practice.
- They will also adhere to the code of ethics herein stated.

Fees:

- The INELDA-trained doula who works directly for a dying person and/or their loved ones will set fees that are reasonable and commensurate with the prevailing charges for EOL doulas or similar services in their geographical area.

Termination of Services:

- The EOL doula who a client terminates for any reason will gracefully and courteously offer appropriate referrals or information that would allow the client to access other assistance in the dying process.