

Supplementary  
Submission  
No 826a

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially  
Confidential

As a midwife who trained in a Sydney hospital, I was most exposed to under supported and toxic work environments when I started working at \_\_\_\_\_ hospital. As a junior midwife I sustained a wrist injury during a shoulder dystocia birth. I reported my immediate pain to my MUM who initially dismissed my concern. I tried to speak about it with other senior colleagues who were completely disinterested. I eventually had to have surgery on my wrist, and the whole process was taxing, but the lack of support from my colleagues and the feeling that I was being spoken about behind my back, made me feel isolated and on my own. This event is one example of the systemic problems that are happening behind the scenes for younger staff, and creating unsustainable work environments.

The 'fear of litigation' was the overarching culture at the time, and meant that the ob/gyn's decisions were to be carried out right away. My role as the birthing person's advocate meant that I often found myself speaking up against certain decisions which were not evidence based. I felt threatened doing this, despite knowing that it was my role to do it - according to my job description! Many times the doctors would use language to coerce the patients into caesarean delivery, using fear and manipulation. We would be left to pick up the pieces of these patients and their families who wanted to have empowered births, but felt that they had lost all control.

Unfortunately too many midwives feel that working within the public health system means going along with traumatising women every day. Women have the right to access healthcare which is centred on them and their child and family.