17. Name withheld

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

I am a woman of 66years of age living in Canberra. I have a diagnosis of schizophrenia, and generally manage my condition well with the help of my GP.

The events I describe in this submission happened last year.

After a brief time as a patient in The Older Persons Mental Health Unit, my daughter took me away from Canberra to her home in Queensland.

She took my mobile phone away from me, and told me to stay in the house, not answer the door, and to not call anyone, and especially, not to talk to the neighbours.

They've isolated me, they've ripped me off by isolating me.

People tried to call me on my mobile, but they couldn't reach me because the phone was with them.

Question 4

Question 5

Question 6

Question 7

Question 8

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Question 10

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Question 17

Question 18

Question 19

Question 20

Question 21

Question 22

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Question 25

Question 26

My bank accounts were used five or six times each day, and both of my credit cards went from very low usage to being maxed out in less than a month. This happened because my daughter had told me that she had instructions from the doctor that I was to provide her with my wallet, including bank cards, and PIN. My daughter and her husband had gone on a wild shopping spree of restaurants, clothes, and overseas holidays including flights and cruises. The bank account was drained by the use of both EFT transfers to their own accounts, and cash withdrawals from ATMs and EFTPOS merchants.

When the money ran out, they continued their spree by taking out loans in my name from online payday lenders for a few thousand dollars each time.

Because all of these transactions were made online, and using ATMs and EFT terminals, at no point did the bank or the payday lenders have a chance to see that it was not me making the withdrawals.

The credit companies are after me, yet I am not even computer literate. If I wanted a loan I would've gone to the bank.

I feel that modern fraud controls used by banks should have picked up these changes in the usage of my bank accounts and credit cards. Account usage should have been blocked until the bank had an opportunity to have a chat with me. I would suggest that banks be required to physically meet older people where changes in banking patterns occur, and rather than obliging a frail or infirm person to come into the bank, a banking officer (such as those who are usually involved in mobile lending) could visit the older person to verify the banking activity is legitimate.

Question 27

Question 28

Question 29

Question 30

Question 31

Question 32

Question 33

Question 34

Question 35

Please see my answer to Q45

Question 36

Question 37

Question 38

When I was discharged from the Older Persons Mental Health Unit, my consent was not sought nor given to go home into the care of my daughter. It was not explained that I was being discharged home. I understand now that the hospital was simply discharging me home, and not into the care of my daughter. I have found out many months later that the discharge was actually "Discharged home with GP follow up"

Because I didn't understand the nature of my discharge from hospital it meant that my daughter was able to take advantage of me in my vulnerable state. She told me that I had to follow her instructions because if I had to go back to hospital the doctor would "Throw away the key".

I would like to see a change in procedures to ensure that all hospital patients are provided with full information, and are given the opportunity to consent or deny consent to which family member they go home with. This would have provided me with a great deal of protection from being manipulated into an abusive situation.

Question 39

Question 40

Question 41

Question 42

Question 43

Question 44

Question 45

I was taken to a mobile phone shop at Forest Lake where my son in law was buying a mobile phone so my daughter and son in law could call me from their overseas holiday while I was locked in their house. I recall that the shop assistant asked "Would you like to buy any credit for this phone" and my son in law's answer was "we don't want her making any calls" and the shop assistant confirmed that the phone could receive calls without adding any additional credit. I was surprised that the shop assistant was so happy to assist them without making any further queries.

 In this case the answer to the question  "who should be required to report suspected elder abuse" is "everybody, including the assistant at the mobile phone shop".

 On another occasion I was taken to see the doctor, but throughout each appointment I was accompanied by both my daughter and her husband. I felt that telling the doctor of my abuse and imprisonment would have fallen flat as the doctor was my daughter's GP, and my daughter and her husband could have immediately claimed I was 'loony' with schizophrenia and dementia.

 Requiring doctors to ask patients directly if they want to be accompanied would have made a difference, and I would have been able to tell the doctor that I preferred to see her alone, and I could have told her about what was happening. A requirement for doctors to ask patients if they would like to be accompanied (and consent to the person accompanying them) would be a sensible change.

 Question 46

I had escaped while my daughter and son were asleep and I went to the local shopping mall, where I approached a policewoman for help saying "I'd like to talk to the police" and she asked "are you suffering from dementia?" I told her I was not but had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, and at that point I became too scared to tell her due to the threats from my son in law of being 'committed' if I spoke to police. I believed that the policewoman had already made up her mind about me, and that any attempt to tell her of my predicament would not be believed. The police provided me with a lift to my daughter's home, but did not make any further enquiries by asking me what was happening, nor did they question my daughter or her husband.

I may have had greater confidence in the policewoman had she not started with a pejorative question which assumed I had dementia. I believe better training of police to assume competence could have made a difference in my case.

Question 47

Question 48

Question 49

Question 50

Other comments?

Life sux, next time 'round I won't trust anybody.

File