

mailbox

Mental-health help not always there

Dear Editor:

Regarding your story NV Woman Laments Mental Health Support (North Shore News, July 8):

First of all, let me say to Halina Haboosheh how sorry I am for the loss of her brother and all she must have gone through trying to deal with it. Coming from a family who has had to deal with mental-health issues, I can say from first-hand experience how pathetic the support is for people in North Vancouver. There are not enough psychiatrists to deal with all the problems, and even the ones who are there are suddenly taking sabbatical leaves thus leaving people who depend and trust them in a horrible situation.

Years of trying to get help dealing with our daughter's health problems including cerebral palsy, vision problems, epilepsy and scoliosis, the strain and extreme anxiety of dealing with it all on a single-income family (I have many major health problems myself) was taking a huge toll on us. We were given six sessions with one counsellor, then that was it. We went to the Ministry of Families and started counselling for huge issues that had happened at \$50 an hour (a reduced rate). We were still talking about each of our own family's history after many visits. I finally phoned the ministry in complete despair and asked about a program a friend of mine uses for families in a severe crisis situation. I was told that the counsellor we were seeing had a different way of counselling than others and that all we needed was a new counsellor. I explained how desperate the situation was to no avail.

My husband left me two weeks before Christmas last year.

It is too late for what used to be my family, but someone needs to step up to the plate and start helping people who cannot help themselves. How is someone like Haboosheh's brother and all others out there supposed to go in and get help by themselves when they are dealing with severe mental health problems that should be talked about openly and not hidden away like it is something to be ashamed about? These are diseases just like cancer, MS, Alzheimer's and so on. It is not someone's fault they have it, just as it is not someone's fault dealing with other acceptable diseases.

Whoever is supposed to be dealing with these problems is obviously not doing their job which we are probably paying extreme amounts of money for.

I hope they can go to bed each night and have a great sleep knowing they are the cause of human suffering and deaths.

Susan Jane Watson
North Vancouver