



<p>Project: 'Reflections of trauma, challenges, and healing: An oral history' Respondent: Dawn Smith Year of Birth: 1985 Age: xx Connection to project: Respondent Date of Interview: June 2022 Interviewer: Dr Sue Morrison Recording Agreement: Yes Information & Consent: Yes Photographic Images: No (Number of: 0) Length of Interview: 1 hour 10 minutes and 13 seconds. Location of Interview: East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action, Kirkintilloch. Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)</p>	 
--	---

Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.31	Respondent was born in Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow. She now lives in Milton of Campsie.	
0.44	Interviewer asks the respondent about her understanding of the word trauma.	
	“I think when people hear the word trauma they automatically think something physical. And I think it’s just something...I suppose any sort of event or anything that makes you feel bad or ups...Not so much upset but like have really bad feelings about it I suppose. So, like negative connotations. I suppose there’s always...when I think about trauma. I don’t know, for me trauma can be quite a broad subject. So, I’d probably struggle to put it into one sentence as to what trauma is. Cause, I don’t know. I see it in a lot of different ways.”	0.51-1.31
1.34	Interviewer asks the respondent about her own experience of trauma.	
	“Mine is probably more mental trauma probably. Maybe coming from physical aspects of things but it’s definitely been more mental for me in that I’ve got two children and through their births I think I became very aware of, probably phys... mental trauma that I wasn’t aware of at the time. I think I probably became more...I think the first time I became aware of it but didn’t accept it would of been after my son’s birth, actually. It was something as simple as when my son he was born via an elective caesarean. Which, at the time, I had no issue with but that was probably because I wasn’t educated. So, I think if I had been more educated I probably may have felt better about it or I may have made the same choice. But, I think it was more because at that point in time I didn’t really understand that having that knowledge for birth would be really good for me. Because at that time I just assumed that the professionals are the ones that do what they do and it’s not really much to do with you; which, in hindsight is completely bogus. But it was like...It was actually after it. So, it was after it. It was when he was a baby and I remember going to a baby class. And it was something as simple as other mums telling me their birth	1.43-15.12

stories. And me going-I don't actually have a birth story. So, my thoughts on that have changed now. But, back then I just thought because I had, had a caesarean that meant I didn't have a birth story because it wasn't a vaginal birth. And, at the time, I don't think it clicked that that had such an impact on my mental health. And I think I probably...I'm one of those ones...And I became very aware of this. I'm one of those ones if I struggle I do more. So, I think probably in hindsight I had my daughter quite quickly after dealing with a lot of trauma from my son's birth. Which, it's just unfortunate that there's no...Nothing to be gained from that in terms of experience apart from being aware of it and talking about it. But it was just unfortunate cause he had a few health issues. But, I think, through dealing with all that I didn't process it. So, I just was like...Well, we always knew we wanted more children. And I think, at that point, I probably was up for having more children quicker. I think there was probably, maybe, a barrier or maybe something I had subconsciously done to stop myself from dealing with what had happened originally. By the way, my kids are six and eight. It took a long, long time to accept all this. A long time. And my mental health's still a battle just now because of it all. But, I think when I got pregnant with my daughter and my wee boy was year old it was...And, I think, looking back on it I think it was we wanted more children. But, then, I think it was because I'd started to hear a bit more about like how you can educate yourself around birth. And how you can have different types of birth and how you can...You can choose what to do. I think it was like me wanting to...to try that to probably heal wounds from the caesarean I didn't realise that I had. But the problem with that being...was that yeah I healed maybe some mental wounds from Logan and things like that. But, then what happened in my daughter's birth and what I've dealt with as an ant-natal teacher since has made me aware that I'm one of the lucky ones. I'm actually one of the lucky ones in terms of I dealt with a lot of...a lot of things that are said to you that shouldn't be. I think the one that always sticks in my mind...I don't even know if my mum will remember this. But I remember going in for one of my first appointments with Casey. So because I was pregnant with Casey I was attempting something called a Vbac. Vaginal birth after caesarean. So, nowadays, hospitals are quite on board with that or that's what they say. But, what they don't tell you is that there also going to give you all these statistics that scare the living daylights out of you. So, I think, for example, I went in for one appointment a wee bit later on in my pregnancy, not really late on. Because one of the first, kind of like, consultant appointments...And their Dad was at work so I was like that to my Mum-'Can you come in with me?' Just like for moral support. And I remember going into the consultant appointment and them being very like-'Oh, we really are all for Vbacs but we need you to be induced at a certain time and not use certain methods. And we need you to be constantly monitored. And we need you to do this and this and if you don't do that then your baby could die.' I was like-'What?!' And I was lucky that I had done some research. So, I was just like-'Pfft, what on earth?' But my Mum...So, it was that bit, like I say, I've blocked out in terms of like my feelings towards that. My feelings about it were actually...I remember my mum coming out of the room and being like.-'And why are you just not getting another caesarean? This seems awful risky.' And I literally had to say to my

