

Background.

My son was the victim of workplace bullying and harassment.

He suffered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Anxiety and Depression as a result of this. He was expected to tell of his trauma and problems over several months to a variety of counselors, psychologists and psychiatrist each time losing trust and faith that this one will not be able to help him either.

When the bullying first came to the attention of his workplace he was offered counseling, He poured his heart out and on the second visit he was told that you only get two free sessions then he had to apply for extra counseling.

Next he went to a counselor at TAFE because as an apprentice he was entitled to use that service. When he went off work on workcover the TAFE counseling was withdrawn, as he was no longer a student with them.

While seeing this counselor he was sent to the CAT team for assessment because it was feared he was suicidal. He was self-harming and exhibiting dangerous behavior.

His assessment was an informal questioning about weather he still felt like killing himself. When he said not now he was told to ring the CAT team if he felt like it again.

He was referred to YSAS and had a 6 to 8 week wait to get in.

During that time he spiraled into a low that had me ask his /GP to admit him to a Psychiatric hospital.

He was admitted for Anxiety PTSD and Depression as well as to help him reduce his use of marijuana.

During that time he absconded several times, self harmed and even stole a bottle of Temezapam from the drug room. Incident Report was written but I never heard what was done about it.

He was discharged in the early hours of the morning following his reaction to “something that has come up in his therapy session.” Staff rang us and asked us to come and pick him up, (2 hours away). We did not have any idea what had come up or how to handle him or the situation but thought that if the hospital think he is better off at home then that is what he needs.

One week later he attempts suicide again and is admitted to the local hospital psych ward, where he is diagnosed as a behavior problem.

His private psychiatrist was informed about this admission and asked for guidelines on how to handle the situation at home. No answer or advice was given.

Continued with YSAS counselor and Private Dr but showed marked distress and anger for the remainder of his life.

Following the suicide death of his youngest sister he spiraled. I spoke to his Dr. and told him how worried I was about him and how he was blaming himself for his sister’s death. I was told “We spoke about that last week and he seemed ok with it”

A week later my son also committed suicide in the same manner as the sister he blamed himself for.

At some stage during his treatment I believe he was seen as the problem rather than his behavior being the result of his problems.

The fact that he used cannabis became the issue and the reason for using it was no longer being acknowledged. This change made him feel that he was not being listened to and resulted in the behavior worsening.

After his death both the Private Dr and the Workcover Dr gave written statements containing judgements about the rest of our family even though neither had ever met any of us. One stated something about his mentally retarded sister. I do not have a mentally retarded daughter, and am very hurt and angry that this statement has been made about us without having ever met us.

My Concerns and Observations are

1. My son learned very early not to trust the system because it always let you down.
2. Never did any of the experts ever ask for our input or even to interview us to find out from a different source how he was going. We lived with him, loved him and had to contend with the results of his illness.
3. There was never a holistic approach to his treatment. He was either a drug problem or a behavior problem or a depression patient.
4. Watching her brother try to cope with his life as it had become, we believe, is one of the factors in the suicide death of our daughter.
5. His belief that he was to blame for her death was not listened to.
6. During his illness my son was angry with the world and often with us as we had not taught him how cruel the world was. Statements made about us by doctors who had not even met us were unfounded and judgmental.
I believe that his interests would have been better met if we had been included, we were willing to be interviewed, as the wellbeing of our only son was our only goal.
7. We saw the changes in him and were fighting the battle of our lives. To save our son. I understand the privacy laws but still think our input when diagnosing and treating our son could have improved his chances at life.