

Transcript

So I'm Aidan, I'm 19 years old and I'm studying a Cert III of Community Services. Early when I became a teenager I found out that I have inherited some hereditary mental health problems, like illnesses which have obviously affected my life going on from there. You know jobs, family, friends, that sort of thing.

One of the biggest things I found when trying to get help was when something was happening with me and I really needed some urgent help then my parents were calling around every day like hundreds of places, so difficult. Either no one had spaces or it was too expensive or it just wasn't available to my age group.

So they eventually took me into one of the hospitals, not because they wanted to do, because they had nowhere else and then they left me obviously with a psychologist and psychiatrist there. And unfortunately as soon as I turned 18, 'we can't help you anymore', it's the crucial diagnosis stage was interrupted and I've had to do it all over again.

I went for months and months without speaking to someone and then finally a year and a half to two years later I was taking myself to the hospital. I was taking hours in emergency just to see someone you know balling my eyes out like clearly in distress and then when I did speak to them they were just focusing on the fact that I had nowhere to stay. I could not get any help, the help that I needed.

So I was distressed rocking myself to sleep, like it was awful, once again ringing around, ringing around, ringing around and every shelter she called said we don't want someone with a mental health in this. That's a little bit about what I experienced and one of the worst things I've experienced is just running with people who aren't trained and not being able to get help because there's just not enough funding and that's basically the biggest problems I've had and so.

They were so nice, their support workers seem to be experienced, they seemed to understand what was happening. They'd come and speak to me and when they asked me about my situation they weren't rude or condescending, they weren't treating me like I was a criminal like they did at the hospital, they were just really understanding like what's happening and wow I really understand that or I've been through that too, like when they counsel you, like I've been through that, and it seemed like they had the life experience, they had the training, they knew what they were doing and that made me feel a lot safer, just as well the facilities were a lot safer.

The only thing that really bugged me about the shelter though was that they were only open

nine-to-five, instead of 24 hours. The best thing about there was the facilities, I had my own room, I had the bathroom, the kitchen's all really nice, we did activities together and the support workers that were there they were really lovely and really understanding and I felt very like, I can tell them what's going on and they're not going to judge me. I had a kid sleeping outside my window of the shelter, like under my bedroom window and just sleeping there overnight cause he had nowhere else to go. They don't have a very good system where they go after the shelter.

Luckily for me I got into the accommodation program because I pushed for it myself, I advocated for myself, I said I'm not going on the street after the shelter, no I'm going to go study. Luckily I have that personal motivation and dedication to get my life on track but a lot of kids don't, a lot of kids are really lost, they're not being put into rehab facilities, they're just being chucked out and saying we don't want you, we only want healthy homeless people.

The minute that I was brought in they were straight away helping me. So I did my application, luckily I got accepted in, I got a housemate, they immediately started teaching me about tenancy rights and agreements and real estate and how bonds work, they started teaching me how to clean and shower and give me all these life skills, inviting me to cooking workshops, I made best friends, I'm studying, I'm going to counselling, I'm budgeting, I've got food in my fridge. I feel independent, I feel like an adult, I feel like, just next week I'll actually be moving out of the program onto my own in a share house with four people because I've learnt how to share, I've learnt how to be in other people's spaces. Like it's really amazing and I'm like gobsmacked that this place exists. Like all the support workers here have experienced what I have experienced so they know, they understand, we'll take you here and there, we'll figure this out for you, with you, and they case manage you all the way, I haven't experienced that anywhere else.

And they even have drug and alcohol counselling here as well, so they cover all the bases in here so I think that we need more of something like this place. People who are caring for you on a day to day basis, I feel like they really need to have the life experience so that they know not to judge you and I think you need more people like that who are passionate in the job. You know and speaking about like diversity and culture, a lot of work places have training online, we need the same thing for mental health. That's why they have the mental health first aid certificate, that people are doing now, like I'm about to do mine, you know it's affecting our workforce, it's affecting our society, you see kids on the street drugged up and drunk you know. This wouldn't happen if a mental health and drug and alcohol addiction resources were more funded and there were more of them, so what's what I think.