

My son is 28 now. He started smoking cannabis around 15/16. He turned to skunk when my husband was diagnosed with terminal cancer when son was 19. He went into a psychiatric unit when he was 21 years. My son has a label of paranoid schizophrenia, takes an anti-psychotic medication and is only just beginning to get back into the stream of life. By that, I mean not afraid to go out by himself and beginning to understand what has happened to him. Years of long stays in a mental health unit, with nothing to do apart from trying various medications and he's just beginning to emerge as a person with a purpose. Is there help and rehabilitation? No! Care in the Community is care by community. Even blood tests to see the hidden effects of the meds. have to be sought. CBT? You have to be on the ball for this. His memory and concentration isn't as good as it used to be. Friends have evaporated. Appointments with the psychiatrist every 6 months appear to be just to make sure he's not relapsing into a psychotic state again. The mental health system is not a holistic care system. After the 4th or 5th time that my house was trashed by my son (the last when he was on leave from hospital) the psychiatrist did not give me any sympathy. Can you imagine care for a broken back or cancer not being holistic? Yes, I think cannabis and skunk were the triggers. Other families with loved ones in local psychiatric unit think the same. I am so pleased (and very proud ) that son is able equate cannabis with his horrific experiences now. He says he wakes every morning and is thankful that he is not smoking anymore.