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

SUB. 0002.0027.0076

Name
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What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian community's understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?
"I was tackled with a mattress in ███████████ I was held down naked and injected with neuroleptics into my buttocks. I was left naked in a cell with only a blanket and a cardboard box. I had to defecate into the cardboard box. My delusions were overtly made fun of to my face by the nursing staff.   Many times I was carried to a cell and held down and injected into my buttocks. This has cause me trauma although I have since not returned to hospital, I am determined to look after myself so I don't end up vulnerable and harassed again."

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?
Perhaps attention can lessen in the public about depression and anxiety and work can be done to destigmatize other more serious illnesses.

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?
We need more staff and better conditions. Patients cannot be rushed out the door before they are ready just to make fresh beds available.

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.
"I think stigma stops a lot of people with less publicised illnesses get the help they need, so that they don't enter the mental health system as an ICU emergency."

What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?
"Aboriginals and people with DID, psychosis and bipolar disorder need to be a focus. Not just the socially acceptable depression and anxiety."

What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?
There should be support groups in every electorate for careers of those with a mental illness.

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce, including peer support workers?
"Better pay, shorter shifts, more personnel, and better education of nurses so they do not make fun of the patients experiencing distress."

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 need to be more support groups! I know few people who struggle with mental illness and the only people I have been able to connect with are people met in hospital. Considering I have not needed hospitalisation in many years, I feel isolated."

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?

Destigmatizing schizophrenia. Educating the public on early warning signs of psychosis and normalising psychosis as a mental illness. Mental health hospitals and care centres and support groups that are on par with the same level of care that physical disorders and illnesses get.

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

Please invest and make it a priority. People are dying at the hands of delusional people who are gentle and kind when not in the throes of psychosis.

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

"I fear for my future as someone with schizophrenia in the current system. I fear for the youth of today, some of which will become severely mentally ill, and due to no support, will take their own lives. I am saddened that the greater public have no idea of the strength that people with serious mental illnesses must develop just to stay alive in the current climate."