

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
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Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Submission written by:

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International Trauma Counsellor, Diploma of Counselling (1995)

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ASCA (Advocates/Association for Survivors of Child Abuse) Group

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Part of the Red Cross Disaster Emergency response team (Gold Coast) and

Australia's worst documented case of multiple predator multiply abused

survivor (As far as is known) that has attained complete recovery and healing.

Trauma Counsellor/Therapist 2000-2005

Position: Manager/Group Facilitator of an International Emotional and Mental Health support network online. Delivering care, compassion, encouragement and support and referrals for patients, victims, consumers and their families. Advocacy support for consumers and families in dealings with Medical Professionals and community agencies. Educating consumers, victims and patients about their disorders and available resources. Specialising in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and its accompanying disorders and mental or medical health issues.

Introduction.

I have nothing to personally gain from writing this submission, I am not asking for funding or government handouts. What I want from you is quite simply to hear what I have to say.

I share my journey, knowledge and experience with those that need to know, those that should know and those that can do something about changing the system that isn't working for so many. I know where it works and where it is failing, not only through my own experiences but through the experiences of the thousands that have and still do come to me for help over the internet and in my personal life, where I share their journeys and their pain and assist them, encourage and support them to attain what I have achieved.

My government funding is zero but I do it anyway because I have the knowledge and the experience to make a difference and have been successful in doing so with people spanning internationally throughout 7 countries. It is a payment free service.

What I know you can't learn from a textbook. Personal experience and its generated wisdom are my greatest assets; it is where I draw my inner strength and the majority of my knowledge to accomplish what I do.

We need to begin with the very foundations of the creation of self, our families. Many children are now being "raised" by completely inadequate parents and placed in the hands of textbook taught professionals because parents give up and are clueless and

would prefer to blame us or chemical imbalances for why the kids are the way they are. When these current generations don't live up to the perceived expectations of what their children should be or things aren't happening according to the books or totally misinformed and emotionally numb concepts they learned from, the professionals and parents get frustrated which can leave us feeling even more helpless and hopeless than we did in the first place sending us internally spiralling back down into the mental/emotionally triggered illness and substance abusing nightmare.

Books and structured education teach knowledge they do not teach wisdom, morals and values, kindness, support, encouragement and nurturing, once learned through families but isn't now. We have, as a society, taken "human" out of the words Human Race and now it is just a race to the finish line and how much accumulated material wealth or glossy magazine photo opportunities we have or have not gathered or how high our income is, or how high up on the corporate ladder we have come, or not, that produces our value in societies eyes.

At the age of 23 I was diagnosed finally with Chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder and Chronic Clinical Depression. I was not born with these disorders, like so many of the current generation, they were acquired through a lifetime of living in this societal nightmare that we as a people created. I attained complete healing and recovery. Spending 12 years being a consumer of available mental health services, medical health services and pharmaceuticals, I now assist others through this quagmire of available but hopelessly inaccessible services, I can tell you where it worked and didn't and I can tell you why, I can tell you why there is

such an horrific number of relapse cases where disorders were once managed and recovery occurring.

Not only is the system in helping people survive and recover seriously flawed but also society is failing the disordered that they themselves created. A huge percentage of people in the mental health system were not born with disorders and illness but acquired it just like I did and it is just getting worse.

In a recent study done by one of the government's many departments 54% of parents admitted to feeling they are inadequate as parents, clueless as to how to raise healthy functioning children with values and morals, self worth, respect and personal identity.

In a news paper article published on the 18th of December, Sunday Mail, parents were begging and bribing childcare centres and their staff to open on Christmas Day, not because the parents were working but the parents didn't want the kids to get in the way of them having fun, socialising etc., or getting in the way of their seasonal days off. These kids are raised by absolutely anyone but the people who bought them into this world. The very people that should be accountable and responsible for them and how they turn out, invisible. Doesn't that startle you? It didn't startle or alarm me; it is nothing I didn't already know. We have kids roaming the streets, more wandering in packs (as I have heard them recently called on the news). Gatherings of kids with no adult mentoring, kids that are virtually raising themselves and the ones that do have homes and parents that give a damn don't know how to raise emotionally and mentally healthy kids with a conscience, wisdom and self value, so they seek

validation and a sense of belonging where ever they can find it, which is not in the family home.

The “good” kids that have the social graces and educational application are looking for their next drink and pills to pop to cope and deal and put on the face that the world is just fine and that they are just fine, when it is anything but.

Work place stress related mental and emotional disorders are costing the government and business millions every year. We have taught people how to make a living, we haven’t taught them how to make a life.

Senate Committee on Mental Health, Term of Reference A, B, C, E, F, G:

The greatest barrier to any changes is the family unit. We now live in a society that has the highest rates of mental health problems and substance abuse on record. Fact is the biggest asset you have to achieve a great Australia are killing themselves, if not each other, in droves, committing crimes against each other and society at large and that shouldn’t be happening but is and we as a society created the human vacuum that is the very cause of it. Kids and those that are a product of the current society are turning in on themselves and turning against society, its structure, its principals and its values.

You are raising generations of people that feel they don’t personally and individually have value, not within their families, not within their larger communities and not within their own country and they most certainly are not being heard.

We are raising our children without the fundamentals of personal internal human value and validation, cast aside for financial and material gain, parental social lives and the gaining of truly uneducated knowledge where yes we are all very qualified or can be to get jobs and have bank accounts, being raised with the sole pursuit of having a taxable income and be a revenue raising asset to our country, and wont our parents be proud of us. We can stand for our glossy photo opportunities with our smiling parents standing beside us while in our heads we are planning about 8 different ways to kill ourselves each day or questioning did we take our medication to get us through the day, whether that be alcohol, drugs or pharmaceuticals. Lives become “gee that was a hard and stressful day at work I “need” a drink and/or sedative” to “gee it will be a hard long day at work I think I need a drink and/or sedative.”

Individual feelings, emotional and physical heart felt intimacy and nurturing are negated in a world too busy to stand and take notice of what we have done and are doing to the current generations. Counselling services are over run and inundated with demands for them because it offers personal intimate validation where our consumer society is completely lacking, our families are completely lacking, parents are seeking counselling and psychological services for their kids in record numbers. For an hour a week people can take time and/or pay someone to get validation for their individual personal needs or their children’s and that kind of intimacy is something that parents and/or ourselves are now having to purchase with money. An emotionally and/or physically invisible or unavailable family cannot provide this human need and acceptance and material wealth and doctorate educations cant fix the holes it is leaving in lives.

