

## **NARELLE'S ORIGINAL LETTER TO TREASURES SURVIVOR**

I am another Post Traumatic Stress Disorder survivor (Feb/Mar). I had a long and painful first labour overseas and the hospital staff were unsupportive. After that, any reminder of birth gave me flashbacks, sweaty palms, racing pulse and feelings of terror – and there were plenty of mentions of birth as I am a doctor and went back to work quite soon. I thought I was going mad and my husband thought I was just being silly. Our relationship deteriorated drastically.

Finally, when the baby was a year old I took myself to a psychotherapist who put paid to the disabling flashbacks with psychodrama.

We re-enacted the traumatic event and inserted some positive and supportive memories. It would like magic! So then, when someone mentioned birth, instead of flipping into panic, I would remember the supportive replay. It was like going into deep meditation.

Survivors are troubled by depression, flashbacks and anxiety attacks long after most people think they should have “gotten over it”. It is important to talk about the trauma, often going over it many times, but the problem is that some friends and family just don't want to hear.

If this happens, find someone else and keep talking. The bravest thing you can do is ask for support and a listening ear. Midwives, Plunket nurses and GP's are good, but some are better than others.

I am willing to be a contact person to form a support group if one is needed and doesn't exist already. Write to me.

Narelle.