

My experience with Lily Sage as our (amazing!) Doula:

As a physician myself, I was initially unsure if my partner and I needed to have a doula. I figured I knew enough about the birth process after having gone to medical school and rotated through the labor and delivery floor to be enough. However, my partner thought it would at least be worth meeting with Lily to see what the point of having a doula was.

I can say with confidence that I was not the easiest client. Lily came to our house for the first time (around 3 months gestation) and we discussed various aspects of what we wanted out of the pregnancy and birth process. I definitely didn't know what I wanted. I wasn't sure what my goals were, so I looked to her to help me figure out my options. I had no idea what kind of preparation we would need for our house, and asked her what she would recommend. I didn't know if I wanted a natural birth, and wanted to leave it up to my feelings during labor. I insisted on not really having a plan. Lily, in her amazing way, was able to roll with this. She was also able to give me an unbiased account of various options: what are the pros and cons of getting an epidural, what are the pros and cons of buying lots of baby gear before the baby comes, what types of things we might want to buy to prepare for delivery and why. After this long meeting and discussion, I was convinced we definitely needed her as our doula. We were sold.

Throughout the pregnancy she met with us many times. She was able to understand that I was only able to plan a short period ahead and that trying to think of everything all at once overwhelmed me. As I was able to figure out what I wanted, Lily wrote down these goals, and would bring them up at subsequent visits to see if they had changed. She helped me stay accountable to myself and also continue to reevaluate my personal plans. She was incredibly communicative and freed up her schedule for many weeks before and after the due date to make sure she would be able to make it no matter what.

On the day of delivery, I realized I was going into labor and texted her that we were getting ready to head to the hospital. She asked if we needed her to bring dinner with her in case labor was long. How sweet! She also packed a bag with things she thought we might forget (e.g. a yoga ball and snacks). She came straight to our house and traveled with us to the hospital.

Lily advocated for me in the most gentle way, and the medical team at the hospital definitely appreciated her presence. She helped me understand different positions that might help with my labor, and held my hand when I needed something to squeeze. She also had an amazing way of knowing when to step back and let my partner help with the physical positioning and hand-holding. I'm not sure how she knew when these times were, but she somehow was always exactly where she needed to be. This is definitely a skill of hers.

I had told her I wasn't against getting an epidural but wanted to try my hardest not to get one. Every time I was about to ask for medication she reminded me that I might want to try a different position or consider waiting a few more minutes. She blew up a yoga ball and suggested I try it – I did this several times through the labor at her suggestion and assistance, and everytime I did my labor advanced dramatically! This sufficiently took me through the labor without medications – which I was extremely happy with – but I also very much appreciate that if I would have gone the epidural route she would have been supportive as well.

The other thing I loved about Lily's style was that she was willing to fill in whatever role was most needed, no matter what it was. She was willing to take pictures when I asked her to, and even went for a juice run during labor because I found myself really hungry but unable to eat food I had to chew (I'd go into a contraction and found it hard to time swallowing!).

As an unexpected bonus, Lily even helped us pick out a baby name! We had heard she knew how to do Tarot reading, and we asked her if she would be open to doing a reading to help us decide on a name. We did this the night before being discharged from the hospital because we were having so much trouble deciding between a couple different options. We ultimately used her incredibly insightful Tarot reading to make our final decision!

Lastly, I am grateful to her efforts to help me plan for postpartum aspects too. For instance, she suggested I ask a friend to check in with me periodically after labor to make sure I wasn't having any postpartum depression, and I did this. She also checked in many times as well and even participated in the naming ceremony we set up a week after our son's birth at our request. Oh, and a couple weeks after birth she came over and cooked us an amazing breakfast and helped us document our son's birth story (and even cleaned the kitchen!).

In summary, we loved working with Lily and would very highly recommend her to others. She is incredible!! We would also be happy to answer any questions her future potential clients might have about our experience -- and why we feel having Lily as a doula is *absolutely essential!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah McLane', written in a cursive style.

Hannah McLane