Realistically think about where all this went wrong. It wasn't because of the women's liberation movement although it was a catalyst for what went wrong after that. When women were acknowledged and accepted into the work place, which was a good thing, the cost of living increased in mammoth proportions, nothing could compare to it in history apart from perhaps The Great Depression where living became unaffordable but they did have community spirit and unity then which we now really are lacking in. The great Australian dream of owning your own home now requires a double average income, the increasing rents on rental housing are unprecedented so that you now have families having to live with boarders because they would all be homeless if it were not so. Getting into a rental house is becoming about as easy as seeking a permission slip to enter Fort Knox where you are told how you can and cannot live, if you can have pets, where even gold fish have to be approved and God help you if you do not leave that house as though you never lived in it in the first place meaning that today's rental housing is not family friendly and children and pets are not encouraged. Paying out exhauberant rents saving for your own home is now becoming a luxury few can afford unless they negate their families and the commitment it takes to raise them in any healthy way.

The chasm between the wealthy and the poor increasing, availability of services decreasing and the cost of living just keeps going up. The division of society, the pressure on people to strive for financial wealth and independence forever on the increase, the stress increasing, the reliance on sedatives increasing and the rebelling against this very societal structure increasing. The helplessness and the hopelessness that more and more are getting trapped within, depression, suicide increasing, responsibility and accountability going out the window as things of the past because

back in the past people felt like they mattered, they don't now. Now we have become a society of account numbers, bank balances and ability to pay bills and how we spend our much deserved and "earned" time out from our working lives. People are now finding spending time with their kids about as enjoyable as locking themselves in a traffic jam in 50 degree heat. Self-indulgence and selfishness are a way of life to the negation and invalidation of our children by the very people that created them.

A sweeping change in personal circumstance, finding yourself single, abandoned and raising kids on your own can leave you with financial nightmares and even if you do find a home and someone to move in with you, someone hopefully you know and can trust around children, someone who will not negate and invalidate them as in the way and a burden to personal indulgence, the black marks of unpaid bills haunt you for 5 years.

Even if you do pay those bills off and do the right thing when you do get back on your feet and show you are responsible it accounts for nothing but remains defaults on your credit history so if you need a loan you cant get one. You may as well not pay the bill at all like so many don't, the cost to business huge, because whether you do or not you still cant get a loan anyway until that default is off your history in 5 years time. Paid or not it is gone. Their numbers defines this generation, tax file numbers or social security numbers, credit default numbers and ISP numbers, that is our value in society and as individual people. The have's and the have nots and it is wrong as has created the problems that we have now as a society as a whole.

This the reason more and more are turning to substance abuse, turning their backs on their families, rebelling against the system and society, falling into chasms of depression, why domestic violence is on the increase, why child abuse is becoming more prevalent (because parents are emotionally and/or physically alienated or isolated from their kids either out of necessity or choice), why divorce is increasing, why the family courts and law courts are full to maximum capacity and overflowing, why mental and emotional illness is happening in critical proportions, why the crime rate is what it is, why drug dealing and crime seems like the “viable” alternative way of having money or possessions for some regardless of the consequences to themselves that may happen or to their victims that do occur. Conscience for our fellow beings going to the wayside if not gone.

We took human out of humanity, compassion, kindness and understanding, nurturing and emotional wellbeing negated and invalidated.

I know you are only dealing with Mental Health but prevention is far better than cure and this has to be an all area approach for it to be fixed, all the causes worked on and money spent where it is most needed. It will take an encompassing of all government departments and even if you do listen, will they?

I have had a look through people and organizations that have made submission to you and they all want to make a difference and have addressed their personal interests and agendas and the need for change, problem is this has to be a holistic approach or it isn't going to work. Handing people or organizations money in and of itself isn't going to work. Money is not going to solve this problem, people are. This is an all-

encompassing humanitarian problem, not an accounting one, both for the helpers and those needing help.

The people and organizations you need to focus on are the ones with wisdom, not textbook knowledge not unless they have personal experience to back it up. Textbook knowledge obviously has a place in society, it can teach technology and business, we as individual people are not machines and computers, if so we would all be the same and we are not. We are not account balances and dollar signs, you can learn that from a book but it is not who we are as individual unique and valued beings. We are not science or building projects, these are things we can do, not who we are, to better improve ways of life.

I am afraid that too much money is being cast upon organizations that have university educated people with no clue as to the inner workings of the very people they are trying to help, how they think and what they really need from the inside out not the outside in. Throwing material stuff at these people removes the immediate crisis but does nothing to alter the cause of it. We as a society are trying to bandaid the punctured wheels of a car while the differential is broken and expect it to work and it is not. The main problem here is not the people but the very foundations of the functioning of those people, their emotional selves, their individual inner self-value, individual inner self worth, validation and a sense of belonging to a functioning unit. We lost that, we now have to focus on getting it back for their to be any real and lasting change to the society we now live in.

It has to begin with a real focus on the family unit and parenting. We now have an entire generation of parents whom have absolutely no clue how to raise emotionally, mentally and physically healthy children, if they even want too. Educationally successful children? Yes for some of the population. Behaviourally “out there” children, yes for many and many parents are completely or choose to be completely blind to it, negating or invalidating the very children they bought into this world. These children whom are learning to exist completely independent of their parents and their guidance, nurturing and values are searching for a sense of belonging wherever they can find it, whether it be among peers or in the school yard, their jobs and workplaces. Then they go on to bring children into the world with all this lacking and having no idea how to deal with emotionally demanding new little individuals and all hell breaks loose.

You cant blame the parents they know no better being raised much the same way, many of them want to learn but don't even know where to turn without being blamed and judged so there is a fear of even admitting that we are individually and as a society completely maladjusted and inadequate so we go where we can be viewed as successful which is outside sourcing, education, jobs and material gain and as is happening more and more often, outside the family. Swallow a few pills, take your afternoon sedative to drown out the emotional negation and you are seen as successful but make sure you hide and negate your kids feelings and teach them to negate their own. Have everybody else raise them, but you, so you can blame outside sources for the shortfalls. It was the daycares fault, the schools fault, the teachers fault, the systems fault, societies fault for making us all have to work for a living so that we couldn't be there for our kids in their most vulnerable and impressionable years.

Some parents are now handing their kids over gleefully to everyone else to raise because of exactly this or just staying at home and drowning with the responsibility of parenting and how tough it is because we were not raised the right way ourselves and have no clue how to do it. Kids are now learning to parent themselves without the wisdom or knowledge or the resources of how to do it. The resources themselves are invisible or damn hard to access because they are wrapped up in red tape and paperwork and waiting lists due to staffing inadequacies. The kids can't or feel they can't turn to their parents because their parents are so wrapped up in themselves and their own self-gratification, denial and busy. The kid doesn't want to make waves or be a further burden and face further rejection by the parents, but that is what is happening more often. Outsourcing their feelings and expressing their oppression in usually very dysfunctional ways like substance abuse, crime, behaviour disorders, gathering in "packs" etc becoming another statistic and being dragged off to jail, rehab clinics or psychologists and counsellors. That is if they even take the option of getting help at all and don't just accept this as their lot in life. Many don't even know where to get help and no one wants to admit that they need it.

