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Endorsed Counselling Psychologist
Postal : P. O. Box 1088, Mornington 3931

12 September 2012

Re:
DOB:

To whom it may concern,

██████████ has requested me to write a letter about the effects on her of her experiences in Children's Homes in which she lived from 4 years of age till 19 years. I believe these effects are profound, lifelong and have disrupted her ability to lead a normal life surrounded by family and enjoying a satisfying work life.

I have worked with ██████████ since 17 February 2009, counselling her with sessions available through "Open Place" a support service for Victoria's Forgotten Australians. I have seen her for counselling on 72 occasions to date. Counselling is on-going.

From what ██████████ has told me, every aspect of her life has been severely impacted by her childhood in the Homes. She did not manage to get a good education in the Homes, no-one stopped her if she 'wagged' school. She has struggled to maintain employment throughout her life. She was unable to develop good relationships with her employers as she had not learnt a good work ethic in the homes.

██████████ described emotional and physical abuse, she said on several occasions she was hit across the face by staff and shamed if she cried for any reason. ██████████ still struggles to express emotion in front of people in any situation, even counselling, fearful she will be shamed again. Physical punishment was a frequent if not daily occurrence and caused her confusion as she could not see what she had done to deserve this, she still frequently blames herself when others treat her badly. There were occasions of sexual abuse as well. She reported being digitally raped at 11 years old by a bigger girl. When she reported this to one of officers, she was 'belted' for lying she said. She was expected to polish the floors on her hands and knees, on a weekly basis. ██████████ put rags on her knees to stop them hurting. This extremely inhumane treatment was normal life in her childhood.

Her life is still disrupted by these experiences. We work consistently for ██████████ to develop trust in humans, realise she is not to blame for every negative experience with her friends and develop a hopeful orientation to life. I have observed ██████████ having flashbacks to her traumatic childhood which disrupt some of the friendships she has currently, especially if the friends are domineering as staff often were. These flashbacks are frequent.

In her family, [REDACTED] has intermittent volatile relationships with her siblings which distress her. She has no contact with her son or his family, she said she was unable to mother him adequately, her experiences in homes did not prepare her for this role. He is apparently angry with her for her inability to mother him in the past. She currently lives alone, often feeling isolated and depressed.

[REDACTED] told me a medical Institute has apologised for giving children in these homes experimental medication, which she remembered receiving. She now has to come to terms with the de-humanising effects of being treated in this way. Her health is poor, she has medical conditions such as cysts which may have been caused by these medications. She also suffers from poor health such as extensive arthritis which develop as a result of too much stress in childhood.

In my professional opinion, [REDACTED] suffers from two life long mental health conditions which stem from her time in Children's Homes. She has complex PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) comorbid with Major Depressive Disorder which has become chronic. She suffers severely from the effects of these disorders.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to speak with me about this,

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Barbara Dickson
HIC Provider No 2609612B

Letter of Qualification

My name is BARBARA CLAIRE DICKSON, my professional address in September 2012 is 3/11 Diane St Mornington, Victoria 3931. I am a registered endorsed counselling psychologist. My qualifications are a Bachelor of Arts with an accredited psychology major and a Bachelor of Education (Counselling) from La Trobe University. The latter is a specialist postgraduate degree in Counselling Psychology.

I have practised psychology for twenty-three years in both private practice and public agencies on the Mornington Peninsula. I was the director of Arbee Pty. Ltd. a general psychology practice from 1992 until 2010. I practised as an associate of David Ball in David Ball & associates for 13 years. David Ball & associates specialised in treating violent and sexual offenders. I worked as the family counsellor for the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council for eight years until 1997. I worked as the Family violence prevention worker for the Peninsula Community Health Service in 2006 and 2007. Currently I am working and directing my own general psychology practice.

I practice psychology in Victoria pursuant to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009. Psychology Board of Australia No: Psy 0001119400 endorsed by this board in the area of counselling psychology. I am a full Member of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) and the Counselling College of the APS.