

Submission
No 271

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 15 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I am 30 years old and a mother of two and I constantly feel physically and mentally broken.

When I was 7 I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. Having known my constantly changing mental state for over 20 years when I fell pregnant I tried to be pro-active in ensuring I was going to be ok, not only during pregnancy but postnatally as well.

My first appointment with the midwives group at Hospital was over the phone during covid where I expressed I expressed my needs for additional assistance and I was assured that they were going to have a mental health nurse contact me.

No one contacted me.

At my next appointment it was in person and a different midwife. I expressed that my mental health was low and I needed to speak to someone. I completed the Edinburgh depression scale and was assured someone was going to contact me.

No one called.

This pattern continued until I was 30 weeks pregnant, a different midwife every time. My pleas for help were constantly ignored until finally someone called and arranged a meeting with the mental health nurse who tracked my progress until post birth.

My labor was induced due to reduced movements and luckily i had a wonderful midwife. I proceeded to have a contraction then a panic attack over and over again for 7 hours. Sadly, after her shift was over and an older woman who (should have retired) proceeded to tell off my husband for sleeping and looked at the bloody bed and state "ew that's a lot of blood" then she just left. Another midwife on duty came in and was horrified that it had been left there and cleaned it up. When being moved to the postnatal ward the midwife pushed me in a wheelchair and left my husband and baby in the room making him literally run to catch up.

After my hospital visit I felt very little support after the 2 weeks when the midwives stopped checking on the baby.

My second pregnancy was a more positive time. At 6 weeks I called the caseload midwives group and had the most wonderful midwife who supported me throughout the whole time. Sadly the week of my delivery she had covid, leaving me with her back up.

I had expressed from the start that I had an immense fear of tearing and wanted a very controlled delivery. I labored for hours with my husband who was an amazing support person. When I was 8cm dilated I progressed very fast and begged for the midwife to check as I thought it was time. She said "Just keep doing what your doing your body knows what to do" At the point I lost all my sense of control as I had wanted someone to assist. After demanding for her to look she finally did but by that time I had already begun delivery. She moved me to the bath where it felt like my baby had become stuck and when they were finally born they were in shock. The midwife offered to hand the baby to me who wasn't breathing at the time. I felt so angry with this woman, she had taken all control from me.

I was then diagnosed with a 3a tear and then lost the first 4 hours with my child. Although the surgical team were amazing and I can not express the gratitude toward them.

My mental health spiraled and has continued to do so 8 months post birth. I have felt lost in a system that doesn't see how damaging this can be to our physical and mental health. There are so many mixed messages from midwives and doctors, there has been no consistency. I constantly have flashbacks and fears of falling pregnant.

I feel alone and broken.