

# Birth Trauma: A patient's story

## Birth Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

When people think about PTSD they often think of a car accident or a soldier returning from battle. But the natural experience of childbirth can make people feel traumatised.

It can happen to anyone who has given birth, for any reason and affects around 30,000 people per year. It can make bonding with your baby difficult, create anxiety and cause frightening flashbacks.

**Here, in her own words, one of our patients shares her story of her experience of birth trauma and her recovery.**

“When I found out I was pregnant with my 2<sup>nd</sup> child, I thought I would be over the moon, relishing every minute of my new pregnancy. I didn't expect to burst into tears when I saw the positive sign on the test. I was terrified. From that moment, I had flashbacks of my first delivery, my time in hospital, fears about losing everything I now had in the form of my first little boy and husband.

The midwife at my booking in appointment very quickly picked up that something wasn't right. She referred me to the Perinatal Team. I couldn't be more grateful. The help I have been given, the support and understanding provided by my workers, has been most certainly life changing.

I struggled to bond with the baby in my womb, I felt threatened, I was afraid and so I resented the baby who had caused all of this.

The team helped me manage my anxiety, helped with coping mechanisms, and never judged me for the way I felt. They also helped me to communicate my fears to hospital professionals, helped write my birth plan so that hospital staff were aware of my issues. I could not have dealt with my PTSD alone. I am not sure what would have happened to me without their help and support.

I cannot commend the overall service provided, enough. I have many new-mum friends, who also struggle with the pressures of being a new mum, and of the expectations to be well and perfect from day 1. I now always share my experience with them and encourage them to ask for help.”

**If you have had a traumatic birth and/or feel you are suffering with PTSD it is important to seek help – please speak to your GP.**

**You can find more information about birth trauma and how to get support at:**

- Birth Trauma Association [birthtraumaassociation.org.uk](http://birthtraumaassociation.org.uk)
- Unfold Your Wings [unfoldyourwings.co.uk](http://unfoldyourwings.co.uk)
- The Berkshire Healthcare Perinatal service [berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/perinatal-mental-health](http://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/perinatal-mental-health)

**There's lots of advice on looking after your new baby and increasing your bond on our website: <https://cypf.berkshire.healthcare.nhs.uk/your-baby>**