Mum.-'Mum, you're not coming to anymore appointments with me. I was like- 'Cause, I don't need that. It's not your fault but I need somebody on board with what I'm doing.' And scare tactics is what always happens. And it's one that I'm very, very aware of because the majority of my pregnancy I got...You had to go to a consultant. All my appointments were at hospitals. I never saw the same midwife twice...like, ever. Never saw the same midwife. Which, again is part of the issue with the maternity system at the moment and it's not midwives faults it's fun...it's money, it's staffing. There's so much to it. But part of the...I can't remember the name of the research but one of the this the NHS is meant to of done is there's meant to be like a plan over five years of bringing that continuity of care to women. And it's just never happened. It's just not happened. And the only way you're going to get continuity of care in maternity care is if you have a home birth. But, then, if you mention a home birth to most care providers they'll be like-'Oh, no you're putting your baby at risk if you're having a home birth.' No, actually, if you look at the research the risk of anything happening in a home birth's actually dramatically smaller than in hospital births. Because in hospital births it's constant coercion. It's constant-We need to do this. We need to that. Instead of what is meant to happen in that-This is your options. What do you want to do? Cause, again, as a woman who has had two children prior to doing all the research I've done. I didn't know I had a choice. I just assumed I did what I was told. And now, see trying to change that mind set of women I deal with on a daily basis. It can actually be...It's quite hard for me as a teacher to deal with. So, I really try...I really have to try and step back. Cause, there's so many times that mum's will come to me get all the education then as soon a care provider tells them-No, you need to do this. They'll do it. But, then that will lead to traumatic birth and you feel responsible. Because it's like-Well, what could I have done to help that person? Because it can be really dependant on who you get. Because, I got constant-You need to do this. You need to that. You need to that. And I picked my battles do you know what I mean. I was told I wasn't allowed a water birth cause I had to be monitored constantly, which was fine. I wanted a water birth. A water birth is something I was interested in trying but it wasn't one of those like deal breakers. I was like-'Och, you... fine... fair...We'll go another way. 'But, I got... I did know to say no at certain points. So, for example with Vbac I was told that I had to...I had to start the induction process at thirty eight weeks. Because I was a Vbac. So they were like-'We will offer you membrane sweeps at eight weeks.' And I'm like-'Why?' Because of the risk of your scar rupturing. And I'm like-Ok, see if you actually look at the percentage...I think the risk percentage for a scar rupture especially after one caesarean is like zero point zero. It's like miniscule. And actually by inducing you actually like treble that. And I actually I read some research that somebody had done and it was...It was one of the girls in my class on Tuesday was telling me that, actually, she'd looked up induction and she literally looked at like a research thing. And, it did actually say if you go for...I don't want to talk about a natural birth but if you go for a straight forward birth with no intervention. By bringing induction into it, it actually probably triples your chance of ending up in a caesarean. And the research supports that. But, they don't do anything about it because it's like a...It feels like it's a control. It's like

a battle of wills. So, for me all I need to do... All I want to do is I want to be in control. Maybe it's just me personally but I feel like the control aspect is what helped me. So, even though my birth wasn't straight forward and I did end up having to accept stuff I probably...again in hindsight probably wouldn't have now knowing what I know. Because, again, unfortunately, after I had my daughter... I had my daughter and I was in labour for two days. And I accepted induction eventually because I wasn't sure of her movements. So, that was fine. I made peace with that because I wasn't sure. But, in the kind of lead up to labour I was really lucky I had a great consultant at the time who was very aware that I wanted an active birth. So, I got to be quite upright which, again, doesn't happen for a lot of women. A lot of people as soon as they're induced are told they need to lie on their back on the bed which is not good for birth. But, I got to be quite active. But, at the end of it I think the one thing that sticks in my mind that I really wish hadn't happened; and I say it was mental trauma it was physical trauma. There probably was a bit of physical trauma now that I think about it. But, again, it's something that I've just realised that I've just swept under the carpet actually. It's not something that I've given much thought to. Is that I had SPD (symphysis pubis dysfunction) and PGP (pregnancy related pelvic girdle pain.) In both pregnancies. And I remember reading something after I gave birth to my second that if you've got SPD or PGP then the use of stirrups should be avoided because it will open up your pelvis greater. Yeah, they needed to get my daughter out apparently. So, the first thing they did was put me in stirrups. And Casey was born in like six minutes. But, Casey's now six and I've still got problems with my pelvis. Still got problems with my pelvis. I've got a total weakness on one side of my pelvis. Even like when I do PT (physical training). So I do PT every week and I have to say there's a certain movement I just can't do. And it's the same as if I do stuff when I'm going from one leg to the other. And a certain movement I can always feel the imbalance. I think I've just ignored it because it's not something that stops me physically doing anything. Like, I still play football. I'm still physically active. So, it's probably minor but there's definitely still something there. And I didn't have it before having Casey. And when I had back issues they always blamed it on lower back issues. They said it was never my pelvis but it's always my pelvis that hurts. And I actually find that weird that that's happened after that. And when I read that I was like-probably because, again, there is research that did actually show that. That actually it can cause issues for women constantly after birth is if you're put in positions that your body's not meant to be in. And stirrups and your legs spread eagle. It's not really a natural position. But, again, I got lucky in that I did do the research. I saved and I made sure I managed to go to ant-natal classes. I went like to birth classes with my birth partner so that we were able to navigate a little bit. But, again, even with that navigation there was still some things in hindsight that I probably wouldn't have done. But, now I have to deal with...that's why I do what I do. That's why I do antenatal and baby classes because they helped me. If I hadn't done antenatal classes with Casey I think my birth would have been totally different. It definitely healed me a little bit. But, I suppose now what I've become very, very aware of which I probably wasn't aware of during my birth; my two births. Were, how much coercion

