



Making Your Point: John's Stories

John Kane is a 47 year-old married father of three who lives in Marysville, CA. He received public mental health services from Sutter-Yuba Mental Health Services (SYMHS) 15 years ago when he experienced severe depression and PTSD after returning from an overseas military deployment. John is currently doing very well and is now a small business owner operating an auto repair shop in downtown Yuba City.

SITUATION 1

John is frustrated that there are no drop-in centers or clinics in more rural areas of the county like Rio Oso, where John's 43 year-old brother, Ron, lives with his elderly parents.

Ron was diagnosed with a severe mental illness twenty years ago and has been hospitalized several times. He was discharged from his most recent hospitalization six months ago. Ron doesn't always have access to a pharmacy to get his medication and frequently misses doctor appointments because he doesn't have a license and his parents' own health problems prevent them from driving too often. John has driven his brother around a few times to handle these errands, but he cannot leave work to help his brother on a regular basis. As a result, Ron has little support to manage his condition and regain control of his life, stalling his recovery indefinitely.

SITUATION 2

John thinks the system isn't doing enough to help the homeless people living in Yuba City, many of whom are military veterans. Over the past year, several homeless individuals have begun sleeping behind his mechanic shop. While John wants to help them, he is worried their presence will drive away business. Last week, a customer complained to John that someone approached her and asked for money when she dropped off her car early one morning before the shop opened. While John feels these individuals are harmless and just down on their luck, one man staying behind his shop often talks loudly when no one else is around, which some of John's employees find disturbing.

John wishes SYMHS provided better outreach to the homeless population and did more to connect them with local resources so they don't have to sleep behind his shop. Although some of the owners of neighboring businesses think the anti-camping ordinance up for vote at the

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next city council meeting will solve the problem, John isn't comfortable with this approach. He recently heard about mobile support teams working in other counties that go out into the community to help people living on the streets and has done some research on permanent housing programs for people living with mental health challenges.

SITUATION 3

Last year, John became the legal guardian of his 16 year-old niece, Yvonne. Since age eight, Yvonne has been in and out of foster care and is now on juvenile probation for fighting and shoplifting. John knows Yvonne is a good kid, but her troubled childhood is negatively impacting her. John is concerned that Yvonne is not getting the help she needs to move beyond the abuse, neglect, and traumatic events she experienced over the years. John and his family have tried to provide Yvonne with a supportive and stable home, which has kept Yvonne from getting into trouble, but doesn't seem to be helping her get better. Lately, Yvonne has been having extreme mood swings, isolating herself in her room, and skipping school about once a week.

Because mental health issues run in his family, John wants to be proactive in helping his niece. He reached out to SYMHS to make an appointment for Yvonne to receive an assessment. Unfortunately, the earliest appointment he could get for Yvonne is six weeks out.

John has no idea what to do for Yvonne until then. He's looked online for youth programs and services, but he can't find anything in his area for Yvonne. His relationships with his spouse and children are strained because they want Yvonne to get better or get out. John doesn't want to abandon his niece. If Yvonne could just connect with someone who understands her, he knows her chances to get better will improve. He is also beginning to worry about whether he and his family can manage the situation and make it through as a team.

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