

Submission
No 599

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

As a first time Mum navigating pregnancy was not easy. I expected more continuity of care. Each appointment leading up to birth I had a different midwife, I didn't get to build trust or a relationship with anyone, and this meant I didn't know who would be there at the hospital when I gave birth. For a person who has experienced adverse childhood experiences trust and safety is even more so important and this should be built/ facilitated by the care provider in the months leading up to birth so Mum is cared for well. If we even begin to look at the statistics of sexual abuse, DV, or abuse in general adverse experiences for women are extremely prevalent. During pregnancy and postpartum this can be a time when consistent care is most important. The current system is failing women rather than empowering them the trust their body. Risk culture has gone too far and the systems needs to really step back and listen.

██████████ hospital was a long distance so I attended the community clinic in ██████████ for appointments before birth. I had to push/ask/walk myself/ into the birthing space at the hospital as tours were not a thing and explain that I needed to see where I would be going to birth to help me feel less anxious. They were fine and showed me through, part of this may have been due to Covid. But why is this not a routine thing?

My waters broke and due to taking too long to dilate I was induced. The constant monitoring straps on my belly were really impacting my headspace and I asked if we could take them off and was told no. Hours later the OB came in and didn't ask me permission but just said they needed to put a clip on the baby's head to monitor his heart rate as I was moving to much. I didn't get a second to think before it was up there. As this thing was put on The OB cut my vagina somehow and blood came out and she said something like oh no I'm so sorry it doesn't need a stitch nd applied some pressure. At this point I felt in shock about what just happened and was extremely tired . I didn't get the vaginal birth I dreamed off. It ended with a C-section I was waiting in theatre and remember yelling saying "I feel like I need to push" a few times. The nurse said oh yeah your at 10cm dilated. The OB was worried I would tear due to baby's head position I was all prepared for the surgery so I felt coerced to just have the baby via C-section. I never got to see my placenta, I really wanted too and had asked. My baby was given to me all wrapped in a blanket not skin to skin.

Following I had an infection and was in a lot of pain. I was horrified at the idea of going back to hospital 9 days after birth but the scar felt off. The entire experience just was not empowering. Bit sad really. I was low risk. I had a really hard time and wished there was more home visits post birth. Baby was so healthy Mum was a bit broken after it all

Home births is what I will be planning for my second child.