



July 2025

## Empowering Rural Birth Support: Celebrating Doula Training in Wisconsin

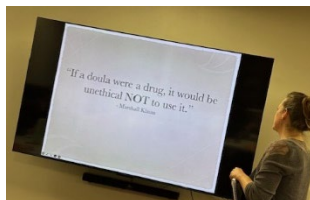
The HOPE Consortium is proud to support initiatives that improve care for individuals affected by substance use, with a special focus on women who are pregnant and parenting. One of our core goals is to expand access to compassionate, culturally responsive care in rural areas—and in April, we took a powerful step forward.

During the week of April 21st, twelve dedicated individuals from rural northern, central, and western Wisconsin completed a week-long birth doula training in Eau Claire. These participants came together with a shared goal: to offer informed, respectful, and culturally attuned support to birthing individuals in their communities. The training, designed to be immersive and comprehensive, was facilitated by expert trainers, Dr. Erin Tenney and Dorene Day, who brought both clinical knowledge and deep cultural wisdom to the experience.



*Birth Doula Training Participants*

### What Did the Week Include?



*Quote by Marshall Klaus*

Over five intensive days, participants engaged in hands-on learning and meaningful discussions that covered the full spectrum of doula care—from the biology of birth to emotional support, advocacy, and cultural healing. Here's a look at what each day focused on:

#### Day 1: Childbirth Overview

Participants were introduced to the foundations of childbirth, including anatomy, stages of pregnancy and labor, and the physiology of birth. This day set the stage for understanding how doulas can support the natural process while respecting each person's unique experience.

#### Day 2: Introduction to Labor and Support in Labor

Participants explored the early signs and stages of labor, how to recognize progression, and what kinds of physical and emotional support can be offered during this transformative time.



*Dr. Erin Tenney demonstrating descent into the pelvis.*

### Day 3: Labor Support and Comfort Measures



*Participants practicing comforting techniques*

This hands-on day focused on practical skills—breathing techniques, massage, positioning, and other comfort measures—to ease the labor process. Emphasis was also placed on empowering birthing individuals to make informed choices in real-time.

### Day 4: Native Birth Plan & Women's Healing Ceremonies

Rooted in the desire to foster respect and appreciation for our unique, rural populations, this day highlighted the importance of honoring traditional birthing practices. Participants learned how to support clients in creating personalized birth plans and explored women's healing ceremonies as a way to restore cultural connection and spiritual strength in the birthing process.



*Participants doing a meditation exercise*

### Day 5: Professional Practice and Postpartum Care

The final day included an introduction to DONA (Doula of North America) International's mission and ethics, as well as sessions on prenatal doula care, navigating challenging childbirth situations, newborn care and breastfeeding, and supporting families through the postpartum period. It also included meaningful reflection and celebration of each participant's journey.

### A Shared Commitment to Healing

This training was more than just an educational experience—it was a commitment to community healing. It brought together individuals who are passionate about changing rural birth outcomes, supporting families with dignity, and walking alongside people during some of the most vulnerable and powerful moments of life.

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