Get the priorities back to the families and I guarantee you that the mental health and substance-abusing crisis in our country will become minimal and the ripple effect in all sectors will be huge. Kids again will have a passion for living, not living to exist and with that passion will come a far more productive and positive society of better functioning and fulfilled individuals because they will feel good from the inside and in all things they do it will be projected outwards.

Today how many children could say that they love their parents, possibly quite a lot? But how many of those same children could say that they felt truly loved and understood by their parents in return? That they felt validated, heard, could talk openly too without being judged or feeling condemned or rejected by their parents. How many could say that their own opinions and ideas were accepted and not negated, or ridiculed? How many could say that they felt their parents understood them, wanted to be involved in their hearts and lives without controlling or owning them? We are now paying people to do this and take the place of parents such as counsellors and psychologists or trying to find this in our peers who are generally as dysfunctional as we are. How many children live for their parents out of a sense of duty or fear of disappointing them? How many children invalidate themselves for this very reason, their needs, their wants, their own hearts and goals and passions gone to live instead the perceived expectations of the parents or the societal structure that they are expected to mould into. How many of these kids could be openly honest with their parents about their lives, feelings, emotions, actions, behaviours, responsibilities and accountabilities without their parents going completely over the top in their emotional reactions having suppressed their own emotional baggage and having it come out in inappropriate bursts. How many of these kids felt a true belonging in their families in the first place? Is it any wonder that we are now in the true humanitarian crisis that we are? Kids need stability, physically, mentally and emotionally and we are not providing that. They get thrown from pillar to post, their carers and people that are paid to give a damn, intermittent, the relationships not lasting and discouraged through teachers that change jobs, day-care centre staff that change or families moving all the time, the children raised without any sense of lasting nurturing care and the inner security of the feeling of belonging. It is no wonder that these kids grow

up with huge trust and abandonment issues and no positive or workable relationship skills.

As a society we need to empower families that are willing and raise the kids of the parents that aren't and break this cycle. Then there are children who cannot or choose not to go home because their parents are too emotionally, physically or mentally abusive or neglectful. Where do and can they find that sense of intimate belonging. The ones that do make it in to the foster care system, their foster carers can change at any given moment, taken from one house to the next they are again denied, their need for intimate belonging and nurturing growth development denied again. Many head to the streets and they find their sense of belonging in each other, their peers that were all dysfunctionally raised the same.

PPP Parenting Program - The government funds the PPP Parenting program yet people who may consider but don't attend these programs do so because they feel it is as good as having tattooed on your forehead, "I am an inadequate parent and it is all my fault." No parent wants to admit that, ever. Apart from a much needed facelift and change of name to something like "Parenting Initiative and Innovation" which makes it sound much more uplifting and non blame and judgement carrying, this is a program that would be brilliant to allocate extra funding too, in fact I believe it is imperative, so it can be better accessed by those in need and groups run preferably by people whom have been through it and had success. There is no higher credibility than that of personal success and people are more likely to listen to and hold in higher positive regard personal experience and inner knowledge than to verbal textbooks that have had no children and no personal experience raising them.

So we teach parents how to adequately parent their kids to be functional adults in society but if we don't teach them how to parent themselves adequately there is a hole, relapse into learned negative behaviours common. They have to have their own needs and feelings validated, their own dreams and hopes and passions fulfilled and know how to go about that and be a parent, raising their children to be able to do the same.

Empowering Families - There is a program called Empowering Families run by Sue Koningen and I know she has put in a submission to you and has actually been invited to speak to you. Her program is a zero blame complete empowerment of parents and their families on how to achieve exactly what we as a society need to achieve. My father was a politician, a math and physics professor and my mother from the Australian Air force, neither of them uneducated people, yet I had to learn to be my own parent and adequately raise myself and after much disorder, inadequacy and maladjusted living I did it. The Empowering Families Program hits the nail on the head. I didn't know about it when I was living through it but damn I wish I did because it would have made my own journey a lot easier and taken all the guess work and errors out of it and made a very short journey out of what was a very long one. Sue originally set this up as a resource for parents of substance abusers but it is just as relevant to parents facing the challenge of appropriately and functionally parenting themselves and their kids. You want to allocate some money that is really going to make a difference; this is a place for it. This program deserves unprecedented opportunity for growth, run again by people who have been through the program and

had success because others will then willingly respond to such personal success making it all much more credible to those that do need it and are willing to try. These are the beginnings of fixing the problem and reducing the barriers to inefficient programs and policies.

Department of Children's Services and Community Care or whatever names it is known by this year. The name seems to change every single year, which automatically creates distrust in it by that simple act alone. It seems disorganised and malfunctioning even at the most basic levels, yet is an essential service and one that is completely inadequately funded and has horrific staff turnover numbers (which also creates issues for consumers of this service) due to being overworked, underpaid, under constant stress and pressure as individual workers to do superhuman hours without emotional reprieve with completely inadequate staffing numbers. The staff they do have seem to make judgement calls based on textbook scenario's and often get it wrong leaving kids to be continually abused in situations and circumstances not desirable for anyone. Lack of time to fully investigate and lack of inner wisdom, knowledge and personal experience is a common cause of this occurring. Common sense would state a parent found to be so seriously maladjusted that they actually harm kids should not have access to those kids unless those parents are willing to change their perceptions and actions and go through some serious behaviour therapy of their own. Parenting programs should be compulsory for such individuals, access to counselling services available to their kids, immediate. The parents need to be held accountable and responsible for their actions or you are all but telling these kids that it is their fault and the kids need to know that what their parents are doing is wrong and that they, the kids are not accountable or responsible for the behaviour of their parents

because most of them will take that upon themselves because it is just what kids do. You will even find them covering for the parents, making excuses for the parent's actions and blaming themselves. There is no excuse for abuse and/or neglect, emotional or physical, and there never will be and until we get tough on it, it will continue.

Parents will still blame kids for their behaviour toward those kids and for the kids behaviours, the kids will blame themselves and abuse themselves turning inward and acting outwards in harming themselves or others. Emotional neglect and individual invalidation can have the exact same impact on kids as full blown, leaves visible bruises abuse, it is just harder to see unless you know what to look for and the only people who truly have the wisdom to know what to look for are those whom have survived it themselves. You can't learn that from a book. The people working for DOCS & DOCC are doing what they can with the knowledge and resources they have got which is more than doing nothing at all. A lot of children are being rescued from horrific lives and circumstances but they still have to learn how to live with themselves and grow into emotionally healthy and functioning adults and that takes far more work and resources than DOCS has. Even if they did remove all abused children from their abusers and negators where would we as a society place them? Places and foster carers are so limited and they are not supported to have lasting nurturing and relationship building impact upon these kids that can actually amount to serious positive outcomes. We once could turn to extended family members but we haven't even got that now because they are just as selfish, maladjusted and inadequate as parents as their siblings. Grandparents are now learning more upon reflection where they stuffed up with their own kids but they have to have the time, energy and

health to raise their grandkids and not all grandparents are suitable, willing or capable to help out. The ones that are should be supported and funded as parents, this resource is often one that is overlooked, unfunded and negated and yet could make a real lasting change in many kids lives returning them back to that foundational belonging and nurturing within a family.

