

HB576

Louis-Dominique Dubeau, Prince George County

POSITION: FAVORABLE

I had a girlfriend who suffered from schizophrenia and was domiciled in Maryland. She's been cycling in and out of hospitals. Since our relationship lasted only seven months, I cannot give as many details as I'd wish.

She told me she thought she'd have to be hospitalized again, either voluntarily or involuntarily. I urged her to do it voluntarily. We tried to find solutions that would help her avoid hospitalizations, but we did not find anything. Assisted Outpatient Treatment would have been helpful.

She's no longer in my life. At the start of our relationship, she was in school, but she eventually had to drop her classes. She lived in a very small studio apartment in a basement. She had no steady job. She walked dogs to make ends meet.

This girl had a substance abuse problem, mainly alcohol, but she did mention other drugs too. At times, she told me she had to sleep in her car after a night at the local bar because she couldn't drive back home. She was not compliant with her medicine regimen, either. I worried about her well-being 24/7, about her mental health, about her living conditions, about her substance abuse.

I still get news from her after our breakup. If her situation was already precarious before our breakup, it became dire after it. She had found a steady job, but she then lost it. She lost her domicile. I believe she is now living back with her abusive mother.

Despite her noncompliance, this girl knew she was schizophrenic. She admitted it right at the start of our relationship. However, anosognosia (lack of insight) is a symptom of the disease, and like all other symptoms, it waxes and wanes. She admitted that when she was in a full-blown psychotic episode, she'd deny having any condition.

I believe the lack of access to Assisted Outpatient Treatment harmed our relationship. Her own family was not supportive. She had a golden opportunity in me. Her illness eventually took over. She ditched me, and now she's in a worse situation than she was in when she was with me.

Please give a favorable report to HB576.