	<p>actually happened in my birth; and it happens constantly in every other birth. And how hard it is as a non-medical professional to tell people that. Because you...I don't want to bash medical professionals because that's their job. They do...they tell you the medical stuff. So, I don't teach anything medical. So, see and like from the women's point of view that didn't want to do something but just got induced because she was told to. It is actually really hard to deal with. But, do you know something, we keep ploughing forward. And hopefully by keeping learning and keeping changing people's perspectives. Or, knowing that knowledge is power in birth. We can have any sort of impact on future births as well. Not that I will know because I don't intend to have any more. My days of birthing are definitely gone."</p>	
15.13	<p>Respondent goes on to say not to get her wrong and that's she'd love to have another birth in order to put into practice what she has learned. She says that won't happen as she doesn't want another child. She goes on to say that her experiences have led her to consider what she would like to do as a career as her kids get older. She would love to be a midwife but she is not sure she could handle the politics.</p>	
18.38	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent to clarify what SPD is (definition above).</p>	
18.41	<p>Respondent clarifies this and talks about having to wear a band for this condition. She describes the condition and some help that she got for the condition. She also states that it's unfortunate that not everyone can afford the help. It's not like it's big companies trying to make lots of money but women trying to help other women.</p>	
21.50	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent about caesarean sections.</p>	
	<p>"So, my elective caesarean was fine in terms of... I suppose, at the time I didn't know. At the time I didn't know anything about it. Again, it goes into this coercion that I didn't really realise...Because, I remember finding out at thirty eight weeks that my baby was breech. Even though I'd been told the entire time that he was head down. It was-'Oh, no hang on. That's not his head. That's his bum.' 'What?!' I'm like-'OK' 'Right, we're going to have to send you for a scan. 'Right, ok.' So, that was like on the Wednesday and I got sent for the scan on the Fri...I remember getting sent for the scan on the Friday. I got sent for the scan on the Friday and they were like-'Yep, the baby's breech. So, this is what we are going to have to do. We're going to have to...I've booked you in for an elective caesarean on blah, blah, blah, blah. And I'm like-'What?' and I'm like...And it was very much put across as-This is your only option. And, actually, I was like-'Well, have we got any other options?' So my other option I was given was to attempt to turn baby. Through something called the ECV (External cephalic version) I can't remember the actual name of it. It literally involves them giving you a drug and like turning baby. I can never remember the full name of it. It's something I generally try not to talk about too much in birthing classes because it's a very personal choice about whether you do something like that. And I don't like to sway mum's with my...my experience of it. So I remember getting told-'We can try...If you don't want to go straight for the caesarean you can try turn baby. If the baby doesn't turn you're going for a</p>	22.01-30.46

caesarean.' There was no option it was a case of ? 23.42 or we can attempt a vaginal birth we just obviously need the...I would say they were being more cautious but it's not even really about being more cautious. So, I think I got the...So, yeah I tried ECV on the Monday and again that was a really hard choice to make. And the only reason I made it was because I didn't...I felt as if if I went straight for a caesarean that I hadn't tried. And it was literally...I'll be honest I didn't even think it would work. I just did it because I would kick myself if I went straight for the caesarean and I hadn't tried to turn baby for a vaginal. So, it was fine. So, I went for the caesarean and, again, the...Unfortunately, you know how they always say you always remember negative however many times more than you would remember a positive. And, unfortunately for me it's more the negatives I remember. So, things like being told to go in at eleven o'clock and not being allowed to eat, which is fine. That time I think it was seven o'clock I had to go in at which is later. It's later now but I remember I had to go in really early and told I wasn't allowed to eat. And also told because I was an elective caesarean for a breech baby which isn't something they need to be worried about. In terms of if I go into labour it's not an emergency. So, I would be like bottom of the list for the caesarean. So I was literally... I was like bottom of the list for the caesarean so there was like three of four people before me. So, I think it ended up I was in there for about seven o'clock and I didn't get my caesarean until about two o'clock. Which was fine but I'd never been in the hospital before. I'd never even seen the labour ward. I'd never seen anything because I didn't really know you could do things like that. You can't do it now. You don't get tours of the hospital anymore. But I think for then...the one thing I remember sticking in my brain as I went down... I remember taking my phone. So, I remember grabbing my phone to take down with me. And the wee midwife that was going down with me... I say that, I think she was the midwife. That was going down taking me down to the caesarean part, theatre, was like-'You're not allowed to take your phone with you.' And I'm like-'But, I was told I was so that I could get pictures.' And she pretty much was-'Well, you're not allowed any phones in the theatre.' So, because she said that to me I took no pictures of my son being born. There's no first pictures of my son being born because of something that was said to me. And that shaped a lot of my second birth as well. Again, the actual elective...The actual procedure itself was fine, no bother. Like I say, I'm not keen on needles but I just got on with it. Their Dad was there with me. But, again, the main thing that stuck in my brain was...The first thing that stuck in my brain was funny and it was they asked me if I knew what was happening. And I was like-'yeah, I'm having a wee boy.' Because he was breech he came out butt first. So the first thing they did shout was-'There's penis and testicles.' So, I knew it was a boy. I was like-'Yay.' So, that was nice. But, then the first thing they then did was cut his cord, wrapped him up, put a wee hat on him and gave him to his Dad. And I'm like...So, my main memory of the caesarean is me lying with my arms like this. So I had my arms on like the wee boards like this. Scott had the baby, had Logan, and I remember him bringing him up round to my head. And I remember him holding Logan to my head and I remember doing this and trying to see the baby. So, I was trying to see Logan. A couple of minutes and I just cried my

