

For eight years I have been caring for a beautiful young adult, who stumbled in the world of mental health in his teens. My son entered hospitals and rehabs more times than one should and could ever imagine.

His life was hanging by a thread, declining before me. This ongoing trauma affected him, all his loved ones on so many levels, and our environment.

Back then he was void of hope, lacking direct support. Peer workers were on high demand and poor supply. I would find solace in being proactive in the system, in collecting precious information and in accepting precious support for myself. This shifted our outcome.

Despite all my efforts to claim help from the NDIA, my son's case was slow and temporarily rejected. Later I understood it was due to not knowing the right terminology and approach, and the perceived lack of permanency. He was young and there was hope for a full recovery in the NDIA's eyes. However, my son flirted with death a few times, each treatment inefficient or leaving him worse off over the years.

No light at the end of the tunnel in his eyes.

My life as his main carer was impacted of course. I was house bound most of the time, enduring the consistently unpredictable ordeals with him. Keeping him alive, while waiting to get help was a full-time job in itself. Devoid of sleep over years, I had to find the inner and outer strength to face: the crisis, the repairs, the cleaning, researching, driving him to appointments after struggling to haul him in the car on time, soldiering on... the eyes always focused on HOPE, never losing sight of this life line.

Out of the blue, a year after the initial NDIS application, I got "THE CALL" that saved my son's (our) life! "They say things happen when you least expect it", THIS was DEFINITELY unexpected.

The NDIA lady contacted me to review my son's case and to explain why he was rejected (permanency). This is when I poured out all the facts passionately. Within 20 min of pleading my son's case, this very fair person admitted that all my points were matching the doctor's letters and the information she had. She understood the situation had gone too far in order to deprive this young man of very much needed support.

Just then, she stated it:

- "I am ticking all the boxes myself; he will have a plan.

- Me: (numb, fearing I heard the wrong message)

- Did you hear me? Your son will get the help he needs from now.

Get off the phone and tell him the good news!."

I burst into sobs of relief, thanking and blessing this lady over and over in a mumble.

This moment is imprinted in my mind. I wish she could read this.

From there, my son found a 24h supported accommodation. The change of location, the restrictive practices, the safety at night, the structured environment, the new faces and the hope for his newly found goals, were all tremendous factors in his imminent survival and recovery. Within 3 months the improvement was amazing. As a result we all felt we'd been given a new taste and passion for life... and for giving back. Which I am.

FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR THE NDIS, TO THE NDIA, AND TO THIS LADY :)

*Keep well and keep safe, all the very best,
Kayla*