

Dear Sir/Madam

25/5/04

I am a member of C.L.A.N and it has been suggested that I submit my story to your inquiry.

Altho I was ^{not} institutionalised for all of my younger years I do believe it had a great impact upon my thinking and behavior in later years, therefore I submit some of my story to your inquiry. Things in retrospect I now believe in part contributed to the breakdown of present family relationships.

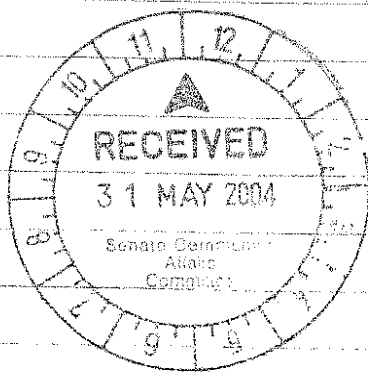
I passively accepted my lot for many years but now realise the importance of open communication and safety for children in care.

My two grandchildren have been fostered from time to time as my daughter has her own personal problems associated with her upbringing, partly because of my lack of knowledge of how healthy families operated.

Please feel free to use all or any of my information in your inquiry into the treatment and care of children in institutions or foster care.

Sincerely yours.

Mrs H. Smith



Dear heenie C.L.A.N

25.5.2004

How very apt is the word 'fruit' in describing the heritage left by those who have suffered trauma in one way or another. And how beautiful the fruit of those who have been fortunate enough to have been planted and nurtured in safe loving environments, secure in the love of both parents, grandparents, extended family and lots of friends.

When I look at the fruit of my younger days, environment, and upbringing I see how far I have come in my journey and how very fortunate I am today to be secure in the love and encouragement of those who looked a little deeper and took the time to see my potential and to patiently wait out many years of frustration, valley and hills, highs and lows.

Unfortunately it may be too late for three of my children who suffered in my journey towards wholeness. They are no longer in relationship with me I believe because as a child in an orphanage and subsequent broken home I had no examples of how a healthy family should operate. No teaching on nurturing, honest communication or resolving of conflicts.

Regimentation, strict discipline (often unfair) no personal attention to needs, no value or worth, no loving words of encouragement, these were part of everyday life until the child believed and the adult behaved as if these were truths.

My brother and sister not much older than I suffered also, today at 65 my brother holds himself

also even from his family, his value and worth are tied up in his very successful performance. ⁽²⁾

My sister became a single mother at age 17 and suffered a severe mental breakdown resulting in 19 years in and out of a hundred psychiatric hospital in Melbourne, her child in and out of foster care, Winton girls home, crime, prostitution, sexual abuse and drugs. Eventually committing suicide as her mother did at the age of 38 whilst in hospital in a secure ward.

My son and eldest daughter are successful in business but want nothing to do with me or my present husband who I have been married to for 27 years very happily. My second daughter I gave away for adoption and my third daughter grew up as the scapegoat for my insecurities and frustration, she also is a single mother as I was and has suffered from rejection resulting in a lifestyle of drugs and street living, fortunately she is now relatively stable but does not want me to see my grandchildren or her.

My mother brought us out from England about 1948 and we were placed in the Melbourne Orphanage at Brighton as mother could not cope having to work and raise us as a single mother, she told us our father had died during the war and I didn't find out until I was 40 that he had not, and mother had left him back in England. I cannot remember a thing prior to 6 or 7 years of age and I put it down to

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the trauma of leaving what may well have been security (I don't know) and love, or then again just shock at the new environment and experiences.

My mother eventually remarried and we lived at Strathmore in Melbourne, the marriage was a disaster and we found ourselves in an orphanage in Brisbane for a short time when Mum left my stepfather, they reconciled but eventually separated again when I was 14 years old.

My mother's way of dealing with conflict was not to talk, sometimes for weeks and then explode with swearing, yelling and cruel words.

This coupled with the way we were treated in the orphanage (I only remember cruelty and isolation in Brisbane) Also I remember having wet knickers pulled over my head when I couldn't hold it in after being yelled at by a black robed nun, also being denied the comfort of having my brother and sister with me.

Since then I have written a book entitled "Out of darkness into light" This enabled me to confront a lot of the issues in my life. and has helped a lot of people identify with me and not to feel so alone with what they have been through, it also offers hope and healing along the road I am walking.

The book is available for \$21. postage paid, to anywhere in Australia by sending a cheque or money order to PO Box 359, Echuca, 3564.

Truly yours Hazel Smith