

Consumer Story ...

Hi! My name is Malcolm. I'm the middle child out of five, so that gives me the title (the real) "Malcolm in the Middle". I thought I'd just get that out the way.

This is my fourth time in Alice Springs. I arrived about four months ago from Tasmania, where I grew up from the age of seven til the age of nineteen on a poultry farm in a rural town called, wait for it, Bagdad! (To get to Bagdad you have to cross the river Jordan. It's true!)

I've travelled and lived in all states of Australia over the past 30 years. I'm not sure how long I'll be here in Alice, but while I'm here I'll be involving myself with MHACA and supporting its programs as a consumer, and teaching cartoon drawing to children in schools and at the Alice Springs Hospital. I also sell my artwork as a therapy tool to help children through to adults express their thoughts and feelings.

I discovered drawing five years ago out of a need to express myself other than through words because words are just not enough in some situations.

Being fifty years young I have discovered a number of ways over the years to express my feelings. It was very different when at the age of 11 or 12 year I had my first attempt at suicide, and have had a number of attempts since then. Most were not serious and in all cases I told someone after it happened. I suffered with extreme forms of low self-esteem - I was very sensitive and my heart was easily hurt.

I am still sensitive, but I've learned to recognise that I control how I react to the world and to those around me who may or may not, unwittingly, try to hurt my feelings.

Although the past is the past and I've gotten rid of a mountain of baggage, the pain of arthritis and general



back pain brings back some of the past baggage, and also causes me to be depressed. And so I have to be on the outlook from time to time.

I'm hoping through involvement with MHACA that I can meet others in similar situations to help gain support for myself. It is only through talking and sharing that we can lessen the pain we all suffer with.

Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,

Malcolm