

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

There were aspects of my pregnancy care and birth that were traumatic, I felt at times coerced, manipulated and like I had no control over how things were to progress.

The reason I feel like these things didn't traumatise me were because I was aware that these things often occur in the hospital, so when it started happening to me I know what was going on. Even though I was aware of what was going, I was too consumed in my labour to be able to think clearly and rationally and hence make clear informed decisions.

I ended up with an induction, which I did not want. Alternative options to an induction were not offered to me and a risk/ benefits analysis of all options were also not explained.

I also feel like I Was manipulated into rushing into a decision about having an epidural.

I remember the words of the doctor- "If you want an epidural its best to decide soon. Its Sunday evening and we don't have an anaesthetist in the hospital now. He is on call and you don't know how long its going to take him to get here". I understand that this is all practice aspects of running a hospital, however I also feel like this is wrong. Women shouldn't have that pressure put on them when in labour.

During my pregnancy I was with a midwife group practice program, at 28 weeks my allocated midwife change jobs. This meant that I was bounced between different midwives in the program after she left. And was very stressful. I was planning a home birth through MGP and because my midwife left this became not an option for me.

My pregnancy and birth were also negatively impacted by cover restrictions. I had planned a 2nd birth support person (my best friend who is a midwife and doula). a couple of weeks before birth they restricted the birth support person to 1 (my partner) so 2nd person couldn't be there. I do think my birth would have been vastly different if she was there as a support person and advocate.

During my postnatal care, my episiotomy wound had started to open up. At the 10 day newborn check for my baby I told the GP about it and asked her to look at it. She wouldn't because she didn't have time. I understand this from a scheduling aspect. I do think it is hugely wrong. I was a vulnerable mother with a 10 day old baby. The day 10 newborn check should really allow time to check on mothers welfare and address any of her concerns.

I have been very let down by the medical system in the past and experienced traumatic events with doctors and nurses prior to being pregnant. So when all of the above happened it wasn't really surprising to me.

Having said all of this there were many aspects of my pregnancy, birth, postnatal care that were good and supportive. At these time I felt listened to, cared for, had my preferences acknowledged, and felt understood as a human being who had lived a life with a personal story.