

**Submission  
No 774**

## **INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA**

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**Date Received:** 9 August 2023

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To whom it may concern,

There are a few things I would like to say as a birth worker before I dive deep into my own story. I am exposed to the effects of birth trauma almost every day, multiple stories, lack of support, lack of understanding, mistreatment, discouraging language, coercion, lack of evidence, care providers not knowing the most recent studies. All of this contributes to birth trauma.

My story is the reason I became a doula. And my goal is to make sure no women & her family I support will ever feel the way I did after the birth of my son.

My husband and I are IVF parents and we have experienced mistreatment and disrespectful care from the very beginning. When we were told that we were unable to fall pregnant naturally not once were our lifestyle choices or natural ways to assist the point of conversation. We were told and I quote "you are incompatible and simply can not make a baby together" it broke our hearts.

Fast forward 2 years, 8 IVF cycles, an early birth & "unviable pregnancy" later (the language, is disgusting) we were pregnant with our miracle.

At my first OB appointment at 20 weeks it was clear that she was on a mission. The first thing she said to me was "let's book in an induction at 38 weeks, this baby is obviously very precious and we don't want anything to happen to you" - she didn't trust my body to birth my baby & wanted to make sure I didn't. There was no medical reasoning for this comment. I was healthy, I was carrying beautifully and I was 20 weeks pregnant. Throughout my pregnancy I was often told that my baby could die if I went past 40 weeks.

My birth was just as bad - my midwife who was completely on board with everything I had asked completely forgot my preferences during birth. We're done with out my consent, my husband felt like he was in the way, it was Covid and there were some pretty irrational rules in place.

Long story short my birth resulted in a cesarean due to "failure to progress" which in hospital terms means "your past the 18hr time frame, we don't want an insurance claim let's go"

I cried on the way to theatre and everyone just said good luck to me, celebrating the fact that I had failed to birth my baby by myself. I could hear the surgical nurses discussing what they were doing on the weekend while my baby was being pulled from my stomach, I couldn't hold my baby because of Covid restrictions, I wasn't aloud to take him to recovery and to top it off the OB didn't know my name and was telling me I needed to go back on the pill so I wouldn't

fall pregnant again. If he read my chart he would know I wasn't able to fall pregnant because of the pill and that I was an IVF mum.

I hated my birth because not once was I listened to, asked if I was ok, felt like I was in control of actually acknowledged. It was like sitting in a room, a fly on the wall. I didn't look at my scar until my little boy was 2 because to me it was a sign of failure.

I wasn't able to fall pregnant with a baby, to birth my baby and I had failed as a women.

When in fact, I didn't fail, the system failed me