

Submission
No 740

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

In July 2020 I gave birth at
event meeting our baby was actually traumatic as staff dismissed all my birth preferences and things did not go as I'd wanted.

What was meant to be a happy

During labour I was subject to many instances of bullying, coercion, disrespectful care, being dismissed, including being pressured into an induction by an OB who never met me before, but walked in the door saying 'wow look at that huge belly, you should've had a 36week scan to check baby's size because it is way over 4kg! Also you should've come in earlier for an I suction because now it's Friday afternoon and I won't be here later to do a C-section when the baby gets stuck!'. The midwives (who I didn't know) didn't give me any privacy or let me create a calm birth space. They followed me in the shower and kept talking to me and turning the lights on, even though my birth preferences clearly stated I wanted a calm and dark space to labour. One of the worst moments for me was when the OB told me they had to turn my posterior baby around for the birth as otherwise they couldn't use the vacuum. She started and I was screaming 'no' and 'stop' to which she replied 'I can do this here now or under anaesthetics in the OR'. I felt like I had no choice so I let her continue and two midwife's had to hold me down as it was so painful! What makes it even worse is that I probably didn't need the vacuum delivery anyway if the midwives would've realised that I didn't wee once during the 16hrs I laboured in the hospital and my bladder was completely full!

At this time when I should have felt cared for and supported, I felt so let down and violated, I didn't know what to do! Every time my partner tried to advocate for me, he got shut down and basically told to stop talking as it was non of his business!

Birth trauma has impacted my physical body and mental health as I couldn't talk or even think about my birth without crying. Now two years later it still brings tears to my eyes! It also impacted the bond with my baby as I just felt numb for weeks after the birth! This should've been one of the most special times in my life filled with loving memories of my newborn but instead I barely remember anything as I tried to suppress the emotions that came with the birth. If I could recommend/legislate/ change one thing to prevent birth trauma and improve care it would be to let every women have continuity of care to ensure she has a midwife at her birth that knows her and her preferences and is able to advocate for her! I had a private midwife for my 2nd birth and the care I received from her was incredible and my 2nd birth was healing, but also saddening as I knew it could've been like that the first time around.