

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

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Name

[REDACTED]

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

Mental health issues should be a part of primary school education. Young children being taught how to identify with mental health issues and what may be signs to look for. How they are feeling etc.

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?

There are some good supports but having children engage with them early I believe is imperative. Understanding what they are feeling and having that support early on.

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

Social media is a massive contributor to suicide. I believe there is a shortage of wards for people who are of serious risk of suicide. Assessments being done in a hospital after a crisis situation can be misleading and we have seen patients classed as no risk leave and commit suicide. That assessment needs to be more thorough.

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.

From my experience with my daughter unless you are classed as a high risk you don't receive the proper treatment and support. After my daughter was admitted to psychiatric wards that's when there was some real support offered but not a great deal of support for family members. Also the turnover in workers is like a continuing revolving door. For a child or adolescent suffering mental health issues being introduced to new workers with different organisations every few weeks is very difficult for a child already feeling stressed and overwhelmed. They then become disengaged and not wanting to participate which leads to undiagnosed serious mental health issues.

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

"I think there needs to be mental health centres. Almost like a one stop shop, where assessment, counselling, psychiatrists are all done under the same umbrella. A safe environment for vulnerable people to go and receive instant help not be waiting for weeks or months or attempting suicide or self-harm to be prioritised. They may never come back."

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

I personally have not received any real support in my daughter's journey. This is a long and isolating road. A lot of families are walking. Better support from professional staff and maybe

implementing family support groups

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

Better families and more staff I have found there to be very little staff which would be impacting on their position

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?

I think early intervention and support is key Proper diagnosis will help prevent long term mental health issues

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?

There are currently not enough wards and beds for mental health patients I have unfortunately experienced two wards with my daughter and both times where for a crisis admission after serious attempts on her life [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] and the new [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] Family members finding it difficult due to distance to be able to spend time with their loved ones and support them properly I believe the assessment process needs to be overhauled and more facilities available

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

protocols that are implemented by hospitals A seperate area within hospitals for mental health patients

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

I don't have all the answers but with so many people committing suicide everyday there has to be change