

Submission
No 299

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

After a traumatic birth of my first son in 2017 where I had a very quick emergency c section out of the blue, at 9cms and after 18 hours of labour. It was never fully explained to me why this had happened and I spent many years grieving the birth I wanted and blaming myself thinking it was something I had done wrong. I also think this impacted my relationship to my baby and initial post partum period. I would also get very emotional each time I discussed my birth.

It was not until I was pregnant with my second child, that I started to address this trauma when I wanted to have a vbac. Initially I saw a dr at the private hospital in [redacted] where my partner was not aloud to attend the appointment with me becaus of covid and I was told that the dr would not risk me attempting a vbac and she has seen babies have bad outcome because of the way the mother wanted to give birth. The only option for me would be a c section but could refer me to a dr more willing to take risks.

I then went to the public hospital who seemed more willing to let me try for a vbac although I had drs tell me that I needed an epidural as soon as I went in to labour incase i needed a c section, one laughed when I said I wanted a vbac and said why would you want to do that. My dad was also fighting brain cancer at the time and I was feeling very disheartened and stressed, I contacted the public hospital and asked for some extra support (I did not get into the midwife program where there is one on one care).

I was referred to an amazing midwife [redacted] who talked me through my first birth in detail and explained my son was posterior (the first time I had been told this) and his head was not in the right position. In having this debrief I was able to process my first birth and move forward and focus on my second without crying each time I spoke about it. [redacted] then wrote a birth plan with me, I didn't see her again until later in my pregnancy but having someone I trusted and could reach out to if i needed made such a difference. At 38 week appointment the dr advised I would need to be induced as the babies tummy was not growing as well as they would have liked but before I made any decisions I spoke to [redacted] who looked at all my scans and liased with the head doctor and organised for me to wait extra days before the induction to see if I went into labour naturally (with monitoring of bub in place). She made me feel safe and heard and helped me mentally go into my labour with a positive mindset and although I was induced I was able to achieve my vbac. I believe this is due to the support that she gave me and believe it is pivotal for a woman to have a birth professional that they trust throughout the process.

In these moments woman are so vulnerable and minor interactions can have lasting impacts on the mother and her interactions with her baby and motherhood. Having a medical professional who you trust and who knows your history also makes a difference.

Further to this I think after my first birth experience I learned you need to advocate for yourself and I was able t do this more effectively in my second birth because of the experience of the first. I think there should beaservice offered where you can debrief particularly in situations where there is an emergency c section, instrumental delivery etc or the woman feels like she needs to.

Please feel free to contact me for any more information.