
From:
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To: Advocacy and Support
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As a survivor of Childhood Sexual, Emotional & Physical Abuse, i have required a lot of Therapy and medical attention.

Firstly I will address my most recent and horrid experience within the public Mental health system.

██████████, i was suicidal and my doctor sent me by Ambulance to ██████████ Hospital Psych ward. In the Emergency department I was treated with respect but once i was in the ward I was treated like a number. My first night i was extremely distressed and crying a lot. I needed someone to talk to me, to care for me, but instead i was left alone. Not one nurse checked in on me on my first night in hospital. (Or any other night). This made me angry and more distressed because I was told hospital would help me. It didn't.... It made me worse because you don't get cared for instead you get told to calm down or be threaten with a 'big needle in your butt' (to knock you out) and placed in seclusion for days. Or however long they like. By the way i was a voluntary patient and NOT scheduled. The threats just made me more furious not calmer. The nurses couldn't seem to understand or see that fact! In my opinion, They had no interest in real care only doing what was required on their job descriptions. Other patients confirmed my thoughts also. I was not offered any after care either when i was released. Something that is supposed to happen!

Each patient is assigned a nurse each day and if you want or need anything you have to ask that nurse only. Even if that nurse thinks you're trouble and ignores you. I was later told she was ignoring me to teach me a lesson for not following their rules. I said 'its a Psych ward and you expect everyone to be good little boys and girls!'

Really? If they offered one ounce of gentleness or care instead of constant threats of basically what boils down to more abuse, then they would find their patients outcomes would be a lot better. But in their words ' its not in our job description'. But further abusive behaviours seem to be.

One day a young female patient who befriended me was feeling very low. Crying alone on the common room sofa. I approached her and asked her quietly if i could hold her hand and be with her. She was holding my hand tightly whilst falling apart on the inside. Then she told me that for all the months she had been in a psych ward not one nurse or doctor had done that and it was something she really needed was someone to just be with her. Fully for her. Human touch is so vital to healing from an emotional perspective. It allows you to feel safe to let it out, to release the pain and sadness or any other emotion you are feeling at that time. Anyway i was feeling happy because i knew i was making a difference to one person. Then i was suddenly confronted by two nurses who gave me the coldest stares and went mad at me for doing what i did. I couldn't believe it. I was stunned.

There is a lot more examples i could give but i would be typing all day.

Therapy:

Only 10 hours Government approved counselling per year. As childhood abuse survivors that is nowhere near enough sessions per year. Thats only one session every 5 weeks or so. Seriously you think someone who has survived years and years of abuse can get it all out with a one hour session only 10 times. I have been in therapy for 10 years and i still need it. By the time you go back for your next session you are back to before because survivors need more regular sessions. In my experience, weekly would be beneficial. We need 50 sessions a year not 10. Therapy needs to be constant and continuous for childhood survivors of abuses.

Further treatments:

I have experienced the healing benefits of short term residential care not in a hospital. This being 'The Heal for Life Foundation' at Quorrobolong NSW.

A program for 6 days that safely & lovingly addresses the issues that are affecting each guest. A maximum of 12 guests per program. A program that asks you what you need to heal. For some its being able to talk and release whilst being held or simply having their hand held lovingly and just being heard.

The program also offers Art therapy, play therapy and anger release therapy. All of which are done one on one with a worker (a PSV, Peer Support Volunteer) all of whom are survivors of childhood abuses and or trauma themselves but have completed much of their healing journey. These volunteers are well assessed before becoming part of the team.

This program works for most survivors. I have seen their feedback stats and over 95% of guests say the week was 'Life changing'. Which is the best of the choices on the feedback form. HFLF have it right! After all my experiences and experiences of my fellow survivors i can easily say that HFLF is the best treatment and care by far! This place should have government funding but it doesn't. HFLF saves lives!

I could keep giving examples of my bad experiences but i think what i have said says it all well enough. Serious changes need to happen with 'Best Practices' in the public mental health system!

Thank you for this opportunity.