With the adult mentally ill supported accommodation is virtually unattainable. I know great organizations do try, like St Vincent De Paul, Salvation Army etc yet even their funding is so short, their staff so limited that these placements are a rare commodity. The adult mentally disordered still require first and foremost intimate contact with other persons to live emotionally functional lives, the sense of belonging and need just as great, they need to feel valued regardless of their physical capabilities or educational standards and don't which keeps them isolated internally and externally. A perceived concept of society is that the mentally disordered lack intelligence and inner wisdom and functioning yet I have found this to be far from the truth, their individual potentials need to be recognised and nurtured and will flourish if allowed to do so. Down syndrome kids, youth and adults are stuck in workshops and yet they can teach boundless, unconditional love. They are possibly the most uninhibited loving, giving and nurturing people on the planet right now and we could learn so much from them and so could our kids. They may or may not lack higher-grade educational intellectual capabilities but they abound in what really matters and is completely lacking within the rest of society today. Yet most of society fumbles and feels uncomfortable with such open emotion that they would prefer to isolate these kids, youth and adults and box them up out of the way. In truth we could learn far

more from them that they would ever want or need to learn from us and so could our kids.

Without human intimacy required and nurturing the emotions of all those mentally/emotionally disordered or medically ill you will continue to have barriers to preferred healthy outcomes.

Community Mental Health Organizations – These are vast in number and required in every community. Not just for the mentally/emotionally disordered and maladjusted but also for those born with brain malfunction. The dividing line between those whom have acquired it during their lifetimes due to all the above stated circumstances and those with actual brain injury and/or dysfunction is fuzzy at best. Fact is that there is no discrimination between the two when being treated and yet, yes the symptoms are the same but the actual disorders and illnesses poles apart in cause, prognosis and so should therefore be also in treatment. As a society we are not differentiating between them. By name alone the word disorder suggests that it was once in order and can be again with correct management and treatment. A true mental illness is managed only so that a person can learn to function to their best human potentials. Yet people and professionals are very guilty of labelling them all together. Schizophrenia for example is a brain malfunction, managed correctly that brain can function to its best potential, much as any other physical medically explainable disability. Individual human emotions are far more complex. You can try and physically/medically explain them away, numb them, deny them and/or invalidate them but they are very real and uniquely individual to each person. If it were not so we would all be robotic in our functioning and we are not. By treating people in such

a way you are again taking the human out of humanity. So you have psychiatry and psychology and you have not nearly enough psychiatrists on the ground that can tell the difference and psychologists who think they can, lump us all into the same box and have expectations of us that generally far outweigh reality because a text book told them so. Counselling is effective in the emotionally disordered and maladjusted taking care of people who are inadequately living with themselves because they were inadequately taught to do so Cognitive behavioural therapy compliant with emotional resolutions, maturation and growth can and does help these people regain their lives with short term medication to help them come to terms with the worst of the memories, circumstances or situations they were forced to endure and live through. There is a vast difference between a textbook psychologist and counsellor and one that comes from personal experience and wisdom: which is why they have chosen this for their career, and in their offices and their attitudes the difference is seen, felt and heard. To one we are a statistic and number; to the other we are a person. To one we are a challenge to fit into their ideals and ideas of what we should be according to them because books and their "higher education told them so. To the other we are the challenged learning to live within ourselves, with ourselves first and foremost and then the society we live in, hopefully then projecting outwards what we have learned so that others too can learn from us to lead better more intimately connected lives. I am serious, the difference is so obvious when you are sitting in their offices faced with those whom have personal wisdom and those that do not but are simply societies conformists doing this work to feel some kind of power trip over others and better about themselves rather than it be about the very people they are supposedly treating.

In the initial stages it can be hard to differentiate between them but before long it shows. When we are not progressing according to the way we “should” be the “professionals” can emotionally turn on us, making us feel incurable, hopeless, helpless and rejects to their system. It can and does happen regularly.

Back in the days before technical education mechanised humanity there was a resource that is now all but redundant in the current system and it is the role of the psychiatric nurse. Without one of these particular older generation women I would not be who I am today. Psychiatric nurses were an invaluable resource, now they are specialised Registered Nurses whom are completely bogged down in the duties of standard nursing, handing out pills, keeping order and have no time to do their historical duties which did work, do work and no are longer accessible or actually taught. Speak to Holly Skodol Wilson and Carol Ren Kneisl, the authors of the psychiatric nursing textbooks and they will tell you exactly the same thing.

Psychiatric Nursing and the teaching of it have changed so dramatically in the last 40 years and it has not done anyone any favours at all. You need to get back into the education department and change it back because progress in education has been a lack of progress in human compassion, kindness and validity. Our health services have become nothing more than a job or career and far less time for any compassion and heart felt understanding and striving and what really matters to human beings at their most basic levels and foundations. People whom enter into nursing now, out of compassion for humanity don't have the time to share that compassion so bogged down, overworked and understaffed. It is a proven fact that emotional nurturing, validation and compassion assists peoples recovery times, whether it be a physical

health, emotional health or mental health problem but just try and find someone whom actually has the time or can or wants to take the time to do so. They are very rare.

Lifeline – The only 24/7 nationally accessible services for people in emotional and mental desperation, if not also physically destitute. They take up all the slack where society and the available resources shut down. They don't profess to have all the answers but they will always listen and are available human access for people to be heard and validated and acknowledged in a world where, most that access these services, feel completely emotionally, mentally and physically isolated and alone. The vast majority of their staff is volunteers, not in this for the money or the prestige but solely because of human compassion and of course society doesn't pay them for that. To me, anyone that walks into these jobs as a volunteer with no hope of ever being paid or recognised for it deserve more than a survivable income to be paid to them for just being who they are and the only way to sort it out as to who is doing this through human compassion and those that don't possess the necessary qualities it takes to do their work proficiently and effectively is to make them all be volunteers first without promise of future income. A person that cannot work from compassion and human understanding cannot and should not be doing this work. This organization and any trying to do the same deserve vast amounts of funding and the people working for it deserve to be paid. They carry the burden, nurture and care for what society it self created. You cannot buy or learn in payment-orientated education what these people have within themselves. They do make a difference in peoples lives, helping them to attain better lives for themselves and offering real hope, understanding and compassion where it lacks in day-to-day life for the vast majority of Australians.

