

**██████████ - Story for the Royal Commission into Mental Health**

I am a consumer of mental health services and cared many years for my daughter who committed suicide and was also a consumer for many years.

I have the following suggestions and comments for the RC:

- Many people with mental health issues have chronic mental health issues. The symptoms should not be treated in isolation, the root of the problems should be investigated as well;
- There is a disconnect between the public and private mental health system. They do not adequately communicate with each other;
- Psychiatrists should not think they are superior or above social workers and other members of the treating team, including family members. It should not be hierarchical. There should be an equal and cooperative approach;
- Regular meetings should be held with the family to discuss the impact of low mental wellbeing on everyone;
- It should be acknowledged that medication has mind-altering effects as well as many physical effects like chronic pain;
- A positive experience has been the manner in which my GP, psychiatrist and pain management specialist have worked in tandem.
- Places should be made available where people with a low mental wellbeing can check-in will be provided with a holistic treatment approach. So they can access all different specialists in one place. ;
- There should be more safeguards to prevent misdiagnosis;
- Young people should only be given medication as a last resort. Because it usually is just a band aid;
- The mental health services are not family orientated. For example, there are no areas for children to play;
- You need to be very assertive and resilient to get yourself out of what I call 'the swamp' of the mental health service;
- It is unrealistic to expect people to pay for all the necessary specialist in order to be treated;
- There are some helpful programs such as art therapy and music therapy;
- There is evidence that being around nature improves mental well-being. This should be encouraged;
- Drugs and ECT should only be prescribed as a last resort;
- Stigma should be addressed as early as primary school;
- Places such as the ██████████ are run like a prison. This should be stopped and people should be treated with humanity.
- Wards are not well maintained and woman are put in the same wards as men due to issues with space;
- CATT does not act with compassion. At one stage, the CATT entered my home when I was cooking, threw me to the floor, handcuffed me and took me away with the police.
- You have to ask and wait for everything. Often the nurses do not even acknowledge that you are trying to get their attention to ask for something. At one stage, I was dragged away from the nurses station to HDU as I refused to leave the nurses station;
- A centralised complaints commission should be established which captures complaints relating to for instance the police and the private and public mental health system. The Mental Health Complaints Commissioner for example, does not deal with complaints about

police conduct when the CATT attends. This creates barriers for those having a complaint;  
and

- People in the mental health system should be treated like human beings and not animals. This is what creates stigma.

I may be willing to provide evidence to the Royal Commission in person.