

CARER'S SUBMISSION TO ROYAL COMMISSION April 2019

My daughter has suffered mental illness for the last 42 years.

From the beginning I did not really know what was wrong with my daughter but I new her behaviour was not 'normal'.

Many many stories I could tell but one memory I have was when she initially became unwell and had not been diagnosed yet. She had her license and drove her car to the Weir with a girlfriend. She had locked her keys in the car and thought we had taken the keys, she said she was going to drown herself. We had spare keys and went out to open the car for her, she did drive home but the friend wanted to get out of the car as she said" she was scared of the way my daughter was behaving and talking".

I cannot remember exactly how it came about but a mental health nurse came to our home to talk to my daughter to convince her to see a psychiatrist. The nurse sort of convinced her to see a psychiatrist as she was not listening to me and there was nothing wrong with her. So in the mean time before she saw the psychiatrist she saw her GP who had admitted her to hospital as they did not know what to do and that night the 'hospital' sent her to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (she was very unwell) she could pretend a lot that she was 'normal' and nothing was wrong but the illness showed up with the amount of time in hospital they were able to see how she was unwell, her behaviour got drastically bad.

She spent 6 weeks in [REDACTED], we tried to visit her as often as possible. Sometimes she was happy to see us other times she was not happy to see us (me and my husband). They put her on some medication which did not work straight away so that medication slowed her speech and she got the shakes from the beginning then she got into her head that I wanted to poison her. Anyway, she had lots of ups and downs over a period of 3 months after getting out of [REDACTED]. She had had a career and went back to work after getting out of [REDACTED] and she was a good worker and then she was put in a Supervisor position, this was to much for her to handle and she relapsed.

Before she started working after leaving high school, I could see that something was not right with her, she was different, withdrawing herself, I could see a difference.

She had been readmitted a few times. They would also say she needed to have injections because she could not be trusted to take her medication. I would notice the change in her every time she did this. The actual Psychiatrist would be a different person. Also medications would be changed and this would seem to go on and on and take a lot of time in these changes which was very upsetting, I remember one medication that was working really well then it was taken off the market which 'I thought' was a huge blow. The last time she was in the clinic in [REDACTED], she was not capable of working any more at the job she had for about 2 years, then she began working in Woolworths for 10 years, still having ups and downs but managed to stay there for 10 years.

The last episode she was having at work they had to call the police because of her actions. This is not good for her as this made her frightened. This had happened previously at her residence and she was confronted with the police which scared her.

The last time she was in [REDACTED] she was discharged but still not well enough to look after herself, she was sent home by train on her own. Some how she manages, she sometimes talks to me other times abusive, I do not hear from her for weeks at other times. She struggles with being around people, she does what she needs to do but that is all as far as I know.

When I am worried about my daughter and contact Adult Mental Health which is where she has a case worker and ask for some information. I might not get a call back for many days which is very distressing for me.

After all this drama, she is on injections (so has medication and not going off at will). She is Ok with her life which gives me peace in knowing that she can look after herself and we keep in contact with each other when she is in the right mood. I would like to make a comment about facilities like 'The Park Facility' this is a positive change that has been made with discharge from clinics. This would have made a big difference to my daughter as well as myself, not just discharging from clinic/hospital and patient to get the train home of their own accord and working to see if they can cope looking after themselves.