

Reaction Paper

Students Name

Institution

Argumentative Essay

Girl, interrupted written by Susana Kaysen, brings many argumentative topics. Kaysen is a young woman in the 1960s who was put in a psychiatric hospital after she had tried to commit suicide “I wasn't a danger to society. Was I a danger to myself? The fifty aspirin - but I've explained them” (Kaysen, 1994, p.39). She was suffering from the borderline personality disorder that is a mental illness commonly found in women compared to men. Initially, Kaysen is told she will be in the hospital for a few weeks. However, she ends up staying for 18 months. The American government boasts of having civil liberties to its citizens, however, when it comes to particular classes of people, the government ignores them. Currently, people who are judged to be mentally ill by a psychiatric are said to pose an imminent danger not only to others but also to themselves. For this reason, they are being committed involuntarily and locked in a psychiatric ward. I will be looking into the deprivation of civil rights particularly of persons with mental illness. Involuntary confinement is not a wholly effective treatment because many of the psychiatric wards do not give patients effective stabilization as well as treatment (Allen & Smith, 2014). I will state counter arguments related to an involuntary commitment based on justice, civil liberties, and science-based medicine.

Arguments that stand with involuntary confinement believe that safety concerns have to be looked into while administering the correct treatment. There are those who argue that patients suffering from serious mental illnesses have no “freedom”. They argue that families of those with the illness should think of their safety first, and, therefore, involuntary commitment should be implemented and even the commitment time lengthened.

Susana Kaysen narrates her perception of being confined in the mental hospital by giving the horror stories she and her fellow patients faced "They were all seventeen and miserable, just like me" (Kaysen, 1994, p. 155). In my opinion, being confined in a mental institution does not necessarily mean the patient will get effective treatment. According to a report given by Suicide Prevention Resource Center in the year 2011, there was no evidence proving that confinement in a psychiatric hospital prevented patients from committing suicide in future. In fact, patients were more likely to commit suicide soon after leaving the mental hospital. In my opinion, the hospital confinement prevents the risk of suicide attempts only during the period of confinement.

Another argument against involuntary confinement is that it undermines the relationship between patients and their doctors. Since they are in a prison-like environment that makes them feel helpless, it heightens the patient's distrust of the treatment and lowers medication compliance. For instance, in the case of Susanna, there was a time during her hospital stay where she went through a depersonalization period "Then I started to cry. I didn't want to, but I couldn't help it." (Kaysen, 1994, p. 109). At this time, she went ahead to bite open her hands flesh right after she thinks she has no bones. In another incident where she is taken to the dentist, Susanna starts to panic and become obsessive after fearing that she would not wake up from the anesthesia (Kaysen, 1994).

Lastly, in my opinion, involuntary confinement is discriminatory. People who are addicted to alcohol, people who have cancer but keep smoking are never involuntarily confined by their doctors. Despite the fact that we do not condone what these people are doing to damage further their health, we do not deprive them of their privacy, integrity, and liberty. So why are

people in mental illness subjected to such harsh treatment? People suffering from mental illness also want to have a sense of freedom and respect (Swartz & Monahan, 2014).

There are other ways to help people with mental illnesses without necessarily confining them involuntarily. New hospital diversion programs have come about in the past years, and they use voluntary admission. These are conducted in homelike environments, whereby peer counseling is administered, and no form of force is used (Swartz & Monahan, 2014). Studies have shown that community-based cognitive therapy is more effective especially with suicide survivors. For a nation priding itself to be the best in terms of science, administration of civil rights and innovation, it is clear that mental patients have been neglected by the government in all these three. People with mental illnesses should be treated with love and care and especially by their families and loved ones. Being confined in the mental hospitals detached from their family only makes families ignore what is wrong. Some of these patients suffer a lot especially with drugs being administered to them repeatedly.

Reflection Introduction

Having been in this class, my writing has tremendously changed for the better. I am now able to express my thoughts in a very clear manner. My writing has greatly improved since I am now able to use correct grammar and proofread my work after I am through. In the past, I used to have many spelling mistakes, as I never bothered to check my work after completing it. I am now also capable of conducting research for my papers and I have realized that extensive research is crucial for a factual and accurate paper. Written word communication helps in almost all professions and developing writing skills is imperative for one to be successful in any professional career. Additionally, my other courses have greatly benefited from my improved

writing changes. This is because I am more able to articulate my thoughts and put them into writing. Thus, my grades have also gone up.

For this paper, my intention was to come up with a topic and argue it from both sides of point of view. I have based my argument on Susanna Kaysen's mental illness known as borderline personality disorder. Through Kaysen's story, my intention was to argue the plight of patients who have mental disorders. Many times, we look at the harm they will inflict on others as well as themselves. We never look at what they go through while they are in these hospitals especially if they have been confined involuntarily.

For an argumentative essay, there has to be a topic to investigate, and then gather information and have a clear position regarding the topic. An argumentative essay can be likened to a debate with a classmate where both parties have their different opinions. Argumentative essays have to be logically complete not to leave any doubt in regards to the intention. For this essay, I argue against the involuntary confinement of patients with mental illnesses especially after reading Susanna's memoirs in her book "Girl, Interrupted" written in 1994.

References

Allen, M., & Smith, V. F. (2014). Opening Pandora's Box: The practical and legal dangers of involuntary outpatient commitment.

Kaysen, Susanna. *Girl, Interrupted*. New York: Vintage, 1994. Print.

Swartz, M. S., & Monahan, J. (2014). Special section on involuntary outpatient commitment: introduction.