

Submission
No 317

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In 2020 I birthed my first baby through the public system, at hospital. During my prenatal and postnatal care, I opted for shared care, and was fortunate enough to have a very supportive, professional and experienced GP who provided great continuity of care. However, learning to navigate the public system for the first time was very tricky, intimidating, overwhelming and lonely.

During each appointment, with a different midwife, with very differing opinions, I left confused, overwhelmed, and anxious.

As I headed towards the end of my pregnancy, the hospital booked me in to be induced. At the time, I believed what I was told "it's best for your baby as if you leave it any longer you're at risk of having a still born". This caused me great anxiety as my naive self believed that my baby would be at risk and it would be my fault if I went ONE WEEK over my due date, and it also caused even greater anxiety and panic as I tried for the next week to go in to labour naturally so I wouldn't have to be induced.

Unfortunately, I was induced. I was booked in for the afternoon, but told

That nothing would happen until the morning when my waters would break. My partner was sent home that night, even though at the time we lived an hour away.

The midwives on duty told me to get sleep.

I started to feel my body going into labour.

Being in a shared room, with a young mother who just birthed her baby and was struggling with attachment and feeding issues, who had finally just got her baby to sleep, I tried my best to labour quietly to not disrupt her.

I laboured on all fours in the dark & quiet room for a little while before pressing the button for help. The midwife that came in, was quite frankly rude, judgemental and was quite clearly not having a good day. She told me to have the pain killer and sleeping pill and get some sleep, not believing, or choosing not to believe that I was in labour. I tried advocating for myself but was also trying to keep the peace for my own mental well-being.

I tried jumping in the shower, I tried resting in the bed but my body wasn't having it. I needed to move. I was in labour. The kind young mother in the bed next to me offered me her heat pack for my lower back as the midwife was apparently unable to offer me one at the time.

On several occasions I asked the midwife to take me down to the birthing room, which she continually refused.

It wasn't until sometime later, that another midwife entered, saw me, and said you need to call your partner we can take you to the birth room.

The "angry midwife" as I refer to her as, made me pack up my things and started walking me down to the birthing Unit, it took a male nurse to notice me walking with my bags, having contractions, to point out to her "maybe get her a wheelchair".

I finally entered the birthing unit, the TEMPORARY BIRTHING UNIT.
The place was empty, all this time I thought they weren't letting me
Go there because it was full or busy. But I was the only person there.

Finally I was reunited with my partner, who brought my mum along because I now needed
extra support after feeling so unsupported and alone.

I remember the room feeling so tiny. A make-shift birthing room.
All I wanted was a shower or bath. But didn't have that available. Eventually some
One told me I could walk up the corridor to find one.
I went through a changeover of staff. I was given a trainee.

From there, everything changed again. He was nice. And I'm all about supporting people on
their learning journey. But was then the time. Was I even really given a choice? Not that I was
in a state to provide that sort of co sent or advocate for myself.

Unfortunately my birthing experience was less about me and more about him and his learning
experience.

I was ready to start pushing.
They told me no. They wanted to do another VE. Which is completely unnecessary.
I was ready to push. And they angrily obliged after I said it three or four times.

I was more comfortable in squatting positions, or on all fours.
He made me birth on my back.
They cut me.
He took control of the birth, telling me when to push,
Forcing my legs on the stirrups. Anytime I tried to listen to my
Own body I was again told what to do.

My baby came.
And within a moment.
He forced the birth of my placenta.
I squashed my belly, yanking thhe cord.

I don't even remember when the cord was cut. Everything was done so fast and without my consent. And my baby's placenta just discarded.

Soon after, I got stitches, there was no surgical lamp - but I was able to point out a torch on the shelf I noticed whilst labouring.

Turns out my son was the second baby born in the temporary birthing unit.

I really hope there weren't too many mothers that had to birth there, it should never have been allowed.

After all of this, we went home a day later. I was extremely excited to get out of there. I hated it there.

I got extremely sick within a week. The hospitals

Wouldn't help me. I spent a whole night in the ER at _____ hospital waiting to be seen. I had my newborn. And they just left me there in a bed. They didn't even offer food or water. I was turned away hours and hours later as they did not have the appropriate doctor that I needed.

Finally _____ hospital was able to help me, after them trying to turn me away multiple times saying I just had mastitis.

It was more than that. I knew that. My family knew that. My GP who was trying to advocate from afar for me knew that. Yet the qualified professionals still didn't know that.

Turns out I had retained placenta.

My body had turned septic.

I was so severely ill.

I finally started getting treatment in the hospital.

I was broken. Exhausted. Angry. Sick.

I had to spend a night away from my newborn.

This greatly impacted my breastfeeding journey.

Even during being treated, the hospital staff were hopeless at giving me answers and withheld so much information from me about my own body & experience.

This trauma took a long time to recover from.

It's only now, that I am pregnant with my second baby, where I have had to deal with the suppressed trauma from my first birth.

This time, I have opted for private midwife care, and am planning a homebirth, outside of the system.

As my learning journey about physiological birth continues, I can see so clearly the heavily flawed and outdated system i was once part of.

I pray I never have to go back.