2019 Submission - Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

Organisation Name
N/A

Name
Ms Suzanne Andrews

What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian communitys understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?
"Being wary of pathologising emotions that EVERYONE experiences - deep sadness, despair, anxiety, etc.   The acknowledgement that for some people who suffer from psychological distress(condition dependent) receiving a diagnosis and being able to label their condition is empowering, for others the diagnosis as an illness from a health professional or society at large can be disempowering, and other less clinical approaches and terminology would be more healing for them. Indeed, many can heal from psychological distress such as major depression, which some health professionals would like to claim otherwise. "

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent mental illness and to support people to get early treatment and support?
"What is working: For those who can afford it and who live in the right areas there are an increasing number of different therapies on offer, and in addition to this an increasing access thanks to social media to nurturing communities, discussion groups that can provide support and increased awareness (and in the latter cases more accessible for those that can't afford therapy). What is not working: Teachers' role in nurturing students. We need teachin studies focusing to a greater extent on nurturing skills, emotional atunement with the students. So schools can be nurturing communities for vulnerable students, which let's face it, includes all students. Lack of education for parents, who will often share similar challenges to those of their children"

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?
N/A

What makes it hard for people to experience good mental health and what can be done to improve this? This may include how people find, access and experience mental health treatment and support and how services link with each other.
"GP's need to be better educated, more open minded re. mental illness and effective treatments. As there is little to no stigma in going to see a GP it is vital that the GP can support their patients in this way in making the more stigmatized but very necessary choice of seeking additional help. This might even include research on the part of the GP into local community organizations that could be of support to their patients in addition to therapy. "

What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?
N/A

What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?

N/A

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce, including peer support workers?
Funding funding funding!!! Acknowledging the value in alternative treatments as well as the currently subsidized therapies and funding them accordingly.

What are the opportunities in the Victorian community for people living with mental illness to improve their social and economic participation, and what needs to be done to realise these opportunities?
N/A

Thinking about what Victorias mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?
"An upheaval of our social welfare system so that health and education are prioritised above all. Mental health days off Looking at other countries to assess what does and doesn't work More workers at headspace   A headspace for over 25s More funding more funding more funding!!!! A ten session subsidy under the mental health care plan is outrageous and must be increased. Funding must also be provided for the exciting, wisdom filled approaches of Somatic experiencing, TRE, and embodied mindfulness based treatments, to name but a few. CBT only works for some, and I would contest that for any deeper, longer standing, more trauma based issues pure talk therapy has a very limited effect! CBT is an intoxicatingly appealing option for a society that likes being time efficient and receiving tangible outcomes, but most healing cannot be condensed into a couple of months and cannot be guaged in a brief survey pre and post treatment.   Funding therapy which involves the therapists also owning their vulnerabilities whilst still holding a strong container for their clients' experiences. The power imbalance between therapist and client can prevent a lot of healing from taking place.   More community based programs, discussion groups for sufferers and non sufferers to raise awareness of the issues and to create communities to help alleviate the loneliness and distress of mental illness "

What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victorias mental health system and support improvements to last?
"How far reaching has the publication of this submission form been? I stumbled across it by chance with just a few hours to spare. I'm convinced that there are thousands more in the community who would've liked to make a submission but will miss out. It is essential that community feedback is received beyond today's cutoff date, indeed, that the views of the community(particularly those who have suffered from mental illness) are continually guaged. "

Is there anything else you would like to share with the Royal Commission?
"Supporting mental and emotional well-being is one of the most vital areas for us personally and as a society to nurture. Whilst emotional health is becoming more of a focus in schooling in recent years, for most of us adults school was an experience that was lacking in emotional attunement on the part of the teachers and wasn't reflected in the school curriculum. Few teachers (and certainly no school subjects) inspired us in their active teaching/modeling of compassion, kindness, humility, emotional honesty, how to set and honour boundaries. And many of us couldn't turn to our families for this type of emotional education either. Much of the prevalence and/or stigma of mental illness stems from our education system. We need to take responsibility for this as a

society and act accordingly. "