

A refuge from family violence and homelessness

A 17-year-old boy shares his experience of life at Wodonga Youth Refuge and why he gave up drugs

I came to the Ref after being homeless for seven months because of family violence.

When I was homeless I became heavily dependent on drugs, such as LSD, weed, MDMA etc.

I heard about the Wodonga Youth Refuge while couch surfing from a mate. I went to Junction Support Services and they accepted me straight away.

When I first went to the Ref I was on edge and didn't trust anyone, clients or carers, because of my past.

The first couple of weeks I found quite rough and found it hard to accept the behaviours of the some of the young people.

After the first month I became more comfortable and started trusting the carers and able to relate my problems and fears to them. I also found it easier to relate with some of the clients. After a change of clients the dynamics in the house changed and I felt more comfortable.

Then I felt like I was able to get my shit together. By this time I felt I had a close bond with most of the carers. I found it easier and more beneficial to talk to the carers than at headspace as I knew and trusted the carers.

I feel that I've matured and that, with the help of my carers, I've mostly overcome the trauma I've experienced in the past.

Moving out of the Ref was hard. I felt really sad to go because I felt a closeness to carers and some clients. I still love to visit the Ref.

When I was at the Ref, I really enjoyed going to the movies and for drives. I'd like to see more funding for activities for young people at the Ref.

I liked that there was an endless supply of food and never had to worry about where my next meal was coming from.

I feel lucky to have been at this Ref and I think it is better than others I have heard about.

It was nice to hang out with staff who understand and don't judge. The staff here respect the young people's choices and treat us as humans.

My message to other young people in need is, no matter what, don't give up. Understand that the drugs aren't worth it.

Drugs stop you living the life you want.

Talk to people about your dramas, talk to your carers, they won't judge you. Understand your workers care.

Life might be shit right now but it will get better. Never give up.

IT'S YOU WHO MAKES YOU YOU!!!

STAT and VOL

Background:

"Statutory" clients are young people who have been removed from their families and placed in care.

"Voluntary" clients are young people who have sought out or who have been referred to the Wodonga Youth Refuge.

Young people who are statutory, or "stat" clients, and voluntary, or "vollie" clients, reside together at the Wodonga Youth Refuge.

Our young person says:

"The first couple of weeks I found quite rough and found it hard to accept the behaviours of the Stat clients' escalations."

"The difference between Stat clients and Vol clients upset me as the Stats showed little respect to the workers and didn't care about wrecking the house.

"Each time they played up or yelled reminded me of my past.

"I didn't like them being disrespectful."

"I found the mix of clients was hard to deal with."

Alone

Rap lyrics by Jastar

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I'm starting to regret the things I've done,
It's like I'm trapped in the darkness and can't see the sun,
Everything and everyone is locked out, All the people close to me I've blocked out,
Cause I'm used to everyone hurting me, I starting to feel as if everyone's out for me
Everyone's got some doubt in me, I'm sick of people doubting me,
It's put me in a bad mind state, I feel as if no matter where I go I continuously find hate,
I don't wanna fit no more, people have taken everything from me, I don't wanna give no more,
I feel like I'm facing a whole army on my own, feeling so alone, All I seem to do is make mistakes,
That's why I'm full of craze, that's why I don't trust,
Honestly I tried to, but in the end all I got was lied to,
That's why I turned myself on people around around me,
They say confidence is a virtue, but when you expect everyone to hurt you,
It's hard to attain, life's a big ball of pain, trying to maintain in this life....



Chorus

Hello hello anybody out
there cause I don't hear a
sound.

Ello Ello I don't really
know where the love is,
I miss you now.

Everyday I feel empty and lonely and I hate it, but this is the way I made it,
I turned my back on the world and it turned its back on me,
I thought everyone was gonna turn around and gonna pack on me,
Because Mum left me behind, Mum left me as a kid,
Told me she was coming back, but she never did,
Made me feel like all people want to do is hurt you, getting used to people desert you,
It makes you wanna give up on life,
It feels like people have failed on you, when so many have bailed on you,
You don't know who to trust so you stick to yourself,
But the loneliness is hard to deal with,
If this is how life is meant to be? Because if it is i don't think life was meant for me.
So I keep up with it, try to do all the day to day shit.
I feel like a ghost, where is everybody when you need them the most?
Huh? Where the fuck are you?

Chorus

Hello hello is there anybody out there cause I don't hear a sound.
Ello Ello I don't really know where the love is, I miss you now.