

Patience and kindness go a long way...

Aug 18, 2021

Source: somehappydayfilm.com

Some nights at the Crisis Centre are more chaotic than others. On Friday when I started my shift the atmosphere became especially tense. Michael, a client I knew, arrived. He was angry but couldn't explain why.



He banged his hand on the window. I asked him to leave and come back when he felt calmer. Normally he would leave without question, but he looked lost. He eventually left but it was not long before I had to call the police. He was climbing the brick fencing, balancing precariously on the top, cursing people passing by and running on and off the road.

Police arrived and took Michael away.

On Sunday, Michael presented again. I told him I was worried about his behaviour from two nights earlier. He explained that sometimes things just get so overwhelming, "I've had a hard, bad life" he said. "Sometimes I just lose it."

I explained that because we called the Police, I had to write an incident report. I told him that I wrote, "Michael is a good guy. This behaviour is out of character. Michael is always respectful and kind and engages well with everyone at the service."

He stood in silence for a few minutes with his head down. He then looked up and told me that no one had ever written anything nice about him. He apologised for causing me concern and thanked me for the kind words.



Back To The Streets

Mar 18, 2022

Source: somehappydayfilm.com

John was provided with accommodation during Covid19. He was also linked in with the Homeless To Home program, a life changing program where clients are provided with housing with rent capped at 30% of their income. Imagine going from the street or a tiny hotel room to getting your own place with cooking facilities, bathroom, bedroom and still being able to afford to pay for food, clothing and phone.



John has no drug or alcohol issues. He has been homeless for over 8 years and is only in his mid thirties. His hygiene is impeccable but he is not in receipt of Centrelink. He is eligible but finds the process of engaging with Centrelink overwhelming. Sometimes he can do it and during Covid19 he was lucky to be registered, so for almost a year, with no reporting requirements he was able to save money and was housed in a hotel. When the reporting requirements by Centrelink were reinstated John failed to meet his obligations and was suspended. John tells me that he was off benefits for 3 years once because it was too hard.

He tells me that in order to take up the offer of a home he has to register for Centrelink again. "It's all too much." he tells me. "It's easier if I just go back on the street."

I let him know that he will have a case manager, someone who can assist him to get back on benefits but he shakes his head, "I've got anxiety, but Centrelink want me to do all these things and I can't. It sends me crazy. It causes me so much stress, the street feels so much easier."

John just wishes that Centrelink and others would understand that everyone has a different story and that they should be assisted according to their story, their needs.



COOL
.ORG

Drinking Your Sorrows Away

Jan 29, 2022

Source: somehappydayfilm.com

Carrie wears a dressing gown and slippers and has been referred by a hospital. She has been cleared by mental health after attempting to harm herself last night. Carrie can't remember why she did what she did, but because of her actions the motel she has been staying in won't have her back. Carrie was intoxicated last night. She is intoxicated most nights but tells me proudly that she is no longer drinking every day. I commend her. Every step in trying to address your addictions is huge. However, I turn my back and she manages to get a large glass of red wine from another client sitting opposite her.



Jacob also exited from a hospital after surgery on his back. He arrives with a 4 litre cask of red wine. I try to assess him before he becomes too intoxicated. I remove the cask from him and tell him he can have it when he leaves. He gets up and struggles out on his crutches. He sends a woman in to ask for his cask back. I walk out and give it to him. I can't give it to his friend as I can't be assured that his friend will give it back to him.

I find alternative accommodation for Carrie and hand back her large glass of red wine when she is outside the centre.

Jacob is too intoxicated to support. He is yelling because he can't get up and it is cold and awful sitting on the footpath. I call an ambulance and heat a meal. He is returned to hospital too intoxicated to accommodate and too unwell to sleep rough.

A vicious cycle.



Lockdown Luxury

Nov 20, 2021

Source: somehappydayfilm.com

During Lockdown 6 I meet a softly spoken, gentle man who's been sent into the Crisis Centre by police. He was told that he had to be accommodated because of the Lockdown.



From Iran, he has no income and spends his nights sleeping in railway stations around the city. He tells me that he changes stations every few nights so that he doesn't get moved on. He has a phone with no credit, he uses the free wi fi available at the stations. He eats at the Salvos in Bourke Street and showers at another support service in the city.

He has been in Australia since 2013 but is not eligible for any benefits. His refugee status was denied but Australia have no arrangements for return with Iran so he stays here stateless.

I organise him a room for 7 nights. He is so grateful he almost cries. Lockdown for him offers luxury. A bed, a shower, heating (it's going to be cold tonight), a TV, safety, a time for quiet.

I can't refer him to a housing service because with no income there are no options. He tells me he has exhausted financial support from the Red Cross and the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, although praises their capacity to keep their doors open and offer emotional support and food.

His only hope is to secure work once the Lockdown lifts. But to secure work when you don't have a home is so difficult.

