

Answers to my supplementary questions - Inquiry into birth trauma – Post-hearing responses – 7 September 2023

1. Regarding the term “birth trauma”:

a. what is your preferred definition of the term? - Any emotional, mental or physical injury or distress that occurs during pregnancy, childbirth and the early postpartum that causes unnecessary pain or issues for a birthing woman or her support person

b. why is this the preferred definition? This is my preferred definition as I believe it is not just about the birth itself but the time before and after and I also believe birth trauma can affect support people e.g husbands or partners as well as birthing women.

2. Regarding the term “obstetric violence”:

a. what is your preferred definition of the term? - Any act by a healthcare worker that causes mental or physical harm to someone who is pregnant, giving birth or in early postpartum. This includes performing procedures without informed consent.

b. why is this the preferred definition? - Obstetric violence is not just physical but can be mental too

3. Can you explain why “informed consent” is necessary for women with respect to decisions they make regarding all aspects of their pregnancy? Consent is something we teach our children from a young age, why should this be forgotten about when it comes to giving birth? As a woman I trust my body and what it was designed to do - give birth. If there was to be an intervention in my birth, it is essential that I understand why and how that is going to happen. The decisions we make in regards to our birth and the questions we are asked should be presented to us with up to date evidence so we can make an informed decision on what is best for our baby and ourselves without coercion.

Thank you,

Aimee