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

SUB. 0002.0001.0057

Name
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What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian communitys understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?
Victoria needs more physical services and better access to them. The only way that I can access services is through my GP or the emergency department at our public hospital. I do not feel comfortable with calling 24/7 statewide lines as I don't know if I'll get a volunteer or a trained professional.

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?
GPs seem to be able to access professionals at the hospital during normal business hours very easily. My GP also has a good amount of knowledge about mental health and a good amount of psychologists to refer people to.I think that the reception staff at my GP could do with some training in dealing with mental health.

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?
"The hospital here seems very understaffed and under resourced in the mental health department. I had one instance where I reported to the GP as I didn't think I could get any better or anyone could do anything to fix my problems. I spoke to a mental health nurse at the hospital on the phone and she promised that someone would call me again that night to check on me. They did not call back and when I called them an hour after the specified time they advised that they were flat out and hadn't gotten to me on the list yet. I wasn't relying on that call - but if I was, it might have been a different outcome."

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 find ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ website really hard to navigate to get to resources to help me. My doctor agrees on that also.I understand the concept of doctors being the first point of call to protect an understaffed mental health industry from time wasting, but it is scary and exhausting to have to explain yourself to a doctor as well as a mental health professional."

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 local, ongoing support services and lack of hospital beds."

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?
N/A

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?
"More staff eg mental health nurses and a different way of accessing them, not just through doctors and emergency rooms."

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

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