

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

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

"Make it something that is discussed more in schools. I am seeing an emergence of candid discussion of diagnosed mental health conditions in the teenagers I teach, but still stigma from those around them. "

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?

"Make therapy part of the MCHN package for new mothers. You get asked a cursory question which it is easy to lie about. The hardest part is asking for help and a session or two in new motherhood with a therapist would help prevent or catch early, PPD. "

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?

"Free lifelines are excellent. More focus on getting men talking, not only to professionals but to each other would help. A really culture change around masculinity is needed. "

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 think making mental health care affordable should be a top priority. When I was suffering Post Natal Depression, I couldn't afford therapy. Even with a mental health care plan, the out of pocket costs were out of reach for us on only one income. We again ran in to this issue when my husband had difficulties with his mental health. We were still on one income and simply couldn't afford it, or would have to wait months for an appointment with a bulk billing therapist and have to travel really far. Not possible when you're struggling, and have 2 small children at home. "

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

Financial strain is a massive impact on mental health. How can you have good mental health when the cost of living has you counting every cent?

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

"Therapy access for them, too. Family members struggle and need access to mental health support to help them cope with living with someone with a mental health condition. "

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

Not sure

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?

Not sure

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?

Affordability. It is atrocious that people cannot access care because they cannot afford it.

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

Not sure.

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

N/A