ASCA – Advocates/Association for Survivors of Child Abuse - ASCA is an Australian national not-for-profit organization for men and women campaigning for recognition of the life impact of the trauma of child abuse, and building the resources - support, advocacy and education - needed to promote healing. Their primary mission is the healing and well-being of adult survivors of abuse. Their ultimate goal is the prevention of all child abuse. They welcome not only survivors of childhood abuse, but also partners, family members, professionals and interested members of the public. They have parenting programs, healing weeks where people get back in touch with their emotional selves and can give it a voice, group support and their 1800 contact number for people in crisis.

I have mainly used their own words here but it is true, it is exactly what they do and they do it with huge staffing shortages and absolutely pitiful funding. I believe in what they do so much I went through the training required to join them. The majority of their work is voluntary due to serious funding shortages. These people want to make a difference and they more than have the inner knowledge to do what it takes to make a difference and yet red tape, paperwork and bureaucracy seriously hinder them. They are the voice of adult survivors too traumatised to speak for themselves that offer real hope and help where it is unavailable and unattainable in other sectors.

Brave Hearts – Begun by Hetty Johnson, she is the voice of the kids that cannot speak and be heard by the ruling authorities about things society wants buried and forgotten, pushed aside and hidden from their every waking hour. The people within her organization open to hearing the language that children vocalise and act

outwardly. They are willing to stop long enough to truly listen to the actions, minds, emotions and hearts of these kids, to reach inside them and let them know they are not having to deal with this alone. Taking on the role of what parents and caregivers should be and attempting to make a difference and fill those holes. Hetty is constantly trying to get recognition for the children and what they suffer at the hands of predators only to have it time and again fall on deaf ears. The funding and resourcing required for this is completely inadequate and the governments current commitment abysmal. Early intervention is critical for the long-term wellbeing of all children in such crisis. The expansion and power of such a service as this one should be a major priority.

There are laws that seriously need overhauling so that this can stop with our generation. Sentencing laws that need to be turned upside down because they are a completely inadequate reflection of the pain, suffering and complete life alterations their victims live with each and every day of their lives. Responsibility and accountability for personal choices and actions need to be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly or no one learns anything and change cannot and will not happen.

After hours services and the public hospital system in regard to mental health.

Usually when mentally ill people present at hospital it is because they have seriously harmed themselves or others or are seriously contemplating it. Either internally or externally they are out of their self-control zones. Immediate management of the current danger has to be put into place and control forfeited over to professional psychiatry. Leaving them in waiting rooms with the general population is not working for these people and is possibly putting all others at risk in attendance in said waiting

rooms and the person themselves if they are suicidal. These persons should not be left alone, they already feel it, intensifying it is only going to make it worse. Human contact is essential even if it is just long enough to knock them out with medication. So that their disordered minds can get some rest. Both the acquired mentally/emotionally disordered and those with actual brain dysfunction gained from injury or having it since birth all need a rest from reality, whether they want it or not, when presenting at hospital. They need to feel safe from themselves and others in a secure place but they also need human contact, nurturing and compassion. The very job that psychiatry nurses used to be able to do and had the ability to do efficiently. I have seen the inside of modern day psych wards and this is very much lacking. Yes the patients need to be taught to be responsible and accountable for their own illness and disorders but more and more they are being treated as though and told that they are their illnesses and disorders and they are not. When this sort of thought is enforced or implied it takes away from personal responsibility and accountability, the disorder and illness as something we cant do anything about, because it is who we are and that is completely wrong. If anything gets in the way of hope for a better future and the dream of attainable recovery. The patient is made to feel that this is their lot and they really can't do anything about it so what the hell, why bother even trying to change and look for a better future. Their lives feel pointless, that they are the victims of some kind of random mistake that they can do nothing about.

I have had to teach people to alter their thinking in regard to their disorders so that they can not only believe there is hope but that they can take control of it.

I wrote an article explaining this recently and will attach it here, it was directed at consumers of mental health services and the disordered.

One of the most dangerous beliefs usually implanted, as our personal truth is that we are and identify ourselves as disorders. "I am BPD, I am Bi Polar, and I am PTSD." We are not our disorders; they are something we have in life, not who we are. They are called disorders, which by name alone suggest they can be put into order, but we need the knowledge and education to know how and be willing to try and take the risk of changing our attitudes toward them.

Our disorders are not who we are but are more like our best friends, something that has a deep connection to us but is not foundationally us.

Our disorders are given labels, these are their names, you have your own name, I have Bonnie, they have OCD, BPD, ANA, BP, DID, PTSD and Depression etc.

As best friends, sometime during our lives, birth onwards they come into our lives and share our lives with us, our most intimate secrets, our friends, our families but mostly us and they unite with us being raised with us and happily raising hell, which when we first have them we don't really recognise. Most of them appear as survival skills during our childhoods that we used to live in amongst whatever we were living.

Then we begin to realise somewhere down the line that this best friend really isn't good for us and isn't really working for us any more, in fact it is disabling, we feel helpless, hopeless, depressed, lost, wind up in financial and relationship nightmares yet we would really rather deny the problem than admit we have it. We develop, we grow, we get more responsibilities and this disorder is in the way of us achieving our full potentials. If we believe that it is quite simply who we are then there is not room for hope and growth but if we can believe or learn to believe a new truth, that this is something that has united with us but not us life can alter dramatically and an attitude of hope can develop. It gives us a new perspective where we can do something about it, and regain control of ourselves and our lives back from the disabling abilities of this problem.

Our disorders can have and do create serious problems for us and anyone else that lives around us. We have spent so long sharing our lives with them and identify with them through our thoughts, emotions and feelings. We now want to do something about them and the disordered part of ourselves begins to rebel. It is our fear of letting go of the familiar and walking into the unknown and it can raise serious uncertainty and hell, causing sadness, clinginess, possessiveness, jealousy, anger, depression or self injury to the extent of thoughts of suicide or even attempting it.

With PTSD, Anxiety and Panic Attacks as our accompanying disorders we are constantly in survival mode, avoid, isolate ourselves, fearful, anxious and our disorder is saying "but I am protecting you from the harmful world out there and then we reach a point where we think, "this isn't working for me, I want to get out into the world, I want to face this, I want to live a functioning life within society and be "normal", why cant I be "normal". The disordered part of ourselves goes into survival mode, gets quite offended, sad, even more scared because it doesn't believe we are looking after ourselves or them or our united best interests. We try and step out, this part of our lives doesn't like that idea and internally all hell breaks loose, then the very first thing that does go wrong, (a therapy session that was particularly confronting, a shopping trip where we felt judged, a smart alec comment from someone) and our disordered perception goes, "well you did it, it is your fault" and we hurriedly isolate ourselves again, internalise our fears and we hide ourselves away.

