

Submission
No 617

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 7 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I presented to [REDACTED] Birth Centre [REDACTED] 11 June 2012 in the late evening for the birth of our baby. I experienced the following that lead to Post Natal Anxiety (PNA) & Post Natal Depression (PND) that lasted for 3 years after my birth:

1. That day I was told to come into the hospital for my regular check up, even after advising the staff on the phone that I was going into labour and would prefer to stay home during the day because I was going to be seeing them that late evening. They didn't believe me, telling me it was my first birth and it would take longer than that. During the check up appointment, they mock laughed at me for expressing my view of going into labour that evening again. It left me feeling not supported and anxious of returning that evening despite knowing I would be going into active labour.

2. On arrival to the Birth Centre the midwife on duty told me to "just relax". This is not what you tell a person experiencing anxiety from after the lack of support earlier than day.

3. I was also told on arrival that I wasn't dilated enough and would need to go home before returning again. I asked the midwife to please check my dilution, which she apprehended at first, but then did, to discover I was 4cm dilated already.

4. I was pulled out of the warm bath where I was gathering myself during Transition. (I needed this quiet time to settle myself before I knew I had to work hard during Active Labour.) This left me feeling shocked, dislocated and unable to "go along with" birthing. It was like I was placed on a bullet train ~ too fast too soon.

5. I was asked where wanted to active birth (birth ball or bed), but not given time to make a clear decision, constantly being rushed.

6. During active labour the rushing continued, and I was told to push on many occasions. I crushed 4 vertebrae which left me unable to lift my baby properly for the first year. And now 11 years later I am still undergoing rehabilitation work for their repair.

7. My baby was also born with Newborn Cephalohematoma (bruises on her head) - this too could have been avoided.

I believe if I was just given a few moments to gather myself and not be on "the hospital clock", I would have gathered myself and be able to labour without excessive pushing and not crush 4 vertebrae nor my baby's head bruises.

8. The rushing continued when I was told I had to birth the placenta immediately. I was shocked and what was professionally assessed later was having a panic attack. The midwife

ignored these signs & symptoms and insisted I birth my placenta immediately. This led me to lose a lot of blood which set me up for PNA & PND for many years.

If women are given time and quiet space to birth, their bodies know what to do, If women have to birth on "the hospital clock", intervention all too soon is given and then the body loses its ability to do its natural process of birthing.

Thank you for your time.