

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

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Name

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

"Life throws us curveballs. Trauma and grief are normal parts of life yet there's still a stigma around grief and mental health. Suggestions to improve - Adequately fund services There should be no waiting lists. I was on a waiting list for domestic violence counseling for 3 months. I needed the support when I was going through the courts getting an AVO. Educate GPs on services Introduce return to work plans for those who experience trauma eg child loss, death of a family member Fund mental health services more. 10 sessions and you're put back together is disgraceful If it's readily available and treated the same as a physical injury then stigma will be reduced. "

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?

We need to make it easier and affordable. GPs need education. We need a database of support services and who they may be best suited to. Regional services need more funding. A friend's friend committed suicide after being told by a local hospital that he was better off with his family than in the hospital

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide? Organizations like Lifeline are great. But hospitals need more funding. See above example.

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.

Life sometimes throws bad stuff our way but we need adequate support services to help people get through this. It may be educating funeral directors on potential support services available to grieving families. It might be educating work places on better work life balance.

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

Insecure work Deaths of family members Stillbirth or miscarriage Poor work life balance Cost of living Life just throwing us curveballs. Some we can work on like work and encouraging workplaces to have more work life balance or just paying their staff properly. There's an inquiry into stillbirth but I believe this also falls under this inquiry. We need to better fund mental health. We need a database which lists and describes the services available. We need this available to anyone and everyone. Mental health first aid training could be introduced into year 12 curriculum

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

Thank them We need to acknowledge them. We have Rook days. What about a day that thanks

carers. Resources that specify where people can get help would be good. Also tips on looking after themselves.

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

Pay them properly. Create secure jobs. Provide scholarships to entice people to study in relevant fields or even move to regional areas.

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?

You need to remove the stigma first

Thinking about what Victoria's mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?

"Community mental health centres set up across the state with services offered such as group counseling, one on one and peer to peer. No limit on Medicare provided written report from gp justifies it. More funding to peer to peer support networks such as sands and lifeline. Stop funding awareness campaigns the services need it. Front line services like domestic violence counseling should have a waiting list of no longer than 2 weeks. More support in hospitals eg maternity wards after stillbirth. You need continuous support after this. Maybe a social worker to stay in touch for 6 months after stillbirth to ensure family is getting the correct support. A database of mental health services with specific descriptions eg grief counseling, domestic violence counseling, post natal depression "

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

Start getting people trained up and ready. Scholarships for students. Grants for people to work regionally

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

Thankyou for having this commission. I look forward to reading the findings.