
From: Elizabeth O'Keefe [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 1 February 2022 11:57 PM
To: Mental Health Select Committee
Subject: Inquiry into the Opportunities to Improve Mental Health Outcomes for Queenslanders

Dear Sirs,

This submission is made by Elizabeth O'Keefe of [REDACTED] Email [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Telephone [REDACTED]
(Please keep my contact information private.)

I would like to share some insights I have into the mental health outcomes for Queenslanders.

MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS FROM BEING ADOPTED IN QUEENSLAND

1. Firstly, I would like to focus on how being adopted affects the mental health of Queenslanders. As an adoptee, I have found that most counsellors, doctors and other professionals (excepting Psychiatrists), are ignorant of the mental health impacts of adoption on adoptees. This lack of knowledge severely impacts adopted people when accessing health services. The fact that adoption loss has significant impact on adopted people's lives and also the lack of knowledge about our health history is significant.
2. Also I would like to point out that being a Late Discovery Adoptee, meaning I didn't find out I was adopted until later in life, the lack of knowledge about this fact and the timing, i.e. not finding out until after I had my first two children had a very significant impact on my mental health. The shock and suddenness of this knowledge combined with the fact that I was trying to achieve a reunion while being severely impacted by PTSD from finding out I was adopted was significant and was a factor in myself feeling compelled to suicide at that time. The shock was enough by itself but the fact that a major health factor (that I had hereditary sensorineural deafness and was slowly going deaf) did have a significant impact on me.
3. Also the lack of knowledge about forced adoptions from the 1950s to the 1980s in Queensland and other States also impacts an adopted person's mental health because they don't realise that their mother may not have had any choice about giving up their child for adoption due to coercion or society's attitude towards unmarried mothers at that time, means that an adopted person can feel entirely unwanted or given away when in fact the truth may be quite different.
4. Please contact Jo Sparrow, Manager, Jigsaw Queensland, New Farm, for more information on the impacts of adoption.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN QUEENSLAND

5. Also I would like to add that I have visited my natural brother in a mental health hospital in Queensland and have found that males and females are not segregated in their living quarters which can be quite harrowing for women who are suffering the mental health effects of being raped or some other sex crime and they are exposed to sharing accommodation with male patients with an increased risk of additional assault in these facilities. A friend of mine has confirmed that this has happened to her.
6. Also some people are at a crisis point when asking for help and are turned away or deferred until a later date by which time they may have suicided from hopelessness. There needs to be crisis counselling similar to the PA Mental Health Unit home visits and/or a safe place for these people to stay and be looked after temporarily until they recover.

I hope you consider the points that I have made in my submission.

Thank you,
Elizabeth O'Keefe