

Ian Holland
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Commitment on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT. 2600.

6th. May, 2005.

Dear Mr. Holland,

As an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder/Anxiety/Depression sufferer, and a consumer of public mental health services, I would like you to give serious consideration to my experiences.

- Public Mental Health professionals are not easily accessible. The waiting period for psychiatric patients as opposed to those patients seeing a G.P. for a physical health condition can be as much as a month. In that waiting period, there could be potential suicide attempts. There is a major difference between physical health and mental health-the latter is blatantly discriminated against.

“If people with physical conditions were treated in such a way lackadaisical way as those with psychiatric conditions, there would be riots in the streets.”

- There are inconsistent follow-up consultations.
- **My file was closed without my knowledge.**
- **When my file was re-opened, I was given a new case manager whom I have seen only once in 8 months.**
- **My “Recovery Plan” has never been sighted.** My psychologist said that I needed hospitalisation. Four weeks later, my psychiatrist recommended a drug company’s sample pack of medication.
- A public mental health service provider suggested I try the PRIVATE mental health services.
- Access to shared-care G.P.s/ private psychiatrists was promised. The promise was never fulfilled.
- There is inappropriate accommodation for OCD/Anxiety/Depression sufferers. Since I was given telephone contact details of a potential accommodation option, there has been NO FOLLOW –UP from the service in 6 months. There has been a minimalist approach by the service. The service has abdicated from further interaction in the situation.
- There is an attitudinal problem from public mental health professionals. I was told, **“Beggars can’t be Choosers”**.
- There has been unsuccessful, on-going, face-to-face support from the consumer consultant at my local public mental health service.

“I would like to regard myself as a ‘consumer’ of public mental health services, but have found there is precious little to consume. Hence, the above.”

Yours sincerely,

A disappointed Chronic OCD/Anxiety/ Depression Sufferer, Consumer of Public Mental Health Services.