



Winter Newsletter December 2004

Welcome to this, the first edition of the Birth Trauma Association's Newsletter.

We hope to publish these newsletters quarterly, in order to provide information on the work of the BTA. Should you wish to contribute an article for the future newsletters, or have any constructive comments or feedback, please do contact enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk.



BTA Launch

The Birth Trauma Association was launched on 25th August 2004 at the Jury Room in Salisbury Guildhall.

The Association was set up in April 2004 by Maureen Treadwell and Debbie Sayers. Both women have suffered difficult birth experiences and are determined to provide support for women traumatised by childbirth and to work with health professionals to raise awareness and identify those practices which contribute to trauma.

The Launch was very successful and all attendees expressed positive comments and support with regard to the good work the Association is already involved in.

For further details of the Launch, please visit our website and read the Press Release by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/BTALaunchPressRelease.pdf>

Press and Publicity



Following on from the Launch in August 2004:

- Articles have been in the Observer, Telegraph and the local Salisbury Journal.

See links below to read the articles:

- Observer Article - <http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/NHSCaesareansstay.pdf>
- Telegraph Article - <http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/Helpforwomensufferingyearsofchildbirthtrauma.pdf>
- Dr Helen Allott and Emma Cuppini did a brilliant piece on Radio Berkshire
- We have had contact and encouraging response from the press. Articles will be appearing in Bella, She (February 2005) and the Mail on Sunday's 'You' magazine. Look out for details appearing on our site.

This Morning - ITV1

Emma Cuppini, BTA Member and Dr Helen Allott, BTA Board Member, did an excellent interview with Philip Schofield and Lorraine Kelly on This Morning on ITV1 on 3rd November 2004.

During the interview Emma discussed the PN PTSD she suffered following the birth of her daughter 10 years ago; how it affected her life; and the relationships with her husband and new daughter.

Emma highlighted that simple changes in attitudes of maternity staff, better communication and different procedures would make a huge difference to the levels of trauma suffered to women in Labour wards across the country.

Dr Helen Allott discussed the clinic she has set up specialising in PN PTSD, following her meeting several women suffering from PN PTSD when pregnant for a second time.

Both Lorraine and Philip were very sympathetic to the cause,



and the whole Birth Trauma issue was highlighted.

The BTA was mentioned, and there is an article on the This Morning website outlining the issue, giving the BTA website for further help and support.

Since the interview, we have had several contacts from women who suffered all kinds of Birth Trauma.

The article on the This Morning website can be found at:

<http://www.itv.com/page.asp?partid=1147>

Forthcoming Publications to BTA Website

We now have on our site:

▪ Epidurals for Pain Relief in Labour Publication

This is an article written by Felicity Reynolds (Emeritus Professor of Obstetric Anaesthesia). It offers valuable information and advice on epidurals from a medical perspective

We hope that this fantastic brochure will form part of a series of articles we plan to produce, all written by health care professionals, which will provide quality factual information to women.

It is on the website at:

<http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/epidurals.pdf>

We are currently working on:

▪ Subsequent Pregnancies and Births following a traumatic birth experience.

This will be a publication containing:

- An article written by Mary Hopper (Senior Lecturer in Midwifery and accredited Counsellor) entitled "Journey of a subsequent pregnancy following a previous traumatic experience of childbirth".
- An Article written by our BTA Board Member Dr Susan Ayers (Senior Psychologist) entitled "Coping with a subsequent birth after a traumatic birth".
- An Article written by Consultant Obstetrician Dr Helen Allott (a BTA Board Member) entitled "Birth Trauma - What Happens Next?"
- There are also two birth stories from women who suffered traumatic first births, but went on to have much more positive experiences for the second birth. These stories offer inspiration to other ladies considering a second birth but are nervous having already experienced a traumatic birth.

We hope to post the above publication on the BTA website during December 2004, so watch out for it!