eyes out-‘You’re going to have to...It’s too sore.’ Because, I was craning my neck and I just cried and I couldn’t hold him. So, when it came to the birth stories, all the baby classes. That’s what stuck in my mind. I didn’t get to hold him. I didn’t get that first connect...And then it all went...The rest of it went really fast in terms of like before I knew it I was in recovery and then I was in the ward. Logan didn’t even have any clothes on and it was visiting time and all my family were there. And I’m like...So, I think the first pictures we got of him were at visiting time when my family were there. And he’s not even got any clothes on. And I’m just like-That poor wean. And you always...You always wonder if...I always wonder if that played a part. If things I did played a part in him being not well. Because, he got taken into special care like... I think it was like ten hours after his birth; ten or twelve hours after his birth. And I always wonder if it was because he was cold, cause he didn’t have his clothes on. He literally was just wrapped in a wee tow...All the pictures I’ve got of him are in this wee towel. I , obviously, I look like a burst mess. So, yeah, even though the actual procedure was no issues and I healed really well from it; definitely the mental aspects of it have always...The negative aspects of it are what always stuck in my...my brain. Which is unfortunate but...I say I’ve healed from it but I probably haven’t. I don’t think you really heal from things like that. You just learn to deal with it. Casey’s birth healed it a bit cause I made it my mission for Casey’s birth that I was getting to hold her first. Literally like, I couldn’t have cared less what had happened. If I ended up in another caesarean. If I’d ended up...The main thing for me was I want to hold her first because I did not get that with Logan. And I always, always regretted it and it was the first thing that happened she literally got handed to me and I put her up my nightie. And, again, the difference...I suppose this is where a lot of trauma comes from for Mum’s as well. See the difference between that and how clinical that was to that vaginal birth in that...The midwife took pictures of...Scott took a picture of like me and Casey. The midwife took a picture of like the three of us. We got none of that with a caesarean. Which I know is probably quite a silly thing to be expecting. It’s like...It’s all about getting baby here safely which I don’t agree with. But, that’s only part of the...part of it. Yeah, happy baby but you need a happy, healthy mummy as well and...A big part of that is those memories of...If you’re completely out of it or you are....you’ve just given birth. A lot you might not remember clearly. So, having those memories is really important. So, that’s probably the big difference for me and I think...Again, I’m a big advocate on trying to make caesarean births more...not so much holistic but more friendly. Just because you’ve had a caesarean it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t get to hold your baby. It’s really simple. It’s actually less distance from your belly to your chest than it is from your vagina to your chest. So, if baby can be placed from your vagina to your chest why it can’t be placed from your belly to your chest. It’s not hard. But, again, it’s confidence in asking for that. Cause, Logan got wrapped up because I didn’t know any different. I didn’t know. I didn’t know it was a thing I just assumed that’s what happened. But, that’s the thing I always remember is him being wrapped up like a burrito and put on his Dad. That’s the one thing I always say which is a shame. But it also means I cried at his birth and I didn’t cry at Casey’s ,but for different reasons.”

30.49	Interviewer asks the respondent what she would say if she had the opportunity to speak to a conference of obstetricians.	
	<p>“A few things probably. I think...Do you know, the main thing would probably be-It’s not hard to listen. Like, yes you have got amazing medical knowledge and you have gone to wherever you’ve gone to, to get your qualifications. But, it’s not you birthing that baby it’s that person. So, maybe listen to them and...and make it more person centred in terms of every person is different. So, what your handbook says won’t work for everybody so it’s not about changing the way the NHS works or the way obstetrics works. It’s just about making it more person centred. About-listen to that mum. And, actually, not even just the mum. Nine times out of ten you probably don’t listen to your midwife. Because that’s the thing. Cause if you’re in a birth setting; as in obstetrician. If you’re the consultant in that setting the likelihood is you have popped in and out of that setting sporadically if needed. And that’s even if...You may not. The first time you come across this mum might be...this might be the first time you’ve come across her that the mum is going through labour. The midwife’s probably had been with her for however many hours and potentially is then, again, asking for a consultant because policy dictates that they have to. But, it’s a case of maybe having that conversation with...This is the options but how do you feel what are your thoughts on it? Because, again, everybody’s so different and it isn’t about...It’s not about letting...It’s not about putting mum or baby at risk. It’s about weighing up the risks of...By putting mum down a certain path are you just leading them into a caesarean? Because, caesareans are harder to recover from. So, just, yeah, be more person centred. Try...as hard as it may be try and switch off the medical brain for a second and listen to the human aspect of it. Start leaving that medical background. Because I know lots of doctors and midwives and people in the medical field they’d come to my classes because they want to know the other side of it. They don’t want to have the...just the medical thought of it. They want the other part of it cause that part can help as well. The whole point is medical and holistic can work together. Because a lot of holistic can help. Do you know what I mean, breathing techniques can be seen as a lot of woo, woo. Actually if you do the research a lot of breathing techniques are...They are going to help keep you nice and calm. By keeping you nice and calm they stop adrenaline. By stopping adrenaline they encourage oxytocin by encouraging oxytocin they help mum’s birth. So, it’s...It’s about knowing that a lot of these techniques are helping the medical side of it as well. And, by allowing a mum to do that you’re not telling them to ignore any danger. Like, cause again, as a mum you’re tuned into your body as well and if you know something...If you’re worried something’s wrong you’re going to change. Do you know what I mean? I was dead against induction. Dead against it because I knew that it tripled my risk of a caesarean. But, when given the option of-has your baby been moving recently? And me going-‘Actually I can’t tell if the contractions are moving or she’s moving.’ They checked her heart rate and her heart rate was absolutely fine. But, then that was me as a person. I was like-Do I take that chance? No I didn’t so yeah I accepted an induction. Which was fine</p>	30.56-35.11

