

Submission
No 140

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 1 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I have given birth to two children and experienced trauma both times in the private and public system. My first birth was an emergency caesarean at _____ Hospital. As soon as my son was born the midwife was hovering over me trying to take him away to weight and measure him despite my express wishes that he be placed skin to skin. I got a brief moment of skin to skin before he was taken from me (despite being perfectly healthy with apgar of 9). We were separated while I was taken to recovery for over 2 hours (again for no apparent reason as I was also healthy). In my recovery I cried and cried without my baby. We missed the golden hour and because of this breastfeeding was extremely difficult and it took 9 days for my milk to come in. Nobody helped me to shower after birth despite having major abdominal surgery. There is no adequate follow up care for women who have caesareans and mothers and babies should not be separated when not medically indicated.

My second birth was at _____ hospital. I was coerced into having an episiotomy although I stated I did not want one. Scare tactics were used while I was in a vulnerable state and unable to provide informed consent. The risks of an episiotomy were not explained and the process of cutting me was 100x more painful than the labour pain - I screamed and my husband almost fainted seeing that happen to me. I ended up with a 3A tear in addition to the episiotomy.

I also experienced trauma while having a miscarriage in the years before I gave birth to my two children. I presented to emergency at _____ hospital with extreme abdominal and back pain but was made to wait for 6+ hours because I wasn't bleeding significantly. I eventually collapsed on the ground in pain before I was attended to. I was made to feel like I was overreacting and that my pain was not valid. It was dehumanising.