"You're Not Allowed to Not Allow Me" Reclaiming the rights of mothers during birth Birth – Cristen Pascucci

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Talking Points

"For most women, pregnancy and childbirth are one of the few times we let other adults tell us what we are "allowed" and "not allowed" to do with our own bodies." (p. 52) Shouldn't it be the patient that allows the provider to do something? In a relationship between true partners in care should we even be using these terms at all?

We "may or may not be allowed" to hold our children following the birth? They're going to "allow" us to labor longer? They're going to "allow" us to push longer? Your hospital policy "doesn't allow" vaginal birth after cesarean? Pascucci asks, "Is it ethical to hold women to what an individual provider will "allow," with the full knowledge that not all providers are practicing to the standards science shows are best for moms and babies?" (p. 52)

Women are being fed the message that they aren't the authority in their own childbirth. Women are being told they "aren't allowed" to make informed decisions for themselves or their child. How are we supposed to believe that we have the right to deny something when we have been bombarded with language like "you're not allowed" and "we can't let you" throughout our pregnancies? As women, we are not passive objects, we are full owners of our bodies and representatives of our babies. We don't have lesser decision-making capacity than those we've hired to support us.

We don't have to remain silent when we hear this type of language in conversation. We can say something while being gentle yet firm. If we aren't hearing respectful language during appointments can we really expect to be respected during childbirth?

Resources

Full references for each article are available at http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html

The International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN): http://www.ican-online.org/

Evidence Based Birth: <u>http://evidencebasedbirth.com/</u>

La Leche League: http://www.llli.org/

Science and Sensibility: http://www.scienceandsensibility.org/

"Letter to a Labor and Delivery Nurse" by Lydia Fong Waggoner <u>http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/letter-to-a-labor-and-delivery-nurse.html</u>

"Eyes Wide Open: Are informed mothers and autonomous childbirth the answer to our modern obstetric dilemmas" by Kelli B. Haywood, M.A.T., LCCE, CSBC <u>http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/eyes-wide-open-are-informed-mothers-and-autonomous-childbirth-the-answer-to-our-modern-obstetric-dilemmas.html</u>