	because I've made that choice because I wasn't sure whereas, if it had been a- 'You're forty weeks now so we just need to induce you because you're forty weeks it would have been-'No.' So, most mum's if they're ever worried about that they're going to do it. It just about being aware it doesn't need to be your first port of call. Think of everything else first. Speak to the person. Ask what they want. How do they feel about it. Yeah, it might take you longer but the outcomes could be more positive. That's just how I personally feel."	
35.13	Interviewer asked the respondent how she got into antenatal teaching.	
35.20	Respondent said that she had been to a baby class and realised she had missed out on the birth memories. The mums had been chatting about attending a antenatal birthing class and this was something the respondent had no knowledge of. When she was pregnant with her daughter she attended the antenatal classes got prepared and got some knowledge. After she had her little girl she returned to the baby classes and received a lot of support that helped with her post-natal depression. When Casey was six months old the teacher had decided she didn't want to continue with the classes and because the respondent had got so much from these classes she didn't want the people of East Dunbartonshire to not have that support any more. Respondent said that at the time she was not enjoying her own job and had been treated badly due to her health. She had enjoyed working with young people through football coaching. She started training to be an antenatal teacher while on maternity leave. She was laid off from work through ill health and panic attacks due to her mental health issues. So she continued it antenatal health and this has grown to what it is now.	
38.36	Interviewer asks about the role of antenatal teacher.	
	"So, at the moment my main...the main part of my job is as a daisy teacher. That's not the official title. So, the official title is a perinatal educator. Literally what I do is I teach baby class. I teach classes and workshops that cover from fourteen weeks pregnant right through to two years old. So, it is a mix of antenatal classes for women and birthing people to come weekly and learn breathing techniques, education, movement... Everything just to help their pregnancies and their birth and become more positive. I also do workshops for couples that bring all that education in to play as well. And the main one we do...the biggest one we do is actually a parent course. Which is, actually, helping parents to learn all about birth but then also learn about when babies are here.; so, feeding, changing, winding, bathing. And the great thing about this is that it's also goes through about how your body changes after and how your mental health may change. Signs and symptoms of post-natal depression and stuff like that. And then when baby gets here we do like three types of baby classes that cover baby massage, baby yoga...A wee bit of sensory element. We read books to them which I love. Just all around about creating communities. So, like the classes themselves are like the centre. But, it's everything else over and above it. That is, sort of, the main part of it. So, I've been doing this coming up on six years. So, I've got a lot of daisy mums as they get called. Actually it was one of my daisy mums that actually made me this t-	38.41-42.45

	<p>shirt. So, it's about creating those communities. Cause then what happens is every class I run I set up a Whatsapp group for them. So, those mums actually support each other. So, I've got mums that are still friends that's babies are starting school. And, actually, the two or three mums that I met in these daisy classes with Logan we still chat. Yeah, we don't meet up every week because we've all got different lives. But, one of them I still actually go walking with a lot. So, you get that, that community and that's probably where...where my passion lies in that... yeah the education part of it. But also the community part of it. It's probably why I have such an affinity to GRACE as well. Not just for the obvious reasons but because they do a lot of similar stuff. Just obviously in a different area. Like, yeah, mine's a private kind of thing. Trust me I wish it wasn't. But, it's about that peer to peer support actually and peer to peer for me is it's people supporting people. That's the key thing for...These classes are for...That's just the tip of the iceberg of what mum's get out of it because they meet friends. They have those groups that can say-'This happened at my birthing.' 'It happened to me as well.' Or, 'My baby won't sleep.' 'Neither does mine.' Cause, actually just knowing you're not alone is so important. And I think that's why I'm more passionate about it as well because even though to look at it from an outside perspective it might just look like a baby class that lets mums come and chat and play and do this. It's actually the mental health benefits of it that really interest me. And it's why I opened up the well-being hub as well to kind of broaden that scope of, yeah, I can only teach this area but let's get other businesses involved that can help anybody's well-being. Cause, again, looking after your well-being can come in so many different forms. Physical, mental... Like for me it's playing football and teaching my classes. So, I play football and exercise I really good for me and teaching the classes is really good for me. Whereas other it's doing yoga, others it's knitting, it's pilates, whatever it may be. That's why I do the art class. And that's probably the main subject of GRACE I probably take part in most is the art class because that allows me to keep myself busy but it's also relaxing as well. Cause, I'm not good at just sitting and being quiet. It's just not in my nature. It's not in my genetics as you can probably tell (laughs)."</p>	
42.50	Interviewer asks the respondent about her own post natal depression.	
	<p>"When my daughter was about six months old I was officially diagnosed with post-natal depression. I'll be honest I had a bit of a battle with it. So, I officially accepted I suppose that I had post-natal depression when I was at my...My niece's communion. I think it was my niece's communion. So, my son was like two and my daughter was like six months old. And Casey was breast fed; predominately breast fed and did not like bottles. No matter how much I tried to get her on a bottle she did not like bottles. But, at the time I was very much a case of- if I can't do this I'm a failure. Which a lot of mum's do. So, for the communion I just wanted her to take a bottle. So I can have a glass of wine. I was like that-I just wanted to have a glass of wine. Do you know, I can't even remember if it was wine I just wanted a drink. It was like I didn't want to get drunk I just wanted a drink. But I remember...I'd frozen breast milk and I remember bringing it with me. And I remember getting hungry. I remember trying to get...trying to give it to her and I remember sitting in the function hall</p>	42.59-55.53

