

**Submission
No 1294**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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I'm a psychologist who has counselled clients who have birth trauma.

What is apparent to me is that birth trauma most often develops when a woman has had some of the decision making regarding her birth taken away from her, making her feel like she hasn't had full control over her body or her child. Often I hear that health care providers have ignored the woman's wishes and proceeded with unnecessary and harmful procedures.

One particular client's experience stands out to me as an example of a system that doesn't respect women. This woman miscarried and was required to give birth to her dead baby. Losing a baby was traumatic enough. Prior to the birth she had requested to be able to hold her baby before the baby was to be removed. However, the medical staff removed the dead baby from the theatre before the mother regained consciousness. This was incredibly harrowing for her, and it contributed to her being more susceptible to developing trauma following her second subsequent birth (which was a very difficult birth in its own right). This woman wasn't listened to or respected and she deserved so much better.

Women are being failed by the patriarchal medical model at what is probably the most vulnerable time in a woman's life. This has got to change.