

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 22 July 2023

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Partially  
Confidential

My daughter is almost 10. She was born in Hospital in 2013. We went through the midwife program and I thought I was fully prepared. I was told the birthing experience would be pressure not pain. I was told it would all be ok. It wasn't.

I had the Hollywood gush of my waters breaking and, excitedly, my husband and I went to the hospital. My midwife wasn't available and someone else helped me into the bath. My midwife finished with her other birth. I remember seeing her. I also remember feeling the need to push and being told but too. I remember people telling me that I'd follow what my body needed. The Tens machine didn't work. A person was called to give me an epidural. It took hours. Then I was told to lie on my side. Not to move through the pain as if I did, the injection could paralyse me. I thought I'd do this without drugs. I was going to only be pressure right? Then, when it came time to push, I had a window of feeling in my back. My midwife told me to focus on that. To focus on my back pain to know if to push or not. So on my hands and knees I pushed my daughter out. And then I waited for a consultant to come and stitch my second degree tears up. To diagnose if it was second or third degree tears. To feed my daughter only to find it painful. To have a nurse put a dummy into my 2 year old daughter's mouth to get her to calm. To be sent home, in pain, not even a day later, even after a night of birthing because I thought I was prepared with my condoms filled with ice for pain relief. To three days later not having had sleep. To five days later having thoughts if harming the daughter we'd tried so hard for. To self admitting to the psych ward. To staying overnight after having my belongings removed along with my drawstrings and needing to share a stainless steel bathroom with multiple inmates and my husband bringing my daughter from the paediatric ward where they had to stay overnight in order for her to be fed. To be assessed in the morning and knowing I was better off at home. To be in pain. Scared. Panicked. Anxious. Overwhelming unprepared. Let down by the system. To breastfeed my daughter for 13 months - have her suck so hard that she sucked my nipple through the holes on nipple covers. To be told 'she has a strong suck.'

For my boy, born 17 months later, I went through the private system. An OB with 10,000 babies behind him. 5 days of care. Nurses who did what they could to help me sleep. To recover. To bond. To heal.

I needed to have surgery to fix my tears and the wee and poo that would come out. We paid for this privately.

10 years and this story comes out. Almost 10 years. My daughter (and son) are amazing. It almost killed me though. It killed my sense of worth. My sense of ability to thrive. It made me doubt my ability to be a mother. It affected my bonding with my daughter. It fractured me as a person. I am still recovering. Ten. Years. Later.