

**Submission  
No 106**

## **INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA**

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I gave birth to my daughter in 2014. I had a healthy and easy pregnancy and went into my 40 week check up feeling good about using the birth centre and having as natural a birth as I could have. My blood pressure was up at that appointment and things escalated very fast after that. I was told I couldn't go home, that they would need to induce me and that they were concerned about preeclampsia. As a first time parent I didn't know anything about my rights in the hospital system and agreed to everything they told me (for the safety of my baby). No one sat with me and explained my options or gave me a chance to talk things over with my husband. After being induced, there was no birthing suite available for me and so I was made to labour in the maternity ward. Because of the visiting hours in that ward, my husband was told he would need to go home. I begged for him to stay but they would not allow it. I laboured alone in room in the maternity ward for hours and was asked to be as quiet as possible because there were women recovering from birth in the rooms around me. My baby was posterior and I was in excruciating pain with no support person or safe place to labour. I progressed to fully dilated alone in that room. Once a room became available I was moved into the labour ward and my husband was told he could come back. I had a midwife I recognized from my mgp visits but at the change of shift at 8am she left. I had been laboring all night at this point with very little progress and a young trainee doctor came into the room and ordered me on to the bed, legs up in the stirrups and "don't make a noise between pushes". This instruction left me feeling vulnerable and like I had failed. She spoke to me like a child who needed firm instructions rather than a woman who needed encouragement. This doctor decided I needed to be prepped for an emergency c section and we signed paperwork in a blur. I was rushed into the operating room while my husband waited outside with no communication from anyone. Once the epidural had been administered, my body relaxed and my child was delivered vaginally. My child was placed on my chest for 5 minutes and then handed to my husband. I was wheeled away and my bed was parked in a hallway where I stayed for over an hour with no communication about why I was there and why I wasn't with my baby.

These events contributed to a feeling of failure which I took into my first moments as a parent. It wasn't until 7 years later (when I was pregnant with my second baby) that I was forced to work through these feelings of failure and confront my trauma. This is not the way a woman should enter motherhood. She should be ushered into this new stage with knowledge, discussion and empowerment. It has taken me years to recover from this trauma.