

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

They say there is a desperate need for midwives. There's a global shortage. I am a student midwife and despite this career being my dream, I am 50% certain I will continue my studies and work as a midwife. I don't know if I want a life of witnessing abuse and having no power or autonomy to prevent it.

The first birth I witnessed on placement at the birth unit was so traumatic that I have had to seek specialised counselling. Day 1, a first year student midwife and that was how the placement began. I witnessed a woman be coerced into a ventouse delivery of her baby. The doctor using the ventouse did not explain to the woman what she was doing, why or the benefits verses risks. The baby was born very flat and needed extensive resuscitation. The woman was rushed to theatres for a retained placenta due to obviously unnecessarily rough cord traction resulting in the umbilical cord breaking off.

I want to be a midwife. But I don't know if this job is safe for my nervous system or my mental health. The culture in the tertiary hospital I am based at is a culture of normalised degradation of women and their voices.

I had dreams about that birth for many nights. I've suffered from intrusive thoughts. I try to imagine being a midwife who is supportive of women but I cannot see how that is possible within the current maternity system being as broken as it is.