

Submission
No 442

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I was coerced into a C-section even when I said no.

It was during Covid times where you were unable to bring a support person. My baby was in a Frank breech position at 38 weeks. My midwife I had seen my whole pregnancy had to refer me on to the obstetrician for review only due to the positioning. The obstetrician said I could either sign now and book in a calm elective C-section or we can wait and have an emergency C-section because they don't deliver babies vaginal love you if they are breech. I asked why not and they said well I'm sure you can find someone that would but your baby would most likely die or have cerebral palsy. Without having my husband to lean on and think with a clear mind I was so afraid to lose my baby. This was a pregnancy after miscarriage so I was already afraid of losing the baby like before. With tears I agreed to the C-section as all I wanted was to have my baby safely here. Bad choice.

In the lead up to my C-section date I was told I would meet the team doing the surgery and get to tour the suit of where we will go after. But no that never happened, they ended up saying they didn't have time for that. Come the day of the C-section and I meet the team a few hours before, I'm feeling better because now I have familiar faces. I get into the anaesthetic bay and a doctor comes in and looks at me checking my canula site and paperwork. Finally looks me in the eye and said I'll be doing your C-section now. No introduction no reason as to why my 'familiar team' is no longer doing it. I burst into tears and said I don't want this, I don't want a csection. The nurse said it's okay but we are doing it we've already started the anaesthetics.

My husband was finally allowed in and saw me afraid and upset. He knew this wasn't my wish and even said to the staff do we really need to do this. Everything I asked for to happen in regards to skin to skin, delayed chord clamping and my baby being taken away in the golden hour were all ignored. I was devastated. It took me days to bond as I was so out of it I felt like I wasn't even present my emotions were so numb. Little did I know that was only just the beginning. It took me a year to process what had happened. The fact that I felt ignored, no one listened to what I really wanted and when I asked they did not follow through on my requests. I felt like a shell, my autonomy had been taken away. I saw a social worker and a psychologist to process and heal. 3 years later and it still stings.

The worst part is that due to having a C-section we have had so many health issues arise in my child that are all linked to the C-section. If I had been told of the risks I would have looked elsewhere for help and options but I blindly trusted my health care providers had my best interests at heart. This was a public hospital going through a MAPS program seeing the same midwife all pregnancy for continuity of care. I was supposed to have her in postpartum as well but I had a different midwife I've never met for a home visit the week after birth and that was it. I never saw anyone from that hospital again I was discharged from their care with a phone call to say you're two weeks post partum that's all we can do for you.

This experience broke me for a long time. I ended up having another baby after this experience but this time I went in with my choices strong and the research to back my decisions. The public hospital told me it's best to have a C-section. I knew that was not the case. I ended up finding a wonderful private midwife and delivered my baby safely in my own home vaginal love you with two midwives who listened to me and held space for my choices. No complications. It was the most healing experience. We need more continuity and choice in care like this. This baby is now one year old and I'm still feeling so amazing due to that experience with my midwife. I also got 6 whole weeks of post partum care. I cannot put into words how amazing that was and how it really set me up for a supported post partum. It changed my mental health and healing physically and mentally.