Funding

- We are applying for lottery funding to help us hold a seminar at Salisbury District hospital and to create a training pack for hospitals. It is hoped that this funding will also cover the production of leaflets and letterheads; the running of the website and messageboard; mailshots, and some publicity costs.
- We would also like to obtain funding to hold an Activists Training Day, probably in London. Anyone with any ideas for a venue, please contact Debbie at enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk.
- We will be applying for a substantial grant from the Department of Health in January 2005 with the aim of establishing a proper 'in house' training programme for hospitals, helpline and part-time staff

Membership Secretary

Celine Mills has kindly agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary. Celine will be responsible for compiling and maintaining a database of all activists and volunteer helpers.

It would also be useful to have a database of professional contacts and a list of those women who contact us with their stories.

If you would like to be included in our database, please send an email to:

enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk



BTA Membership

A BTA Membership Form has been created, which can be found on the BTA website under the 'Join Us' page. Anyone who would like to become a member of the BTA should complete a membership form.

By becoming a member you ensure that you are kept up to date with all forthcoming activities the BTA is involved in.

Membership is free, but it is also suggested on the form that the BTA is a voluntary organisation and therefore donations are accepted!

Also, within the membership form there is a section where members can highlight any relevant skills they have which they are willing to offer the BTA for their work, for example website designing skills, journalism skills and contacts, health professionals advice.

Letter to the Health Minister - Dr Ladyman

In December 2004 the BTA sent a letter to Dr Ladyman, the Health Minister, introducing the Birth Trauma Association and the aim of our work.

The letter highlights the issue of Birth Trauma and states that many causes of the trauma suffered by women are preventable with simple improvements to procedures.

The letter finishes by requesting that the Government urgently address the issue and provide details of the steps being taken to raise awareness and remedy the

current practices which cause PN PTSD.

We will keep you updated on the Government's response. A full copy of the letter can be found on the 'Publications' page of the website, or by following the attached link:

<http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/ladyman.pdf>

Professional and Hospital Developmental Work



- Emma Cuppini has agreed to become our NHS Liaison Officer. Emma has been doing excellent work in East Sussex talking to midwives, health visitors and hospital staff to raise awareness of this issue.

She aims to form a working group at the local hospital and they will be working towards holding a seminar in the New Year.

- We have been doing similar work in Salisbury where a working group is in the process of being created. This will hopefully pull together relevant professionals of different disciplines to discuss how this issue can best be tackled.
- We have applied to become members of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' Consumer Forum. This Forum meets four times a year and will allow us to feedback women's views on maternity practices.

- We are liaising with the Royal College of Midwives, the Association for Improvements in Maternity Services and the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) on how to raise this issue most effectively.
- We are now NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence) stakeholders' for their Guidelines on Intrapartum Care and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- We will publish our responses on the website and are happy for any feedback on this issue.
- We have meetings in the New Year with some eminent researchers and practitioners in the field and will post any new information about research on the website.
- We are producing articles for TABS (Trauma and Birth Stress www.tabs.org.nz) and the NCT.
- We are working on setting up a database of counselling contacts and would be grateful for contact from anyone who works in this field and is willing to help.
- PN PTSD was raised at the Executive Meeting of the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association. We are waiting for feedback.



helping women traumatised by childbirth

Thank you!



The BTA would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all the women who have helped with the valuable work of the BTA, including at the Launch in August 2004, recording birth stories for the awareness video, speaking with the press and helping with general administration tasks.

Without your help and support, the BTA could not carry out its work as effectively, but with our Members' help together we can make a real change to the maternity practices in this country.

Future Newsletters



We hope to publish the Newsletters on a quarterly basis, and anyone wishing to submit articles or if you have constructive comments and feedback, should forward these on by the end of February 2005, via the email address:

enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk

Please mark in the subject title of the email - FTAO Newsletter Editor.

Finally, we would like to wish all Readers and Supporters a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.



The BTA looks forward to your continued and valued support in 2005 in our quest to improve maternity services across the country for all women and their families, in a bid to reduce the unnecessary levels of birth trauma existing today.

With Kind Regards

Wendy Watson
BTA Newsletter Editor
December 2004