



WITNESS STATEMENT OF JESSE MORGAN

I, Jesse Morgan, say as follows:

- 1 I make this statement on the basis of my own knowledge, save where otherwise stated. Where I make statements based on information provided by others, I believe such information to be true.
- 2 I have been a carer for my mum since I was a teenager. I had an unofficial caring role for most of my teens. I am now 25, still live with mum and receive a carers allowance.

Experience of being a carer

- 3 Growing up it was me, my mum and my younger brother. My dad wasn't around. Mum had agoraphobia and bipolar as well as physical health issues.
- 4 When I was 14, and my younger brother was 8, she stayed in her room and just wanted to shy away from the world.
- 5 I helped mum as best as I could. I did the shopping, looked after my brother, tried to keep the house clean and did the laundry as well. I cooked too; we ate a lot of pesto pasta. I was going to school, but I also worked part-time six days a week at a pizza place to help with money. My brother and I would take turns going out or doing any activities that fitted around our mum, as one of us had to be home with her at all times. We were drowning in responsibilities as children.
- 6 I had no support as a young carer for my mum. She had a case manager who would give my brother and me movie tickets every few months. But we didn't receive any peer support or links to services. We were only seen as our mum's sons and not as official or unofficial carers.
- 7 A few years later in 2015, mum's condition got worse. By that time, she had also been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and schizoaffective disorder. Her personality became unrecognizable and she had visual and auditory hallucinations. She was dependent on me for her daily activities – she needed my help to get up from her chair, go to the toilet or take a shower.
- 8 In 2015, my mother fell over in our front yard and couldn't get up by herself. She thought she was on fire. I called an ambulance which picked her up and took her to a hospital. Her initial treatment was to wean her off medication that was making her really sick.

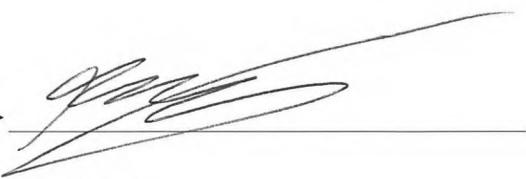
- 9 She was later moved to the psychiatric ward of the hospital as an involuntary patient. After three months in hospital she was discharged. Although, she was doing better when she came out of the hospital and was managing with minimal medication, she felt she was treated in a degrading and inhumane way in the psychiatric ward.
- 10 After she was discharged from the hospital, mum was determined never to go back. She reached out and developed a support network for herself within the community. This has been immensely helpful to her and she's able to manage most things independently herself. She only needs assistance for a few things such as going to the shops or lifting heavy objects. As a consequence of the support network she has developed for herself, it has become easier to be a carer for her now, as compared to any point previously.
- 11 I became mum's official carer in either 2015 or 2016 and receive a Carers Allowance from Centrelink. I didn't know I was entitled to be an official carer for her until then, I was never given any information about it and only knew about it when one of my mum's case workers asked me why I wasn't receiving a carers allowance.

Impact on my life

- 12 I have struggled with mental health issues myself since I was a child. There were several times where I have shut myself off from the world and behaved like a recluse. These mental health issues, along with the responsibilities of my caring role, have been difficult to manage at several points in my life.
- 13 My caring role for mum was always my first priority growing up, to the detriment of my own life and development. I dropped out of year 12 as the caring responsibilities and my own mental health issues all got too much to be able to manage the workload. I feel like it has set me back in life.

Recommendations

- 14 The mental health system needs to recognise the role of young carers and be able to reach out and offer supports. Lack of supports can have an immense impact on young carers lives, including on their education and their own mental health.
- 15 From my own experiences with mental health issues, I see that there needs to be education and information for young men (aged 16 to 25) about mental health issues. No one tells them they are allowed to talk or gives them information about where to go or what to do.

sign here ▶ 
print name Jesse Morgan
date 03/07/19