trying to give her this milk. Her not willing to take it. While she was not willing to take it my son had decided to run into a post. So it was like one of the posts of like the dance floor. He just decided to...He didn't mean it obviously. He ran into a post. So, he obviously comes over crying his eyes out big lump on his head. Casey is lying in my arms crying her eyes out not taking a bottle. And at that point I just snapped. I literally...I remember...I vividly remember not physically throwing but literally throwing Casey at my Mum. I was like-'Take her.' And ran into the kitchen of the function hall and just cried my eyes out. Just cried...Just could not handle it anymore. That was like the straw that broke the camel's back. I just could not handle it anymore. And that was obviously when everybody went-'You really should go to the doctor.' I'm like-'Yeah, obviously.' But bizarrely, the weird thing about my mental health was that I'm quite a high functioning person with my mental health. See, even now I have really bad anxiety. Like I'm really bad...I suffer really badly from anxiety but I've always been high functioning with it and also good at hiding it. So, I remember when I got diagnosed it was-Right I've got post-natal depression. 'here's some tablets. And we'll refer you to such and such. Because, I remember battling for months. Battling for months and months to get help. I got...I managed to refer to Bluebell which is a counselling service in the town which is predominately for post-natal depression and things like that. So, they were great because they'd a crèche. So I could take the kids there and they would only be like a couple of doors down from me. And it was actually really good but like everything it wasn't...So, I was... I was pretty much I was told I wasn't unwell enough to get any help with the NHS. So, I wasn't unwell enough to get a CPN (community psychiatric nurse) or cause I was still functioning and still working. And because my kids...there was no worry about the kids. So, you know with post-natal depression they always talk about the bond. Well, my bond with my babies was fine. So that's why I didn't think I had it to start with because they always talk about this-you don't bond with your baby if you've got post-natal depression. My bond with my baby's fine. And again it was diagnosed as post-natal depression whereas even now I don't believe that what...It was probably partly post-natal depression about it was probably more post-natal anxiety than depression. And I think a lot of the post-natal anxiety came from Logan's birth. In that he had so many health issues wrong with him and we just...I just ploughed on and I had to be like this super human person that just did it all and wouldn't ask their Dad for help. And I just ended up totally annihilating our relationship because of it. And all of that...And being told constantly-Well, you're fine you're...We've got more not well people that need our help. So, I was constantly getting told that I had to refer myself to third party... third sector organisations. So, that's where Bluebell came in handy. Worked really well until I was like getting right into the nitty gritty of it and then the girl...Cause all this stuff is volunteers. It was like-Well, I've actually finished doing whatever degree it was to become a counsellor. So, if you want to keep continuing to use the service you would need to go back on the list and go to a different counsellor. So, I'm like-'Right, ok,' So, like I got referred to another one. I can't remember the name of them. Out in the Gallowgate. So, they're based in Crownpoint Sports Centre. I get to the third party. Another third party. And, again, he was really good in that...

this is why I'm telling you...This isn't over three or four months this over probably about two or three years. This is how long I had to battle. It got to a point where Scott, the kids Dad, phoned up the health visiting team and had to freak out at the health visiting team because they weren't helping like...he freaked out. He's like- 'My partner's crying out for help and getting nothing, absolutely nothing. And she's just been left.' And unfortunately it's because of where I lived. Cause at the time I lived at Springburn so I was North Glasgow. And unfortunately, yeah, Glasgow's got a...the rate of depression and things like that is probably higher there. So, yeah, compared to probably a lot of people I probably wasn't as unwell. But, I had to fight for it a lot. But I think in total I was referred to three different third sector organisations that could only offer me short term counselling. And even, as I say, the last one I went to... the second last one I went to, sorry, I was allowed six weeks. It was actually during the six weeks that the guy started to talking to me and became very aware that actually even though I ended up diagnosed with post-natal depression; that actually my mental health had probably stemmed way before kids. Way before kids and it's the having the kids that just triggered it. And, so he was allowed to extend it for another six weeks so I got twelve weeks. And I was told-'We can't do any more' which was fine. And unfortunately things went south with the kid's Dad and because of that I was allowed to access another service to do with...It was all to do with what had happened but, again, it was just before the pandemic. So, it then had to kind of, it then became virtual during the pandemic and then I moved. So, then it was then I wasn't allowed to use the service anymore because I was in East Dunbartonshire. And I've now been in East Dunbartonshire two years. And, I got to the point where after the third one I just stopped trying to get help. I just... there was no point. There was just absolutely no point trying to access help. Because, they just...every time you tell your doctor you're not well it's just-'We'll call the primary health care team. And they tell you- well you're...you don't fit the criteria for getting help so go to a third party.' I'm not going to a third party to spend six weeks spilling my guts to not actually get anywhere. So, unfortunately for the last two years I've just been going to myself-ha, ha, which is fine. The only dealings I've had with my doctor is to do my repeat prescription. So, that's like unfortunately I'm six years in now and still on medication. Don't get me wrong in the early days I was really bad at taking it. It's only in the last couple of years I've really tried to take it more. Because, I've pretty much been told I need to rely on it. And because I don't trust that I can get the help out with that to help me get over it. I'm just going to have to accept I'm going to have to take anti-depressants and I don't know the propranolol what that's classed as? Is that the anti-anxiety meds? I just have to accept I have to take them to not...To stop me having panic attacks or meltdowns. Which is a bit sucky because I really don't like taking medication at all; I don't even want to take paracetamol but I've had to just accept it. Having to be on these cause you notice it when I'm not unfortunately. I'm lucky that the kid's Dad and I have prepared...What we went through actually in the pandemic actually helped us. And we've actually been working more as a team now. So, that helped me that I had help. But, having to help myself helped me as well to an extent. Cause, I then had to look at other options. But, yeah I've

