

Media Release

SBS Insight explore birth-related trauma in-depth

Amy Dawes, CEO and Co-Founder of Australasian Birth Trauma Association

This week, our CEO, Amy Dawes had the great honour of sharing her story on SBS Insight alongside brave women and families who have experienced birth-related trauma.

To be provided a safe space to hear and share these experiences was especially validating. After 4 years of fighting to get birth trauma recognised, it now is and not just by those that have a lived-experience but by our health professionals and policy makers.

Birth Trauma is real, 1 in 3 Australian women identify their birth as traumatic, with birthing partners and other family members also experiencing birth-related trauma.

As psychologist Dr Pajak says "Women often recognise that their birth experience was distressing but can be told that they simply need to accept it and move on. I hope that the Insight episode leads to greater recognition of the impact of traumatic birth on postnatal mental health and encourages women to seek support following birth trauma."

Just like a stone you throw into a pond, a traumatic birth can create ripples that get larger and larger.

As the first charity in Australia solely dedicated to reducing the incidence and impact of birth-related trauma, we provide a voice to those who have previously suffered in silence and SBS Insight gave us a platform to roar that bit louder.

Over the last four years, we have identified common themes that contribute to birth trauma, including poor communication from our care providers, lack of compassion in health care, lack of informed decision making and life changing injuries. It's so important to recognise that birth trauma is completely individual as is demonstrated in the episode.

"I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to represent the people we support and to hear the perspectives of health professionals with a special mention to my colleagues; Dr Rosanna Pajak, Angela James MACP and Dr Oliver Daly." say Amy Dawes.

"For me the most incredible part of being involved in this program, is that we heard the voices of women, **and** their partners, because the ripple effect of trauma is experienced by them too. To hear the devastating impact that birth-related trauma has on sense of identity, bonding with baby, sexual function, and ability to function at work or home. It is not something that has truly been explored to this depth on mainstream media."

"I had first-hand experience witnessing incredible courage in vulnerability, including those from the ABTA community; Gemma Purdy, Bronwyn Ford and Iti Lekha. It is something I will never forget and they are the reason we do what we do. There is great power in peer support." say Amy.

"I reached out to Gemma and Iti to ask what made them want to speak out and this is what they shared."

"I felt like my body was falling apart with no support in sight. We have rehabilitation for just about everything in the healthcare system except for women after birth. Where is the rehab for women with significant life changing

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birthing injuries? If I can make even ONE woman feel less alone and bring awareness to a topic that makes all women warriors then I will continue to share my story” – Gemma

“I wanted to take up the opportunity to share my experiences with my traumatic birth and postpartum injuries (both physical and psychological) on SBS Insight because I believe that spreading awareness is the most important thing right now as not much information or help is available around birth-trauma currently.” – Iti

Once again from the entire team at the ABTA, thank you to the SBS Insight team, in particular, Rebecca Baillie for providing us with this opportunity, as well as a chance to mention our [campaign](#), calling for Medicare subsidised pelvic physiotherapy for birthing parents. Please sign our petition and help us make recovery after birthing a priority.

By sharing the voices of birthing families, we aim to inspire action for safer births, better healing. Watch the episode [here](#).

“Physiotherapists play a critical role in pelvic health and antenatal and postnatal care, but funding is very limited, preventing women who need this treatment from accessing it. The Australian Physiotherapy Association is advocating strongly for better funding, to assist in reducing and recovering from birth trauma.” Scott Willis, [APA National President](#)

Birth is wonderful.
But sometimes birth is frightening.
Sometimes birth is physically damaging.
Sometimes birth is nothing like you hoped or planned.

It’s hard to hear, but important to say: birth can be traumatic. But it doesn’t need to be, and there’s help if it is. We are a peer-led community dedicated to helping women and families from Australia and New Zealand prevent and heal from birth-related trauma. We do this through advocacy, education, research and peer-led support.

Initiatives

Peer2Peer Meets
Peer2Peer Live Chat
ThinkNatal Education

For more information on ABTA contact marketing@birthtrauma.org.au or
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