
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 26 January 2022 7:01 AM
To: Mental Health Select Committee; South Brisbane Electorate Office
Subject: Submission on mental health committee

Categories: Submission

Hi there,

I'd like to make a submission for the mental health committee that I heard about from Amy McMahon mp.

Mental health in Queensland is really challenging now. I'm going to tell you the things that have worsened my mental conditions (PTSD, anxiety, depression, self harming, disordered eating):

* Free DV counselling services had a 3 month wait list to see someone, so I had to pay for counselling myself, which cost \$120 out of pocket, that's the gap AFTER Medicare paid some through a mental health care plan. I had intended to do sessions every 2 weeks but could only afford once per month. Why is it so expensive, and why doesn't Medicare cover more of the cost?

* Couldn't afford to keep paying for health insurance, so I had to stop seeing my physio and chiropractor, which has worsened my chronic pain from spinal scoliosis and childbirth pelvic injuries. I've saved up to be able to start seeing those health professionals again but can afford to do it only a few times this year, instead of doing it every 3 weeks as recommended.

* Couldn't get any emergency funds from Centrelink in order to move out of my DV relationship, so I had to stay until I could afford for me and my 2-yo (3-yo now) to move out and pay bond on a rental of our own. I couldn't believe that Centrelink wasn't able to help me in that emergency situation, isn't that what they're for?

* Legal aid was really confusing trying to access that for the legal side of separating from my DV abuser. I ended up having to pay out of pocket for legal advice, mediation costs, then more legal advice, then court fees to file a financial separation. I actually could not find a lawyer I could afford in Brisbane, so I had to hire one from the gold coast and do everything over the phone. It's really hard having such hard conversations over the phone and then having no one there in person to talk with, just cry to yourself at how hard everything is. Really, legal advice in a DV situation should be free, otherwise how does anyone ever get out???

* At the rental that I moved to, there are people across the road living in a DV situation, and I've had to call the cops multiple times in the past 6 months because I'm genuinely afraid for the woman and her child's life. The police attended a couple of times, but otherwise seemed to ignore the situation. It's really stressful, and seems like the police just do not take DV seriously.

* My daycare centre has had multiple cases of covid but because I work full-time in order to afford to live as a single mum with my kid, I have to send her to daycare most days. I honestly thought about reducing my work hours, but then I will not be able to afford groceries and rent, I would have to choose. Why isn't childcare free? Does the government not care about working mothers, especially single mums like me?

* You can't find a RAT test for love or money anywhere in Brisbane unless you show up to the hospital with symptoms, like I did this month. And even then, the hospital just handed me a RAT test and sent me home to use the test, without any examination or treatment advice. That's crazy! How are we supposed to be okay mentally in this kind of situation?

* My DV ex signed me up for a car loan under duress, but since I have been unable to prove that I did not want the debt, I have to pay for it. Selling the car has been difficult, especially because public transport in Brisbane is not frequent enough (or safe enough during covid) for me to sell this car without a back-up transport option. This isn't something I think the government can fix, but debt is certainly a huge factor in mental health.

* Because I had to stop my health insurance, I couldn't afford to see a dentist and now have a gum problem that I have to save up to deal with. Why is dental not in Medicare???

* My rental landlord has been amazing these past few months, replacing several faulty appliances, but I have plenty of friends who have not been so lucky. They can't even get faulty wiring replaced when it's a health and safety risk. Renter's rights are not being taken seriously and it's so dangerous in this housing market, because I can't afford a home deposit yet and I can't save much money because rent is so expensive.

* My friends who've been on job seeker say it's a crazy small amount. My friends who applied for jobkeeper but couldn't get it because they were casual workers - that also seems crazy. Does the government expect people to magically find a new job in a market where employers have been laying people off and closing doors?

In short, the government needs to address systemic issues in order to tackle mental health. There is no one band aid that would fix this crisis, but there's so much that could be done easily and for a small percentage of budget.

Please let me know that you care about people's mental health like mine.

Thank you,

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