

Submission
No 1425

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Birthing is the experience that allows courage, compassion, resilience to begin the parenting journey. Having that experience treated as a procedure IS NOT OK. Not listening, consenting, giving space or checking in with the mothers and babies UNIQUE cues during birth is abuse. Birthing is not a procedure. Every mother and babies bodies share their own story which needs to be individually considered and supported prior to arriving in the birth suite in the public system.

"How a woman is supported through her labour and birth may impact upon her post natal recovery, adjustment to motherhood and her self-esteem for many years to come therefore care providers have a duty to be sensitive to the woman's emotional, cultural and physical needs." - Safer Care Victoria

Having an episiotomy done by a student midwife who has never performed one before IS NOT OK. Having a senior doctor come into the birthing suite and openly discuss who would like to perform the episiotomy at an already traumatized birthing mothers feet IS NOT OK. Not asking the birthing mother who she would prefer to perform the episiotomy on her body IS NOT OK.

This occurred in a specialist public birthing centre who said were advocates to SPECIALIZING in one to one care. Providing a mother with ALL her options and what the legal bound is ones birthing plan was also not part of this service. There were three birthing support people who were not listened to, not informed, not checked in with while the birthing mother suffered in a space of not knowing while birthing her first baby. THIS IS NOT OK.

When her baby was born the mother was not given details of her episiotomy and had no after care after birthing or leaving the hospital. Is this normal the mother wondered?. The baby was also jaundiced, not sleeping for longer than 20 minutes at a time (day and night), and had trouble breastfeeding. There was no after care with any of this. THIS IS NOT OK.

Years later. There is so much trauma that continues to be part of the lives of the birthing mother, her baby and all those who were witness to this birth trauma inside a public birthing centre - under a midwifery care program. There was zero aftercare regarding the traumatic birth and all that were part of this birth are learning how to heal on their own accord. THIS IS NOT OK.

DIFFERENT BIRTH TO THE ONE ABOVE WITH A DIFFERENT MOTHER IN A DIFFERENT PUBLIC HOSPITAL.

The midwives in this second mothers birth story were experienced, educated, informative and absolute advocates to the mother and baby to birth safely and in THEIR TIME. The Public Hospital had a student midwifery program with VERY CLEAR communication between the birthing mother, the head midwife and the student midwife. All communication was treated respectfully with the detailed birthing plan the mother provided the hospital on her arrival.

Birth for the first time. The mother felt ready and calm and was looking forward to meeting with her baby for the first time. She decided no intervention as long as the baby and herself were showing all good signs of good health and well being through the labour and birth. Moving this birth along towards the transitional stage of labour where the midwives shift is coming close to the end and a female obstetrician decides to enter the room while the mother is in the peak of a contraction to discuss intervention options because the labour is not progressing. The mother asks about her babies condition and if there are any concerns for her or her baby. The answer is no. A second now more demanding elderly male obstetrician now enters the room together with the first to demand that intervention begin to move the labour along. The mother waits for her contraction to end and asks if her and her baby are well? The reply is yes.

Throughout her labour the obstetricians continued to demand to intervene when the mother finally agreed to having a cannula put "in case she experienced excess bleeding after birth, like she had over a year ago after her surgery of a missed miscarriage" (at the same hospital). THIS IS NOT OK. To scare a mother who is clearly in good health and showing no signs of risk to her and her baby during labour. THIS IS NOT OK. The obstetrician continued with her procedure of putting in this cannula in between contractions that were 5-10 minutes apart while the mother was sat on the toilet.

The demanding female obstetrician held the mothers left arm waiting for a pause in the mothers contractions. When the needle pierced through the mothers skin, blood sprayed over both of them, the floor and the wall. The mother screamed out telling her to stop immediately. (The mothers forearm bruised for over a month after this). The obstetrician apologized saying she got it in the wrong spot. THIS IS NOT OK. This was one of many battles the mother and her support team had to get through throughout her labour and birth.

The mother had a vaginal birth to a healthy baby with the incredible advocacy of her midwives at a public hospital, her partner and her two support persons who all continued to listen to her and monitor her and her baby through the labour and birth. She received no after care once out of hospital and went into a different bordering state to receive after care for her and her baby for postpartum support. She was one of the lucky ones as she won her battle in the boxing ring when entering the hospital to birth her baby.

The answer to fixing all of the above and many more INDIVIDUAL cases outside of these needs to be based on the initial laws put in place towards human rights while giving birth. Put them in place so humanity, parenting and bringing parents and children up into this society are valued towards creating a better world for all. Educate our BOYS AND GIRLS on periods in our schools. Periods, the menstrual cycles and sanitary products is not womens only education, IT IS SOCIETAL EDUCATION.

Care during labour, birth and after birth for every individual is a must. Nothing should be classified AS NORMAL as nothing is normal if you have never experienced it before.