

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?

N/A

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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

N/A

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

"Family members, and I speak for mothers here, need to be able to let their child go and live in the community in safety. My daughter is 38 years old and cannot handle money, has extreme anxiety, cannot really sustain relationships or keep a job and wants to be independent. Our most recent experience of trying to have her live independently ended with her losing her job, attempting suicide, becoming homeless, squatting in an empty house and having no way to shower or wash her clothes or even eat. And of course using ice again just because everything seems so hopeless. You know if society said Oh now all people with Down Syndrome have to just go out and find a place to live and support themselves and we're not going to help them other than give them crisis accommodation if something goes wrong! There would be an outcry- and that is not far from what has happened to my daughter. Now she has rented a room for which she has to pay \$180 a week - out of her Centrelink payment - and she has virtually no prospect of anything better unless she gets a job and that is extremely difficult to find. Having her live with us is no real solution as she just retreats into herself and has no real life. I hesitate to bring this up in these days of political correctness and gender equality but, for a woman like my daughter, it is a very dangerous world. A certain type of man seems able to find her vulnerability and use it to his advantage and it is almost impossible to stop this happening. I am positive that she would not be the only one this is happening to. My need is to find a way that she can be safe and I need help to

make that happen."

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?

I don't think there are many opportunities to improve their participation

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?

The measure of society is reflected in some ways by how it looks after the vulnerable and downtrodden and there is great scope for creating safe places for people in this situation - I am not overly familiar with the supported accommodation model which many disabled people are a part of but I feel that needs to be extended in some way to include people like my daughter and also made much safer as there are scandals there too about how people are treated.

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

N/A

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

I know my story would not be an unusual one - and that in itself is an immense sadness to me. And the murder just recently of the beautiful young woman in a Melbourne park would bring to so many families that feeling of dread that we carry around with us - could that be my daughter?? Please no!!