

PRESS RELEASE

Birth Trauma Awareness Day, 15th August 2009

When Birth is a Day to Forget

"I felt an absolute failure" - Annie

***"My son is almost two and I still have nightmares
about his birth" - Rosie***

***"I was left feeling deeply shocked, like I had completely lost
control and had somehow 'failed' as a woman to birth
my baby successfully" - Karen***

Almost one-third of women say their experience of childbirth is 'traumatic' and as many as 15,000 women develop post-traumatic stress disorder following childbirth every year. Yet despite these numbers, talking about a traumatic childbirth remains taboo.

Women are told that birth is a 'rite of passage', that they are lucky to have a healthy baby, or that they will 'soon forget' the trauma they suffered. Sadly, many do not. They are haunted by their experience and the social and emotional effects of trauma can be devastating.

Many women suffer flashbacks, nightmares, marital difficulties and find it impossible to bond with their baby. Others experience humiliating physical effects such as incontinence, which wreck their careers and confidence. For a minority, the outcome of the traumatic birth is a disabled or brain damaged child. The birth for them is a day of grief.

Please help us to highlight this vital issue. The BTA can be contacted for comment on wide-ranging maternity-related issues including midwife shortages, caesarean rates, general childbirth issues and mental health issues relating to ante and post natal care. We can also help with case studies if you are planning any features around these issues.

Events around the awareness day

"The aim of the awareness day is to raise awareness of birth trauma and the work of our organisation, so that families know there is somewhere they can turn to for help and support during what can be a devastating time," says Julie Orford, Chair of the Birth Trauma Association. "We are planning a range of activities. We will be adding generic sponsorship forms and posters to our website nearer the time so people can download them to hold their own local fundraising events, such as a stall at the local



fete, a family picnic in the park with other mums and dads, a dress down day at work (or fancy dress) or a Sponsored Toddle or Splash."

Julie has also created a BTA Facebook profile image to be used to highlight the day, "This has been circulated via our Facebook group for people to use. Search Facebook for "Birth Trauma Association" to join the group. Mums are finding their own ways to help as well. We have one volunteer who is kindly selling handmade jewellery online with a birth trauma theme, with 10% of the proceeds going to the BTA (<http://www.weddingandbaby.co.uk/newmumjewellery.htm>) and another mum who has offered to donate a percentage of the money from the sales she makes on EBay to the BTA as well."

Notes for Editors

- The BTA was launched in 2004 to support women traumatised by childbirth, to raise awareness of the condition Post Natal Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and to work towards prevention of the condition.
- The causes of traumatic birth are widely acknowledged; overstretched maternity services where mothers feel no-one is listening, poor support, inadequate pain relief and degrading and humiliating practices.
- The Birth Trauma Association works very actively with the health service to improve services.
- The Awareness Day will bring this work into focus and hopefully mean that fewer women will have such damaging experiences of childbirth.
- For more information on PTSD following childbirth, please visit our website www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk

PLEASE ADD THE BIRTH TRAUMA ASSOCIATION TO YOUR CONTACTS BOOK

*Please call the BTA on 01264 860380

Or by email at enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk

Our website address is:

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

