

## ABOUT US

### Our Vision

The Australasian Birth Trauma Association (ABTA) has a vision of safer births and better healing.

### Our Mission

We are a peer-led community dedicated to helping Australians prevent and heal from birth-related trauma.

### Family-centred care

ABTA recognises that the immediate family of parents affected by birth-related trauma, including fathers, non-birthing parents and infants, should be included in early and appropriate intervention.

We believe that more work needs to be done to understand and in turn, better support, the emotional and physical needs of birthing parents affected by birth-related trauma.



[birthtrauma.org.au](http://birthtrauma.org.au)



[support@birthtrauma.org.au](mailto:support@birthtrauma.org.au)



Australasian Birth Trauma Association-ABTA



[@birthtrauma.org.au](https://www.instagram.com/birthtrauma.org.au)

## ABTA SUPPORT SERVICES

**Our Peer2Peer Support Programs create safe spaces to share your birth and postpartum experiences, connect with others, and create your own community of support.**



### These will help to:

#### Peer2Peer Social

Our peer-moderated Facebook private group supports women and birthing people who have experienced birth-related trauma.

#### Peer2Peer Meets

This is a 6-week, in-person support program. Led by our trained peer workers, you'll be guided with engaged, open conversations and storytelling so you can see that recovery is possible.

#### Peer2Peer Chat

Our free online (written text) chat service is available via our website, book in a time that suits you.



"The best part of the program was it helped me not feel alone in a scary and overwhelming time."

The information provided is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between a patient/user and his/her/their existing health professional/s.

Last Reviewed July 2023. Queries in relation to this document can be submitted to [support@birthtrauma.org.au](mailto:support@birthtrauma.org.au). This resource does not host or receive funding from advertising. © Australasian Birth Trauma Association 2023. ABTA0024G. Designed by BrandUnity.

# BIRTH-RELATED TRAUMA SUPPORT



Australasian

**birthtrauma**

Association



Birth can be wonderful. But sometimes it can be frightening, and even traumatic.

This leaflet contains information on physical and psychological symptoms that can occur following a traumatic birth experience. Please seek help if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

## SUPPORTING YOU

Birth-related trauma is a trauma or injury - whether physical or psychological - that occurs at any time in connection with pregnancy, labour and birth or in the postnatal period.

Birth-related trauma affects as many as 1 in 3 birthing parents in Australia and can have psychological, emotional, and physical impacts.

Fathers, non-birthing parents, as well as others witnessing a traumatic birth can experience birth-related trauma.

Experiences of trauma are unique, and what may be traumatic for one person may not be traumatic for another. If your birth experience felt traumatic to you, then it was. We want you to know you are not alone and there is support available.



**We need to break the taboo over talking about birth-related trauma and challenge the myth that all that matters is a healthy baby.**

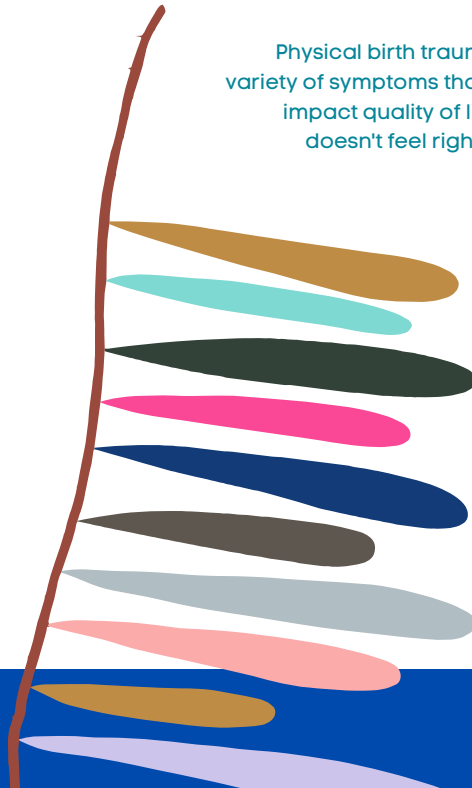
*Amy Dawes OAM, Co-Founder*

## BIRTH INJURIES

Symptoms or injuries may include:

- Pain around the site of the episiotomy or tear in the perineum (between vagina & anus) after birth
- Bladder damage
- Coccydynia (any type of persistent tailbone pain)
- Dragging/heavy feeling in the pelvis or a sense that something is 'falling out'
- Pelvic organ prolapse
- Pelvic floor muscle damage or muscle laxity
- Incontinence/leaking of wee or poo
- Infected stitches
- Pudendal neuralgia (nerve pain/damage)
- Wound dehiscence (wound breakdown/separation)
- Hysterectomy (removal of womb/uterus)
- Postpartum haemorrhage (PPH)/ Secondary PPH
- Other injuries that may not have been categorised.

Physical birth trauma can result in a variety of symptoms that may negatively impact quality of life. If something doesn't feel right, ask your health professional.



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

Psychological symptoms may include:

- Feelings of intense fear, helplessness or distress in reaction to reminders of the experience, e.g. words, smells, rooms, clinicians
- Fear and anxiety about going outside
- Struggling to bond with your baby
- Flashbacks
- Trying to push feelings away and get on with looking after your baby
- Difficulty sleeping due to bad memories or reminders of the birth
- Nightmares regarding the birth
- Irritability and guilt
- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Avoiding reminders of the traumatic birth, such as the location where it occurred (avoidance reactions)
- Feeling emotionally numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings
- Sweating, shaking, headaches, dizziness, gastrointestinal upsets and chest pains not connected with a medical condition
- Noticing changes in mood.



Please seek help if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

✉ [support@birthtrauma.org.au](mailto:support@birthtrauma.org.au)



Contact us at ABTA to find out more about support for yourself and your family.

You may also wish to talk to your GP, midwife or health visitor about how you feel. Awareness of problems, whether physical or psychological, varies greatly. Use this leaflet to help explain how you are feeling with your care provider.