

Submission
No 552

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 9 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

8th August 2023

To who this may concern

I am the mother of five and I've been fortunate to attend the births of all my six grandchildren. One a homebirth and the other five born with the midwives of the MGP program (Midwifery Group Practice).

All three of my daughters chose to birth under the care of midwives and doulas because of the horror stories they had heard from close friends and other family members.

All births, except the one I am sharing here were empowering, respectful and honouring experiences through the MGP for my birthing daughters and their partners.

Due to unforeseen circumstances during the birthing of one of my granddaughters there was a space between the change-over of her MGP midwives and so one of the hospital midwives stepped in. The lights that had been dimmed to create a peaceful space for the birthing and arrival of my grandchild were turned on and the atmosphere changed from a beautiful sacred birthing space into one that was medicalized, loud, intense and rushed.

The midwife was an elder woman, sharp, cranky, impatient and clearly tired. When she asked what the bucket was for that we had brought with us for the placenta that my daughter wanted to take home with her, she rolled her eyes and said "Whatever next, I've never heard of such a thing".

At one point she turned to my daughter saying "I'm too old for this shit" and continued to tell my daughter she wasn't going quickly enough. She continually scolded my daughter when she swore, made a lot of unnecessary noise in the birthing room, complained that things weren't in their proper place and was generally unfriendly. She then decided to call in the obstetrician to help "get the slow baby out". This was only four-five hours since her first contraction.

The obstetrician arrived and agreed baby wasn't coming quickly enough. Both the obstetrician and midwife continually raised their voices loudly at my daughter saying "listen to us, you must listen to us, you need to listen otherwise baby will be in danger, push harder and put more effort into it". This was my daughter's first birth and she changed from being peaceful, empowered and trusting of her body into being anxious, compliant, frightened and confused.

I confronted them both telling them that if they took the time to look at my daughter's face they would see that she was indeed pushing and she was directing her energy inwards rather than making the sounds they clearly felt they needed to hear to prove that she was doing as they instructed. I was both furious and ignored. They decided to give her a forceps delivery

which I witnessed as being harsh, violent and highly distressing and in my opinion totally unnecessary.

My daughter didn't want to speak of this for a long time after her baby's birth and is still reluctant to do so now hence me sending in this submission. I can kick myself sometimes for not intervening and saying more than I wanted too and at the same time, I'm also aware of the reluctance I'd felt to add more distress to my daughter and partner.

Fortunately and deservedly, she went on to have two more births with the MGP midwives that were empowering, honouring, sacred and respectful.