

Submission
No 758

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

Hi my name is Crystel Passano. I am now 37 years old and live in the _____, NSW. I have a 3 year old boy and only now am I feeling better from my birth story.

While I was pregnant I had the most amazing midwife through my journey. I wanted a Doula for the birth, but due to COVID I knew she would not be allowed it. Being pregnant during Covid times was very scary and uncertain. I did not feel nurtured or supported much besides my lovely midwife. Towards my 3rd trimester, she let us know she will go on casual and will no longer be able to support me for the rest of my journey. I know that is out of her hands, but 5 1/2 weeks away from birth time I get handed over to another midwife, that honestly was so cold. I never forget close to my due date, she said to me she is going on a 2 week holiday and that she knows my son won't come then, well guess what he did!

So on a Tuesday 30th June, 2020 my waters broke without me realizing. My mom told me on Wed to go have a look and see if its all ok, so they booked me for the Thursday and I went in and was told my waters had broken and labour had commenced, as it had been almost 48 hrs that if my boy wouldn't come on his own, then I would have to come in at 6 am the next day to be induced.

I had not being informed anything of what to expect, so I walked away upset as I truly wanted a water birth and if being induced that would not be an option.

I went for acupuncture and massage to help, but nothing.

Next day at 6 am we went in and met my new midwife which never had met as my other one went on holidays. She was lovely, but I was scared. I was given a room with a pool, which I had to stare at the whole day knowing that would not be a possibility.

One hour later from induction starting I vomited my life away. I was weak and no energy and I could not eat. Induction started at 7 am, around 5 pm Dr kept coming and putting pressure on dilating and letting me know that for the safety of the baby if I did not dilate to 10 cm by this time, then we would have to do c section and for the next couple of hours was this game. As if our bodies will respond to that kind of pressure. Thanks to my midwife that reminded me that I wanted my natural birth and that I can do it. Hours went by and the last pressure was given, which was so cold and I felt like an object. I went to take a shower and that helped with the pain, after that I started stretching and when they came to check after several times of being invasive of putting their hand inside of me like I was a machine, I dilated. Was 10 pm and was preparing to push.

So the marathon went on for about an hour of pushing and nothing. Of course my little one was not ready to come out and his head kept turning. While you are in another world you are told that this is bad and blah blah like the natural way is not right, anything to intervene in their medical way. Every minute and every second counts in this peoples agenda and was so sad to witness. After much trying and no luck, I was told that they would need to intervene with either forceps or the vacuum. For my partner and I both options sounded horrific, but we HAD to choose right? They gave us no option and brought fear to us. So we chose forceps.

Here we prepare for this last round. Gosh I was broken inside, nothing I had wished for went my way. The system took over to make it their way and brought so much fear and uncertainty to me. I felt horrible and so guilty that this was the option they had given me. At that point I just wanted to birth my son, so at 00:27 am my little man came to this world surrounded by bright light and 20 people that's how he was welcome.

I got briefly a moment to connect and breastfeed before being told I was up for another marathon of pushing. This time is for the placenta.

Oh guess what? Now the placenta doesn't want to come out, what a surprise as that process takes time, but once again they are on a time frame and no patience to let women choose truly their way, so there I was told that for my health and concern they needed to remove my placenta. If my body wouldn't do it on its own, then they will have to intervene. At that point was close to 2 am exhausted from everything and the day.

They said I would have to get an epidural to remove it after specifically being against it for my birth. I did not want it, I trusted my body.

But no luck, after signing the consent form and telling my husband of the possible effects this could cause, I left and he was left with no words scared with a newborn and a mom that could potentially be paralysed from this injection.

They took me to the theatre room and did their job to remove my placenta. Never was asked for what I wanted to do with it, they just threw it away like it was nothing.

At 3:30 am I got to be back in the room with my family, completely shattered and exhausted. After all that I get given a non nutritious meal after undergoing all that and was told my husband could not sleep there. He was sent home. I had to stay by myself.

I woke up at 5:30 am too excited to see my newborn and all drugged up from all the medicine they kept feeding me. We stayed only 1 night as I could not stand that place any longer and wanted my home.

I left there completely traumatized, hopeless with a broken heart. The day that was meant to be my happiest day, was traumatic due to the lack of support in the system for mamas.

Took me weeks to get my head around it and let alone talk about it. I cried and cried. I felt I betrayed myself and my son.

Here we are 3 years later and after reading so much and following people with knowledge I realized how robbed I was. My story is one more, as everyone of my friends that gave birth after me had a traumatic experience. So what is going on here? That's not right. Now I question if I really needed to be induced, if they really needed to use forceps, if they really needed to inject me to remove my placenta. What happened to free birth, free choice. Birthing at home seems a much safer option than the hospital.

What happened to the support and nurturing around birth and the mamas. Why do we have to go through this?

I really hope we can bring awareness and change to this.

During my postpartum period we got a few visits between a week and then we had to figure it out ourselves. Once the visit was over no more support. The sacred window is around 6 weeks for the recovery of the mama, so how come we get 1 week on;y and no more support?

If you want a Doula or more support you need to financially afford it on your own. There needs to be more help for mamas to have Birth Doulas, Post partum Doulas, Lactation consultants and all the support they will require to recover. It takes a village to raise a child, so how come we are left alone to go through this.

We need better laws for this violations. Birth trauma is real and we need change. We need support and help.

We need a medical system that can work with their medical beliefs, but also understand and comprehend the natural way and free birth. Birth is meant to be sacred, so people should honour that. We need support to feel safe while pregnant, be given all the preparation we need and not based fear opinions.

We need to truly be given consent for all this interventions. We don't need them. We need funding and assistance for all mamas to have a birth doula.

We need assistance and support for mamas to have a post partum Doula that will support them through the 6 weeks if natural birth or 8 weeks if recovering from c section.

We need the truth, care and support.

We need to create a safe place for all birthing experiences.

We need change please.