It becomes apparent that this "best friend", our disorder, is such a big ingrained part of our lives we cant turn on it, turn our back on it but we can help it and learn to love it back to it's own states of health.

So we take our problem inner child/friend/disorder to the doctor, it may at first be stubborn or unwilling to go and we fear what it may be put through so this is a big decision to make but eventually seeing how destructive this "friendship" is we decide to go and try to help it and help ourselves at the same time by trying to remedy this serious co dependency issue this problem has.

We get handed medication and either seek or get told to go to therapy. Some go through a rebellion with medication because they believe they don't need medication and the functioning part of themselves doesn't but until the time comes that this disordered partnership gets sorted they do, whether that be life long or short term until the underlying issues can be determined. We have issues to deal with ourselves but also have to take on the responsibility of the "best friend/inner child/disorder that we have to parent because their maladjustments to living generally far outweigh our own.

There is hope that one day this intimately connected problem might not need medicating and might learn other behaviours through therapy, support, information and education but for now it needs it until there are other ways in place.

Our relationship with our best friend gets better and over time seems to have improved and then it tries to convince us, and it usually works, that it doesn't need all that other stuff anymore but has its life changed, has its circumstances altered, is there new behaviours in place, now information gathered to utilise, is it fully educated about its disorder so that it doesn't relapse? Now our disorder may be well and truly under control but if we have not dealt with our perceptions and issues that a life long relationship with it has created or that created it in the first place, and we believe the disorder doesn't particularly need our protection, help and devotion anymore we can lax in helping it to remain stable while we sort ourselves out.

We take it off its medications; pull it out of therapy etc. Unfortunately when they relapse, and we are so intricately connected to them we go with them and the cycle begins again. The only way to help ourselves is take back responsibility and accountability for our own issues/inner self/best friend and disorder again. This can feel like a huge step back, the helplessness and hopelessness regained and a huge hole again enters our wholeness.

We need to help our disorders and ourselves remain stable but we cannot ignore it. We have to become the parents it never had. We need to care about our disorders, as we needed to be cared about, offer it the love, devotion and nurturing it needs that we needed and need to be the best we can be. People outside of us cannot see, feel and know the disorders we carry within us, only we can, so only we can take on the role helper for it and get it the help it needs much like we would our own children. It is still there and it needs our attention and the attention of support people, professionals and others and then the disorder is cared for and managed. In taking the parental role over our disorders we sometimes we have to do for it what it doesn't want done such as keeping in therapy, make sure we get to appointments and keep on medication if it is still needed so that we can function too while we sort out our own stuff, our histories, feelings, emotions etc. We need to be the ones responsible and accountable for our disorders because only we really know what is going on inside of ourselves. We alone have to do it but we don't need to do it alone and usually cant.

We have to take responsibility for disorders and in so doing take responsibility for ourselves. We can and do get lost in the confusion of living and neglect it for a while, we do lead busy lives after all and that is when it will present again with it's problems and that can quickly overwhelm us.

Remember you are not your disorder and should not identify yourself as it, by doing that you are saying it owns you and it doesn't, our disorders can be managed, but we then need to take that opportunity heal ourselves.

Hospitalisation is about management of the disorder/illness, it is what happens after that that makes a real difference with the system the way it is right now. Without appropriate after care and complete education of carers and consumers relapse will occur consistently. This is where far more money needs to be spent under the current system so that accessibility and availability of these services are there for immediate and long term care as people come to terms with their histories and current disorders and illnesses.

Points of reference so far covered:

- a. Resources committed to the National Mental Health Strategy

- Division of responsibility between all levels of government

- Barriers to progress

- b. Adequacy of care for people with a mental illness

- Prevention

- Early Intervention

- After Hours Crisis Services

- c. Opportunities for improving coordination and delivery of funding and services at all levels of government to ensure appropriate and comprehensive care is provided.

- e. The extent to which unmet need in supported accommodation, employment, family and social support services, is a barrier to better mental health outcomes

- f. The special needs of groups such as children and adolescents

- g. The role and adequacy of training and support for primary carers in the treatment, recovery and support of people with a mental illness;

- h. The role of primary health care in promotion, prevention, early detection and chronic care management;

Senate Committee on Mental Health, Term of Reference: **I**.

I can name two very sound reasons for iatrogenesis occurring. Many “professionals” are so tied up in paperwork and the technicalities of their professions, overworked with a phenomenal amount of patients and clients to see each day and having to spread themselves so thin that compassion and real empathy have no forum to enter into the process, making patients and/or consumers of the necessary services feeling like they have about as much personal value as cattle through a weekend cattle and farmers stock market.

Empathy can be learned if people are willing to take a good look into them selves. It takes an intimate connection with self to be able to step into the mind of another and work out what is happening for them. It is a time consuming process and the professionals don't have or can't or won't take that time. Many don't because it makes them confront too many emotions of their own and that makes them uncomfortable and question themselves, which many don't seem to want to do.

I have had the experience of professionals turning on me, becoming aggressive and negating and invalidating me because things weren't working out or functioning according to their books. Books cannot teach compassion, understanding and empathy, it is internal and one must first be able to fully put them selves in front of a mirror to gain insight into others. Confronting self should be a part of every professional medical and psychological training or burnout and negation and invalidation of consumers will be common and is. There also needs to be a lot more on the ground than there is. When you are having a complete meltdown a three-month waiting list to get outpatient care is not acceptable. Inpatient care is not an option for many. Consumers have other outside responsibilities they cant get help with, like raising kids, paying bills, furthering their education etc. On the downslide of a mental

breakdown you need immediate access to care and it isn't available because of waiting lists that are so long that you have to reach complete dysfunction to even be seen. This is a serious staffing and funding shortage problem and needs to be fixed but those choosing these careers also need to be trained adequately, not just with the technicalities of what they are dealing with but also the inner empathy required to do the work they are choosing to do.

Recovery focused care through consumer involvement; the consumer has to be involved, in every stage, every step and every discussion that is had about them, they need to have all their questions answered adequately and in terms and language they can understand. Consumer knowledge is the key to healing and recovery. I have experienced first hand a whole team of professionals throw their hands up in the air and admit they were clueless as to how to help me help myself achieve actual recovery. It was admitted in the end that I taught them far more than they felt they ever taught me. It was a team effort with me involved in that team to help me to help myself and I did with them standing beside me not standing over me and dictating to me. We won my war as equals and that took a hell of a lot of compassion, empathy, a willingness to understand and being open to learning and not believing they knew it all because they didn't and they admitted it. From that point there was real hope for my recovery.

