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Client with Mental Health issues, her experience with blocks to re entering paid employment

#### CONTEXT

May 2010 - Single Mum, mid 40's in the private rental market, has 4 children 3 at home with her, two still at school, one unemployed and living at home. We will call her "Sue" for the purpose of this discussion.

Due to family and work stress early in May 2010 Sue experienced a complete breakdown. Her GP managed her medication and she attended KCHS for counseling and support for herself and children for 9 months.

Sue was at the time of the breakdown in fulltime paid employment, she used up all her sick leave and annual leave then resigned from her job as the organization was not able to support a change in job and she didn't want to return to the same job.

Sue reported that she always been an anxious person had managed her anxiety by keeping very busy, trying to achieve high standards and being both Mum & Dad to her children on a day to day basis.

#### SUE'S BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SUPPORT TO RETURN TO WORK

##### 1. Attitude & beliefs around Mental Health:

**Examples experienced by Sue: At Centrelink- Counter Staff "if you are well enough to re train you are well enough to go back to work" another time Customer Service person on the telephone " You have had a long enough holiday and now need to get back to work".**

Sue felt that she was under constant pressure to return to the paid work force from Centrelink and that they didn't understand how unwell she was because they couldn't see anything wrong.

##### 2. Job Capacity Assessment process :

Staff were very supportive at CRS, received different amount of information at the two assessments she attended . 1<sup>st</sup> time with a counselor as her advocate, received good feedback on the day. 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment she attended by herself no feedback on the day or from Centrelink . Sue believes there is a lack of transparency with the process and the different outcomes may be due to having a professional at the 1<sup>st</sup> assessment. Sue believes that as it's her assessment she should be given some feedback about the outcome.

##### 3 Access to re training:

Sue believes was not able to access re training as she was considered "skilled enough" comment made by Centrelink worker . She believes that Centrelink training is designed & available to under 25yr olds or unskilled people. Access to training is not reflecting that Mental Health impacts on all ages and levels of skill and they all require support to re enter the workforce .



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