



### **Long term effects of institutional care experiences**

You carry with a survival mechanism, that you are forced to self learn while in institutional care. It is one of keeping quiet and not drawing attention to you. The consequences for me were having a less ability to adapt to learning mechanisms of school and social skills. As a result you become inhibited and you develop a loner mentality. There is often a compound effect in how you live your life. As adults you automatically adopt a defence mechanism of social withdrawal to survive difficult situations.

I have survived and have two children and a spouse. As an ex care leaver it places greater pressure on how you bring up your children. You are often conscious of where you are at the same ages of your children. The memories - issues do not go away. It is like there is a box and the box is open again. And you have to deal with the contents again.

I have to some degree attempted to deal with the past. In 1997 *Melrose* Children's boys' home at Pendle Hill, Sydney NSW was on the ABC as part of reporting of institutional care. As much as I tried to deal with past methodically, success was only on a limited basis. I have always considered that I never had a childhood. Thousands of children unfortunately would have been similar. I cannot stress enough that children deserve a childhood without adopting childhood in a survival mode.

Yours Sincerely  
Terry Langham