Consumer operated services are good to a point but it can also create competition as to who is the worst, who has the most scars and whose experience was the worst and a justification and excuse creating reasons for staying unwell. It doesn't always happen this way but certainly can and I have seen that too. What is better is for the healed and recovered or responsibly self managed to run such services. I can fully understand

consumers not wanting to feel alone, wanting to know someone out there does truly understand what it is like to live with these disorders from the inside and in recovered past consumers they can also find hope and hope leads to recovery. Bouncing ideas off each other can be beneficial too. When someone sees what is working for another, and hears of its benefit from their mouths it offers a willingness to perhaps try it themselves. That is never a bad thing. Having professionals sit in and learn from these consumers what it is like for us is a great way to learn empathy and compassion, if they want too and can take the time to do so.

Point of Reference. J.

There is a program currently running in the USA that really does need to be explored by the Australian Criminal Justice System as a real hope for better outcomes. I will copy here what I have in regard to it for your consideration.

In teaching personal accountability, responsibility and disorder management this is a huge inroad, these guys are getting their lives back and are being given the opportunity to make the choice to do so. This is awesome and huge progress.

Mental Health Court takes first big step

PUNTA GORDA -- John Lutz could have been just another number adrift in the perpetual flux of the correctional system's revolving doors.

Instead, he is number one -- and has learned not all doors are closed to those who seek help.

Lutz, 48, a Port Charlotte house painter, became the first graduate of Charlotte County Mental Health Court Friday.

Established earlier this year, mental health court offers misdemeanour offenders diagnosed with a mental illness an opportunity to get treatment while avoiding jail.

The diversion program is voluntary and only for those charged with non-violent crimes.

Lutz appeared to be an ideal candidate for the program after his arrest for DUI.

A year of drifting and drinking had left him homeless. He'd been diagnosed with depression, but was not being treated.

"I needed medications which I couldn't afford," Lutz said. "I was self-medicating by drinking."

After a jail interview with a nurse, he was referred to Charlotte County Mental Health's Tam Sicard, who enrolled him in the program.

Rather than be placed on probation, Lutz signed a contract that required him to attend weekly status hearings before County Judge Peter Bell and make daily contact with a therapist or case manager.

Through the program, Lutz had access to medications, vocational services and housing assistance.

"I don't think I would have made it under regular probation," he said. "I would have been sitting in jail."

And that's the point of the program, said CCMH Director Dr. Jerry Ross.

"Mentally ill people who commit crimes often don't know they've committed crimes because of their psychosis," he said. "They don't need to be in jail."

The program pays dividends for taxpayers financing a court system not keeping pace with its caseload, and an overburdened jail.

The [Charlotte County Sheriff's](#) Office estimates about 20 percent of inmates at the Charlotte County Jail have some form of mental illness.

During the first nine months of 2005, the Sheriff's Office says, 344 inmates were diagnosed with a mental problem; 769 were issued medications; and 124 were identified as "suicide risks."

Treating the mentally ill in jail is not only expensive, but does little to break the cycle that places these offenders in custody.

Alarmed with the costs of treating mentally ill inmates in an overcrowded jail, a committee of mental health professionals, court officials, county representatives and law-enforcement agencies created the mental health court as an alternative.

Commissioners provided the fledging program \$50,000 in seed money. The state kicked in a matching grant to make it more viable.

There are now 14 participants in the program, but Dr. Ross wants it to grow to 30 or 40 enrollees.

The program pays for itself, he said.

If Lutz hadn't been treated for depression, Dr. Ross said, he would have languished in jail, been released into probation, and probably re-offended -- and his depression would have been untreated.

Instead, Lutz is "out of the court system, out of jail, and a productive member of the community," he said.

The program is "not easy to get through," Dr. Ross said. "People are accountable."

"You can't screw around because Judge Bell is going to hear about it," Lutz agreed.

Participants must pass random but regular drug tests.

Friday, as Lutz was leaving the courthouse a free man, another program participant was jailed because his drug test came up "dirty."

Nevertheless, Dr. Ross said, he's pleased with the program. "It's far exceeded what I thought it would be," he said.

An unexpected development was the establishment of the "Open Door" group by program participants for mutual support.

"They did that themselves -- came together for support," Dr. Ross said.

Lutz said he'd lean on that support because much rests on his shoulders. As the first graduate, he must prove the program works.

"That's the whole idea," he said.

In Bell's third-floor courtroom Friday, Lutz shook hands with court officials -- including prosecutors -- and was applauded by those who hope to follow in his footsteps.

"This is the day you make that first step no one else has made," Bell said. "Anything you do in the program now is voluntary."

"I'll help out. I'll volunteer," Lutz said. "I'll re-up for a month -- just kidding."

You can e-mail John Haughey at jhaughey@sun-herald.com.

By JOHN HAUGHEY

Staff Writer

Perhaps a mental health court in Australia is needed, where they are made to be accountable and responsible for their disorders first and foremost. It sure wouldn't hurt to try this and the results may be what we, as a society need.

Point of Reference; K.

Detention and Seclusion of consumers whom are a serious danger to themselves or others is essential. It means they have lost control and the faculty to think clearly and realistically, that they are irrational and beyond healthy reasoning; beyond a point where they feel, or it is obvious, that they can be held responsible for themselves and their own actions. Someone has to take over during these times and put these people in a safe and secure environment until management of their disorder or illness is again

under control to the point that the consumer can again be accountable and responsible for it.

Those whom put themselves in willingly usually don't want to leave because they feel safe where as in the outside world they don't. You can treat and manage the illness but unless things change outside the facility relapse will occur. Perspectives can change but unless these consumers learn better ways of managing their lives that led to these altered perspectives, unsupported outside the facility to make necessary changes to themselves and their lives, nothing changes. There has to be back up out patient care to deal with what is the cause of the disorder, management is the band-aid solution, healing and recovery the desired outcome. For there to be lasting change perspectives from the interior life and changes to management of the exterior life has to occur and learning how to do that, supported, essential. Too many are put back out onto the streets with no clue what to do next or how to create change, they lack the information and resources to manage there lives more functionally than when they went in. We need to again empower these people over their own lives and that takes encouragement, support, understanding, compassion, patience, education and care. The facilities do not cater to long-term care and people are being pushed out doors way before they are emotionally stable enough to do so. Yes their medications may seem to be working, most usually haven't had long enough to actually show the lasting impact of these medications but because some improvement has shown in the short term out they go back into the world. They have not had any alteration in how to emotionally and physically deal with the outside world that was generally the cause of putting them inside in the first place.

