

**Submission  
No 1309**

## **INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA**

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In my career as a doula / birth support and educator, I have seen first hand evidence of bullying and coercion in the birth space in hospital. Some of it is subtle and leaving mothers not quite understanding how things got so out of control. Others, outright bullying with no consideration of the mothers wishes, and if nothing else respecting a woman's body and her right to body autonomy. The incidences of lack of respect for my role also has a knock on effect for Mums and their partners. Birth trauma has become the norm, which sadly means many women don't realise that it's happened to them because it happens to almost everyone in some way or another. I believe it begins with the constant undermining of women during pregnancy, over servicing, over testing and then finding just the smallest 'issue' 'problem' 'danger' and in doing so hijacking the birth. I also have many young mums downloading with me afterwards, and to be honest it's heart breaking the stories I hear. Most women will NEVER report these incidences because they are afraid or just trying to 'get on with it'. It is paramount that the hospital system is overhauled and that women are listened to so that maternity care is for the women and not for the system. My most beautiful experiences in the birth space have been with mums who chose home birth the second time around and are so amazed at how beautiful undisturbed birth can be. Thank you, Megan