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

Name

███████████

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

"Better advertising around services for mental health issues.More available information regarding mental illnesses. This could be achieved by tv based advertisements and positive news and media reports regarding mental health issues. Alongside more outreach to community services, organizations and schools with the goal of informing mental health issues and increasing awareness. Trauma-informed practice and care for our health services in which people with physical and mental health issues are treated equally and with compassion."

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?

Better access to therapy and councilling rather than case management as these are very different things. Better responses to trauma in childhood in order to prevent mental health issue developing further down the track.

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

"When I have approached professionals for help with suicidal thoughts they have turned me away challenging me to prove my suicidality resulting with me walking out into oncoming traffic. I have jumped off bridges, overdosed on medications and self-harmed as a result of not being validated. All after approaching services and being accused of attention seeking. On other occasions, I had been told by service providers to take my own life in order for the wrongs done to me to stay covered up."

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.

We need to see a greater practice of trauma-informed care. We need more talking therapies made available not just to be case managed. In order to heal first of all my past traumas need to be addressed in a safe environment and not have therapy delivered by a perpetrator of said trauma.

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

"We have low-income families being forced further away from services due to income and rental affordability as a result, leading to poor mental health outcomes. Alongside this people involved child protection services being placed back into unsafe situations, knowing for well the dangers. being placed with a known sexual perpetrator into my family. When the situation was confirmed I was told by services that they thought the person would not do it again."

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

them?

I care for a person with significant behavioral issues and mental illness and I feel that I do not get adequate support as a carer because he falls out of the scope of support that services can offer.

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

Better recognition of the roles peer support workers play and more training opportunities to equip workers for this important and much-needed work. Peer workers need to be recognized for the work they do and need to be not treated in a tokenistic manner.

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?

"There is a massive lack of opportunities and support for people living with mental health issues finding work. There is an attitude of ""its all in your head"" so you can work."

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?

People need to be asked what they want and not forced onto CTO's or such treatments as ECT.

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

Increase positive supports and peer supports so that when things change there are not left without supports.

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

"When I was 16 I was admitted to ███████████████████████████. There was a male nurse that would repeatedly rape me and make threats against my safety and liberty if I did not comply. All the staff were aware and facilitated the abuse making them as guilty as he was. ████████ ██████ made threats against me that if in did not take the medications, take part in research studies and attend appointments or meet practitioners interested in my DID (dissociative identity disorder) that I would be sent back to ██████████ to be raped (there was never a CTO in place)either. As well have the nurse that abused me, push for my BPD diagnoses so he could say that I was attention seeking if I ever came forward about my abuse. Staff ████████████ frequently asked that I do not talk of my abuse as this will upset other patients and had even been told to just take my own life. On 1 occasion on a planned outing, nurses encouraged me to jump in front of a tram. The nurse who raped me would often force me to take uncharted medication in order to render me compliant. As a reward for not telling anybody he would take me to see the animals in ████████████████████████ and buy ██████████