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

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What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian communitys understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?
"Mental health no doubt has become less stigmatized, however this is mostly centered around depression and anxiety. Two serious mental health no doubt, however there are few other mental health problems discussed in a wider community. "

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?
"It needs to be common practice to go to a councellor. It needs to be much more readily available without so many hoops to jump through. At the moment I receive 10 sessions I pay $50 for a session, after 10 it moves up to $170. I could've been through those 10 sessions within 3 months with how terrible my mental health was. Yet I have had to ration them because of my lack of money despite the fact I work a lot I barely earn enough to pay rent, Let alone pay for my mental health."

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?
"Access to beyond blue head space etc is widely known. Which is great. As far as preventing suicide, it's extremely difficult. As someone who has recently come out of a suicidal few months Its difficult to know what may have helped more without just asking for hand outs. I think organisations and schools need to be help more accountable. Having been diagnosed with mental health almost entirely because of the way I was treated at uni, because there are no checks and balances, it quickly snow balled when my social life also fell apart. A feeling of hopelessness especially amongst young people because we can barely afford to eat let alone have fun it at the centre of a lot of my friends problems. Renting is barely possible let alone ever owning a house. This all contributes to suicidal tendencies, along with the current pessimistic trend that circulates through young people's social groups and the humor that we consume on social media. Overall it should be more widely known that suicidal people or people who fear someone they love may commit suicide can be checked into hospital for the night and assessed. "

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.
Services are complete rubbish all around the country. It's completely disfuntional and impossible to get anything done. The cost of living is insane and wages are low. Money is a huge part of mental health. But also making sport and gym more available. I can't afford to play sport at the moment and research shows sport helps mental health Having more free activities in the community to promote health. Maybe teams who consist of people struggling with their personal lives who can be together and know that it's a judgement free zone amongst peers who are in

similar situations.

What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?
No doubt amongst young people the futility of everything. It's fucking depressing having a country run by old white men who decide what's best and couldn't care less about us. The world is in crisis with climate change and politics and Australia is once again on the wrong side of history and it's depressing as hell. Lack of money means lack of engagement and depression makes it impossible to get out of bed when there is nothing to be done.

What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?
"Having been in a relationship and living with someone who had BPD (borderline personality disorder) for 3 years, I can say there is ano support. Or at least no support that I know of. It put so much strain on the relationship we parted because it was impossible between both our mental health. Treatment for her CBT was roughly $5000 a month and we couldn't afford that being at uni a minimum of 9-6 all day every day. I was unaware of any support around me or if support was even available "

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce, including peer support workers?
Not qualified to answer this questions.

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?
"As stated previously it's extremely hard. I'm currently working 6pm until 4am 4 days a week because bar work is all I can get (being in the arts). The sleep schedule no doubt ads to my depression and the lack of ability to see friends hurts as well I get legally underpaid but fairwork won't help, and I can't afford to find a new job or get fired. I earn too much to receive any help but most of it goes to rent. socially it's so hard to meet people, everything requires money including sport or groups etc. Making friends is so hard when you have mental health problems because they hold you back so much. "

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?
"Free counselling, free sports or other activities, a lot of it is things out of your control like wages, and renting spices etc. More teaching about different mental health problems such as BPD so people can support others as they may need. "

What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victorias mental health system and support improvements to last?
"community engagements, a voice, ways to meet new people in similar circumstances, without it being all difficulty and government as everything always seems to be. That's too hard for someone who can't even leave bed. "

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

"Most of my friends have mental health issues. It's incredibly common in the arts and it's an epidemic. Lack of work has every depressed at all times, and we all feel abandoned as most of us are hot on lbgtqi+ issues, climate changed etc. We feel alone and let down, capatilism is failing the youth and prevailing for the older generations and it's crushing our ability to function as everything feels hopeless. "