

Submission
No 413

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My own birth story but I think it's also important to note I am also a midwife.

I spent most of my life waiting and preparing for when my turn for labour and birth would come. I was finally going to be a mum. I was ready I'd read everything I could get my hands on, studied and my husband and I had our birth plan and a great team who knew our wishes.

I laboured for a long time my plans went out the window as my daughter turned posterior and I ended up with an Epidural and oxytocin to strengthen my wearing contractions. My cervix wasn't dilating fast and didn't change from 6cm for 8 hours. I was offered a Caesarean section twice during that time. I was reassured my baby was well by the medical staff and I was supported to wait longer if my baby remained well. She did and my cervix finally fully dilated. During this time my wonderful midwife had to step away for a well earned break and I was cared for by another midwife.

My Epidural wore off and I begged and cried hysterically for the Epidural infusion to be started again. My midwife ignored my request I've never felt so out of control in my life so so vulnerable and helpless unable to move begging for help. That memory still is so vivid. I pushed for a few hours and finally birthed our gorgeous girl who ended up getting stuck with a shoulder dystocia. She wasn't breathing at birth but the staff were amazing calm and communicative and she recovered within 15 minutes.

From there things went well until we got home and my baby wouldn't feed. I brought her back because I knew her relentless crying wasn't normal. She was really unwell and had to be transferred to a tertiary hospital for intensive care.

She was treated and became well again and is now a thriving teenager.

I later learned that an MRG was performed to assess risk to my child for choosing to allow my body longer to labour.

I also then heard from staff that 'I got what I deserved' with sick a sick baby after not following a drs instructions. This was from colleagues, friends I though.

There is no doubt the trauma of my Midwifery colleagues thoughts of me as a new mother trying to make decisions to better both our health was in their mind harm that was deserving. And that my choices were putting my child 'at risk of serious harm'.

This was 12 years ago now but I still experience this same judgement by colleagues of other women choosing a different path for their births. I still here midwives say 'I wouldn't let her do . . .' As if a womans choice ever comes from a place of harm. As if a woman's choice is anyone else's but her own.

Things are much better than before but we have so much more to learn about trauma, trauma informed care and supporting women to make decisions for their bodies and babies.