

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

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What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian community's understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?

"Education and discussion in schools regarding mental illness, symptoms of mental illness and the availability of treatment options for both students and parents. Maybe a campaign along the lines that mental illness can happen to anyone...Mental illness does not discriminate. First aid courses in schools and communities"

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?

Education in schools. Mental first aid courses in schools which are also accessible to parents. More centres such as Orygen so that people in all areas have access to specialised care which has achieved good results. Some private psychiatrists are not specialised enough to be able to deal successfully with some cases resulting in loss of life and devastation to others

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

Talking about it. Maybe a campaign like the road toll one only a suicide toll. Not talking about it isn't going to prevent it. Each suicide is not just one life lost it is devastation to many lives connected to that person. Maybe highlighting the ripple effect. Parents need to be given information from mental health care providers about what is happening to their child and the treatment plan and medications. Information about the possible side effects of medications.

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.

"People need good practitioners who communicate with the patient and families providing information and support and provision and explanation of a treatment plan. Otherwise it is like having your hands tied and having to watch your child suffer and self destruct in front of you, when all you really want to do is help. "

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

"Lack of specialised centres such as Orygen, Some private practitioners are inadequate. The consequence of this inadequacy is loss of life."

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

"Parents need to be involved in the care plan for their children. They need to know what is happening to their child to be able to know the best way to support and assist them. They need to know what medications are prescribed and the possible side effects of these drugs. We were told

█████ had early psychosis and told to look it up on the internet as was █████ █████ took his own life ten days after commencing medication on Abilify which the psychiatrist prescribed for him. After his death we found out that he was also, earlier in his treatment , prescribed antidepressants which we were not told about. As a consequence the prescription was not dispensed."

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce, including peer support workers?

"More funding, more specialised training, more holidays. It is a stressful sector to work in which requires more time out to provide the best possible service and less burn out."

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?

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?

"psychologists in schools to assist early intervention, education in schools parent involvement in treatment and care plan and provision of information to parents More flexibility concerning confidentiality to parents caring for their child Mental health fist aid courses in schools/communities"

What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victorias mental health system and support improvements to last?

Public awareness and information

Is there anything else you would like to share with the Royal Commission?

N/A