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

Organisation Name
N/A

Name
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What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian communitys understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?
"I was treated very badly in an emergency department by an ED nurse because of my mental health issues. I was blamed for my condition and told by her it was all my fault that i ended up in the Emergency.I was taken off a long haul flight with severe vomiting and uncontrolled shaking and the paramedics in Melbourne insisted i go to hospital. I was not aggressive and understood i had to wait my time to be treated. The nurse never once asked how i was, offered me any fluids. I had no call bell within reach and practically had to crawl on my hands and knees to go to the toilet, the nurse just looked at me and pointed to the toilet far down the corridor, ho help or assistance. I made my way back and the nurse told me it was all my own fault and that i could stop the shaking and go home. I was made to feel inhuman and felt like i was wasting her time. I was a nurse myself for 30 years and was appalled at her attitude to me just because i had mental health issues. This should not happen, i am a mature, intelligent wife and mother. i had better treatment from the airline and airport staff. Please educate our health care workers, people with Mental health problems are all not violent and aggressive, we are human beings. I would be very happy to appear at your Commission and relay my story."

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?
I have found there is some improvements and the public is more accepting of Mental Health issues thanks to Government campaigns but please open more public beds.

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?
"Educate our young people early, talk about it, have Mental Health studies in primary schools, get to the root of the problem before it gets out of hand. Educate people on signs to look out for. Improve access to jobs, a home, get people off recreational drugs, improve social contact and activities."

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 have private Health Insurance and can get into a good hospital, but a bed is not always available. Improve Crisis Assessment Teams, employ more staff. Look at other ways to improve mental health instead of just writing prescriptions for serious medication. Educate all Health providers especially those in Emergency departments."

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 services seems to be the main reason. People have to travel miles for help and support.

Improve services for cultural diverse communities. Improve life for vulnerable and isolated people and communities.

What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?
"Family members need support also, like paid emergency leave to care for their family members.Perhaps employers could have a BBQ day and have all the workers and families together and discuss what happens at home. Have more psychologists and psychiatrists work on the weekends. Mine does not have an after hours service. Improve the Medicare rebate for these services, the hourly rate they charge is crazy."

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce, including peer support workers?
"Have a more stress free environment, less hours, improvements to shift work and time needed for them to spend time with their families. Show they are appreciated. Ensure they do not experience assault at work."

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 need a job, a home, to feel safe, accepted. They need friends, social contact, more social activities. Access to good food and medicine, all basic rights for anyone. Do not JUDGE, educate people more to accept Mental Health issues and an understanding of what someone goes through one if they suffer from it."

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?
"We need more psychiatric beds urgently and in those facilities we need improvements. Access to social workers, psychologists, career guidance. Support emotionally and financially."

What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victorias mental health system and support improvements to last?
"Please televise the Royal Commission. Let the public really know what is going on and what can and needs to be done. I will speak up, i will shout from the highest mountain. I was treated badly in March, i want the country to know that we are sensitive, warm and loving people we just want to get on with our lives but we need extra help."

Is there anything else you would like to share with the Royal Commission?
"Please listen to our voices, please do something now. Please get more funding, we need you NOW."