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

SUB. 0002.0027.0110

**What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian communitys understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?**
"Actually listening to people with a mental illness and carers, to help find what people need and want. Also counting mental illness as a disability, it stops me, my sister and others from doing daily activities, as well as not having opportunities with education, jobs and a career. 1/4 people have a mental illness... 1/4!!! Yet we are treated as it's something to be ashamed of. People embrace and help people with physical disabilities, what about the people with mental illness? Just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it isn't happening. Also looking at mental illness at a young age. "

**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?**
"Having mental health clinics that are accessible for everyone, but more needs to be done with that. Making better support plans for people of different ages and needs.  "

**What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?**
Being genuine and being linked with support systems from all directions.

**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.**
"External factors like school, home, work, social media. But, also just internally beating yourself up with mental illness etc. Having support for families and carers is really important, because their mental health can be affected just from looking after someone else's mental health. Being able to find support and payments to provide support should not only be easier and accessible, but also long-term. Having more support networks and more public mental health facilities that provide long-term ongoing support. "

**What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?**
"Socio-economic status, harder to afford support, but also there's more stigma attached, making it harder for people to get help. This can also apply to aboriginal or torres strait islanders, people of colour and people of the LGBTIQ+ community, it's hard enough to find support, but being in any of these communities makes it harder. A lot also connects to domestic violence, sexual abuse etc, making it also more difficult.  "

**What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?**
"Generally having a support system, somewhere for them to go to, someone they can talk to. Having offers that could give carers a break, like a holiday, cleaner or something else similar. They

just need a community and environment so people can understand and connect. It is almost impossible to get help for carers, family members when they don't get a break."

**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?**
"People see having a mental illness a negative, while trying to get a job. People find it 'too hard' to have an employee with a mental illness. That's why there is such a high unemployment rate and an increasingly high homeless rate. Half the people on the streets right now have psychosis, depression and other mental illnesses, then the system is failing these people by not being able to help them, leading to more suicides. "

**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?**
"Having more accessible support for all ages and genders. Having more support for families and carers. More funding towards youth mental health and more ongoing long-term support, as there's not much time to go through all of the trouble in someone's life. Most case managers only last a few months, when a lot more could be done. "

**What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victorias mental health system and support improvements to last?**
MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!!MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!! MORE FUNDING FOR ALL PARTS OF THE METAL HEALTH SYSTEM!!!!!

**Is there anything else you would like to share with the Royal Commission?**
"I am 16. I have ASD, severe anxiety and depression. I have been bullied since the age of 5, leading towards being suicidal since the age of 8, having mental illness diagnosis at 9 and started taking anti-depressants since. At 11 my sister tried to kill herself for the first time, I was there, traumatized, I had to ring the ambulance and watch this happen everyday in my head I've had to be a carer for her since I was 11. 11 AND having mental health issues of my own. At 13 my Dad was diagnosed with cancer and died 3 days before my 14th birthday. My family have not had a break. I've had many terrible change overs and discharges at my mental health clinics, making it harder and harder to trust people. most of my life I've had no one. I've had to look after my whole family. My sister has been in and out of hospital for years and had to have ECT. I have found

everything impossible. I barely have any support and try my best everyday. I have tried to kill myself twice this year and have been self-harming for two and a half years. I have had to go through life while being bullied, having mental illness, trauma, being a carer, grief and so much pain. I am 16!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"