

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

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Name

Anonymous

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

More education for the community on mental illness to better understand what it's like for people living with mental illness.

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?

"More affordable access to counselling, psychologists and psychiatrists. Many people can't afford to seek help in private sector and the public sector focuses mostly on hospitalisation and crisis treatment. There are not enough services available for the general public "

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

The mental health system is broken and for some people causes further trauma rather than treatment as other patients can be abusive and triggering for patients who have experienced trauma. Suicide help lines and psychiatric triage services can help but only if the person seeks that support and sometimes the services are so busy you have to wait on hold for a long time or leave a message and sometimes don't get a call back until the next day.

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.

Public mental health can be hard to access as psychiatric wards are mostly full of patients with drug induced psychosis and are not safe for patients who have suffered trauma and have only mental health issues and not drug or alcohol issues. Staff levels seem to be lacking and in general staff treat the patients like they are second class citizens. Patients can wait up to 3 days in emergency or short stay units before they can be allocated a bed in the psychiatric units

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

Bullying and violence in the workplace seem to be a significant factor in mental health issues as well as drug and alcohol use. Separate services needed for people with drug and alcohol issues and patients with just mental health issues. Poverty and family violence also play a significant role in the cause of mental health conditions

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

Carers and family members should have better access to support services and information on mental health and what it's like for the person who is living with mental health issues

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

Better staffing levels and ongoing support for health workers working in mental health. Possibly regular debriefing for staff especially if any incidents have occurred during their shift.

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?

Better outreach services and support groups for People living with mental illness. Community groups would be great for People with mental health issues. Also things like group outings and more support groups would help in prevention of crisis and social and economic 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?

Separate units for drug and alcohol patients and patients suffering just mental illness. Better access to outpatient services and therapy services

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

Funding and information on what changes would improve mental health services

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

No