Care standards within facilities is very mechanical, patient no 54679, medication, blood pressure, pulse (maybe). Don't make waves for the other patients, sit in your room and cry alone because the floor staff are just too busy and/or lack compassion having done and seen this a million times before. The psychologists are accessible for maybe a hour if you are lucky, and that might be every few days if they have time psychiatrists care is minimal and usually we are only charts to be perused over and nurses given medication instructions. The only way to actually be noticed is to go off your head. I have said all along that human contact is imperative to recovery and what I have found is that it is minimal. Consumers may not be making any sense at all, their thoughts jumbled, their words confusing and if that is what a person on the outside sees, imagine what it is like living that from the inside. Just having someone sit with you, even in silence is powerful to recovery. Group work within facilities is great but it can also promote competition and unless facilitated very carefully can turn into a negative experience for many. In both of these cases it helps to have a fully recovered and healed attendee who can see what is happening without it even being spoken. The inner knowledge, wisdom and experience a huge and valuable commodity that is right now completely disregarded to the detriment of all concerned.

In the unwilling, those involuntarily placed into care facilities you immediately have a brick wall. Most don't even recognise they need help, cannot see it, let alone admit it. But what if faced with someone who was in their position and now isn't, someone who could talk to them and get through to them from the inside out. No one can get through to these people without the inner knowledge and understanding of seeing things from the inside, empathy. We can get into the hearts and minds of these people without living it for them being sympathy. A true empathic understanding means you can see the world through their eyes and hearts and understanding of a disordered

mind, there is not better understanding of a disordered mind than one that has been there and come out of it. You want people to listen and be open to listening then it has to come from experience and inner wisdom. We are not going to listen and be open to hearing dictators that have no idea what it is like. As consumers and professionals it has to be and be felt to be an equal partnership in the best interests of the consumer. That kind of relationship takes time, empathy and compassion and the services now provided lack a lot of these qualities. Trust has to be involved and building trust, that also takes time and human contact and understanding. You need someone who can get on the inside of these people fast and the only people who can achieve that immediate common ground are people whom know inner wisdom and knowledge. Without this you not only wind up with relapse but effectively nothing to found lasting change. These consumers seek the door out and nothing else.

Point of Reference; L

I know I could come up with some great advertising campaigns not only aimed at educating the public but also offer hope to those suffering from mental illness and destigmatising the problem that it is. Flyers, leaflets, T.V and other forms of multi media. It truly doesn't take a rocket scientist to work this stuff out to have the biggest impact in a short message. There was a great advertising campaign not long ago with people saying that they had mental illness and/or disorder but they didn't follow through with what these people are doing now in their lives and it didn't explain what they could accomplish if the disorder was managed. Mental illness/disorder is something that people have, it is not who they are and it doesn't have to be a problem or viewed as something "out there", volatile and dangerous to the general community if the current education programs are correctly facilitated and modified.

The provision of educating consumers and their families as to support services available could start at the very first point of impact for many which is the GP office. At some time, every single one of these consumers and/or their families or carers will be in a doctor's surgery. Having a yearly updated, community support data base, which the Red Cross has currently done for the Gold Coast area, and putting it into short booklet form to be handed out to mental health consumers upon first contact would be hugely beneficial. You will find that most mental health consumers will be seeking help and understanding but they don't know where to start, this can put them in touch immediately with appropriate care and needed attention.

Point of Reference: M

At the moment people are being funded by how many consumers they push through the system, or their particular part of it. Numbers of people is comparative to amount of funding. The system does not accommodate for long-term consumers and yet healing and recovery is a long-term process. Saying, "ok, we have given them their medication and made sure they take it, next please" isn't helping these people. It is mechanising humanity and we are not machines and will not respond to being treated like one. Yet if an organization takes the time that it takes to actually help individuals get their lives back on track their funding is cut because the numbers are not being pushed through. How does that work for anyone long term? You are only getting more people being a part of an ever increasing system rather than achieving and doing what it takes for recovery so that people can be free of that system.

The holistic approach as mentioned in my opening paragraphs is the only approach that will work between all areas of government. Families, Community, Health, Housing, Business, taxation, education and employment all need to be a part of the

process of the recovery of society as a whole. If it is done, and necessary changes made then the mental health crisis now occurring within our county will decrease dramatically. People will begin to have a greater self value, will feel validated by society individually and that will generate a greater, more self confident and functioning community, and country, that has compassion, gratitude, and the ability to nurture the following generations to achieve the same.

Point of Reference; P.

Online psychology is a reasonably new and not terribly successful method of reaching out to consumers. To use this method of technology can be helpful but anyone who believes they can “cure” someone from an online approach without any physical human contact and personal identification is living in fairy land.

A line has to be drawn as to what can and cannot, should and should not be attempted over the internet. There is work that can be done such as parts of the self exploration, guidance, support and encouragement, the sharing of opinions, self education and the sharing of information between peers but that is where its usefulness ends.

While people can hide behind a computer screen and keyboard there is still an invisibility and anonymity which allows consumers to also hide from and conceal their actual lives and circumstances and their personal accountability and responsibility over their illness and themselves that only face to face contact can have an impact upon and see through. People can and do lie through their teeth over the internet, manipulate and assert control issues and exhibit attention getting behaviour that they have absolutely no will to change because the attention is fulfilling a need in them. Many Internet consumers keep themselves sick because they have found a resource that does fill a hole in them selves and to get better to them would mean they would loose it and be left lonely in the real world again. It is seriously not going to work as a sole resource and should never be encouraged as one. It can be beneficial if it is a

part of a team approach with professional personal human contact but that actual human contact is an essential ingredient to the healing and recovery process.

We are not machines and nor can we be cured through them. That is like saying that a person can find cure through a book and reading its pages. Without support and validation from real people it just becomes words. A lack of actual change occurs when there is no personal accountability to follow through. Over the Internet you cannot visually see progress or the lack of it but are taking the word of the consumer. Consumers are in need of attention to fill an invalidation hole within them selves. They can get validation over the Internet but it does not help them cope and live within the real world and the society that is the ultimate goal of being a functioning member of. The only thing that actually confirms and supports change and the will to act upon new information and progression is intimate human contact, it creates personal accountability for stagnation or actual forward momentum in healing and recovery and you cant get that from a computer and nor should anyone be seeking it from it.

In all the work that I do online we work with and along side of professional helpers in the real world. Consumers are completely encouraged to seek human contact and back up and what we have found is that when this occurs it cements the reality and truth of what we do online. Without this, many would not have achieved what they have and gone on to live far better and more functional lives. A great deal of my work, insights given and shared gets taken by the consumers to their professionals for discussion and they use that then to offer real help to the consumers in the real world. A great many working professionals spanning the globe validate my insight and wisdom.

There are a lot of great helpers and professionals out there, there are also perhaps just as many, just as lost as their consumers and they can do far more damage than good. I do believe that society can turn itself around where things are going seriously wrong but it will take the government to listen and do whatever it can to facilitate this change. I wish you well in your endeavour to do just this.

Kindest Regards

As Always

Bonnie Trevanion.