	<p>been, pretty much, let down with the NHS a lot. But, I don't...I take it as what it is. It's...It is what it is do you know what I mean. And, unfortunately there's only so much I can access in terms of help in with GRACE. Because, I've got kids and I've got a business. Yep, I'm highly functioning. That's cause I need to be I've got two kids to look after. I've got a job to do and I'm not the type of person that will just curl up in a ball. I'll actually go the other way. I tend to take on everything which is why during the pandemic I trained to be a yoga teacher; a kid yoga teacher and a toddler yoga teacher. I just kept taking on online courses while trying to school my kids. So, yeah, I'm not looking forward to one o'clock tomorrow afternoon cause it's summer. Again, I'll be honest; I love my kids but I'm also not built to be a stay at home mum. I'm built to be out doing stuff. I don't mind having the balance but I definitely think that...You obviously...Well, you're working with GRACE. You'll be aware of this of how badly our mental health services are in need of more. There's just nowhere to do it. I don't there's enough people or time in the day to fix our mental health service or our maternity service or pretty much any service. That's why I try and help GRACE out as much as I can. Cause I know that they're doing good work. And I can't help that I can't access it as much as it is. But anything I can access I do. It's also why I did the Kilt Walk for them. And also why I actually use my business to raise funds for them. That's what the girls were talking about. So, recently I just had a charity raffle and raised £120.00 for GRACE just through my own business because ,again, I know how important the work is and how important it is to have something if you can't get the help you need but...I won't lie I still...I still think I need help. I still think that if there was the ability to access it I could definitely do with a psychologist. Because I really get the feeling as if I need to get to the root of what causes my anxiety. Cause I still don't know. I don't know what causes the anxiety. It just...It just comes on and it changes. Because I talk a lot and loud so people just think that I'm this confident person but actually I have such horrific social anxiety. Hate being in big groups. And I hate not knowing people. Like, I'm ok when I get on with people but in big groups I'm...I will have panic attacks and I won't enjoy it. So, like, I don't go out much except to things I know. It's like football and things; but the idea of going to a concert or a club is just a no, no for me. Whereas, that's what I spent my youth doing. Going out and having fun...I always wish that I could just go to a...get out my head for just a second and just dance the night away without worrying about what may happen, or how I look, or how I'm acting or what other people think. I'm too loud or too in your face or things like that but it's just something that I have to deal with all the time. Six years on it's just something I have to accept."</p>	
55.45	Interviewer asks the respondent if there is anything else that the respondent feels would help in any way.	
	<p>"I think it's hard. One of the things I found helped me a lot. But because it was short term...It didn't...That's kind of like it helped short-term. Cause, I always found that I'm...I always feel better when I talk about things. Even if it is literally like half an hour an hour just chatting. Cause, then what I find is I build up or hide a lot of things that I've not even realised I'm doing. And it's not till I start chatting about it that I realise...Which is literally what's happening right</p>	56.07-58.07

	<p>now. I've not thought about a lot of this for a long time. Or, spoke to anybody about it for a long time. So, I definitely think that yeah, counselling to an extent is always a good thing for me. But to get access to things like that is always...One it always has to be short-term because it's third party and two I can't afford to pay a private counsellor. Cause, that's the only way I'd ever be able to guarantee it every week. I can't afford to pay that every week or every month or whatever. But I definitely think you...I think the ability to chat, the ability just to have that conversation with a non-family member. It's the outsider bit that helps me. It doesn't need to be somebody that I don't know type thing. But, yeah, it needs to be out with the family. Do you know what I mean like my family are aware of everything that happens, and that, but I don't know...I just don't ...It's like I say if that's their job to sit and listen then...There's always that worry with family, and things like that, of judgement or them saying something to you that you don't want to hear. Like-Stop being a whine. You know, that's where the anxiety would come in whereas having just a person that it's their job to listen to you ramble is probably a bit easier for me because of my anxiety Yeah, chatting's good for me. I think it's just the way I work through things. It's always been the way I work through things; which is why when I don't do it that's when I tend to have meltdowns."</p>	
58.08	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent about her interest in art.</p>	
	<p>"I've always been arty, I've always been arty. That was one of my favourite subjects in school. And I think it's...I'm very much a person... I'm very driven and, again, it's not an ideal way to be to an extent, in that, I just always feel as if I need something to kind of work towards. Or, I suppose, have something to show. So like, I like doing art because I am working on something that like allows me to explore my creativity, but I also know I'm going to get a final, like a piece at the end to be proud of, and can be like, "Oh! I did that!". And like, and I won't lie, getting that praise does... is always good for your ego. And I have always been arty. Like I do like art but I don't get to do it nearly as much as I would like. But, I mean, I've taken part in a good few of the art exhibition things with GRACE, and I still get a wee kick out of the fact that my artwork is in Auchinairn Community Centre, up on the wall, from like, from before Covid when I went to the Auchinairn one. And it's... I like being busy, so I think, see being able to do something that's not work, it's not writing, it doesn't really involve you really having to think like logically, but it keeps my hands busy. So it's not just art, I like colouring in, it's something... I need something to keep my hands busy. I'm not one just to sit and do nothing. I need something to keep me busy, but it's not something that's boring or something that I don't enjoy. I do love art. I do like to create things and I definitely like the more structured approach to it, so like, art's a good therapy for me but it's not something I'd go and do myself. So, like having that structure of, I'm going to that class every week, it helps me. Like, I'll colour in, I'll colour in, but I probably wouldn't sit down every night and like, try and create something. it's just not in my nature. I need something... I still need that wee bit of direction, I think."</p>	58.10 – 1.00.22

