

“That’s when the pain really started”: Birth experiences of teen mothers

Allyson Kelley, MPH, Margaret Brown, MPH, Kelly Mauceri, MPH, Tracy R. Nichols, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Empowered Births

My Mom Was Basically My Doula

I didn’t really get a doula
because I went unexpected.
It started about 2.
I was actually in my room,
by myself, but my mom was home.

I was in my room
for a while.
I just called her upstairs.
“I think it’s time
to go to the hospital.”
Cause I’ve been rocking,
getting on my knees doing
pelvic rock,
about 3 hours

...

When she first came out.
They handed her right to me.
When I first saw her.
Knowing that she was mine,
I actually had her,
had a baby.
And tears, that’s it.

-Abrianna

Disconnected Births

It Was Exhausting

I was like
“what’s going on?”
I was like dead asleep.
I just laid there
just let it,
it was contractions.
I just laid there because
I was so tired
When I stood up,
my water broke,
and I knew
it was time to go.

...

Soon as she came out,
just threw her up there
and there she was.
The best part is when
she finally came out.
And I finally
got to get some sleep.

-Cyarra

Surreal Births

I Was Shocked

She just came out,
she started crying,
my boyfriend cut the cord.
He was scared,
he saw all –
all the blood
he was like,
“Oh my gosh,
am I cutting her?”
The blood sprayed all over
the doctor and me.
...
I thought that I was going
to bleed to death.
I didn't think that
so much blood
would come out.
...
They were wiping
all the stuff
off of her,
then I hold her.
I was so shocked
she looked so –
she looked so gray.
She was gray,
because of all that stuff on her.
I was like,
“why she gray?”
[Then] she was pink.
-Tonya

Disempowered Births

I Needed A Lot Of Help

I was having mad contractions.
I fell in the bathtub.
I was just laying there,
hurting.
It was contractions
coming back to back to back.
I kinda sure
I was in labor.
I had fell close
to my due date.
I went into the hospital.
They were like
“well you're not in labor
it's just the inside is open
and the outside is closed.”
I was like
“huh?”
They drugged me up
with Percocets
and sent me home.
...
I woke up
as I woke up
I tell my mama,
“Ma I feel something coming.”
she was like
“Girl you don't feel
nothin”
-Stephanie