1.00.23	Interviewer said that by all accounts GRACE is a wonderful organisation and is she right in saying that their activities are all held during the day. She then asks how that fit in logistically.	
	<p>“I feel like I can’t come to a lot of the stuff. Unfortunately it’s always been the one thing that’s missing from it. And I can understand to an extent because I don’t think they have enough of that type of person to be able to create something. But when my kids were younger when I was really in the heights of anxiety itt could have really helped with coming to a lot more stuff. I couldn’t because there was no crèche there was nowhere to watch the kids. So, I think that the inability to have child friendly is probably not great. But, I think it’s probably because I probably...There’s not many clientele that deal with GRACE that is that have children. Unfortunately, so again, so the art group...I took part in the art group the last time it was on and I can’t take part in it this time, So, I change my work schedule to make sure I have a Thursday off so I could come to the art group. But I can’t go to the art group now because it’s in the summer and I’m going to have my kids every Thursday. So, I’ve already said to Rachel like put me on the list for August as soon as the kids are back at school I’ll be there. So, it’s...It’s a tough one cause I think it’s...As a person I know it’s hard to cater to everybody. And it’s not that their not child friendly. It’s not that. It’s that they’re not my children friendly. And if my kids are there I know I’m going to be anxious. Do you know what I mean if my kids are with me I know I’m going to be worried that they’re being too loud or they’re getting in the way or their doing this or their doing that. So I prefer to choose as a parent not to come for that reason.”</p>	1.00.46-102.29
102.30	Interviewer asks the respondent if there were any facilities available that would look after the children a couple of nights a week.	
1.02.50	Respondent said there are a lot of kids clubs but a few can only be accessed if their needs meet the club criteria. She knows there are mother and toddler groups but she does not know of any clubs that are open during the summer break or in the evening. It would be good to have something like an art group where you could be doing something like art and the children could also be doing something in the next room. She says that her kids love coming to GRACE and everyone loves them. She feels that there is definitely something missing. She believes that when people think of GRACE they think of older age groups, whereas she knew about it through her own connections. However, childcare might be a problem for younger adults.	
105.50	Interviewer asks the respondent what her hopes are for the future of mental health care.	
	<p>“I really...For it to be more accessible in terms of it not feeling as if it’s a fight to get seen. To not feel as if you’re just a statistic. That is you’re not a certain...If you don’t reach a certain benchmark you’re not worth helping. You’re not worth...Not so much not worth... but I definitely think if...If mental health was caught earlier I definitely think it would be a big deal. Cause I definitely think...I think the first port of call’s always like-Well, here’s an online portal to CBT. It’s getting away from that one size fits all notion of CBT will</p>	105.56-109.55

work for some people, peer support will work for other people, something will work for other people. So, I suppose it's about changing this one fits all aspect of when it happens. But I do know that...I see there's a lot more getting done for child's mental health and I think that's really important. And I think that's...I definitely think we ...I definitely think mental health talk and mental health and all general aspects should start in school. I definitely think we need to be more aware of it in school unless...Educational driven in terms of I know there's definitely some schools compared to other schools that are more...more likely to help pupils that are going to give them the higher results than other schools that won't. And I definitely think that mental health's a really big factor. My kids' teachers...I've got no doubt that they know what they're doing education wise. Which is why when we have parents nights or I get the reports I'm like-'If you're happy with their progress that's fine with me. You're a teacher I'm not. The only thing I want to know is are they happy? Are they bullying anybody? Are they causing any problems?' That's ...It's the mental part for me that I want to know about because I trust the school to do the educational bit. I just want to make sure my kids are still...That they're not being bullied and that they're happy. And that's the key thing for me and that should start at school. But, I'm probably more keenly aware of it with my kids because I worry about what my kids mental health is going to be because they've had to live through what I live through. They've probably had to see me at my worst and deal with me at my worst. So, I suppose I always worry about what that...what impact that will have on them. But, again it's not like America or anything like that where you'd probably be sending them to a child psychologist. You don't have access to things like that here unless you're up here. And I don't show as being up there. I'm capable. So, yeah, I think the mental health service is in the toilet. I won't lie. Third sector isn't...I've got nothing but good things about the third sector but there's only so much the third sector can do. There really is only so much the third sector can do. In terms of, I suppose, if it is more deep rooted. Do you know what I mean the third sector can help me because I can talk and things like that. But, I still feel that the bit that's missing is the thing that somebody that's educated would be able to get to. If you are a psychologist you are trained. You'll be trained to get stuff... to the root of stuff that I wouldn't even think about doing. Or it might be...Do you know what I mean cause obviously it can sometimes be an imbalance in hormones or things like that. So, obviously I think like that's...I think psychologists probably aren't...are probably used sparingly for people. And it could maybe help other people that are...without having to beg for it."

Interviewer thanks the respondent for sharing her memories with the project.

