

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

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Name

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

"Don't separate mental health and physical health. My mental health condition causes severe physical illness but because I look "normal" I don't fit in either section. Emphasis on women's hormonal mental health. Unless you are either Male or Aboriginal no one cares. You are just a hysterical woman. Stop discriminating against diagnoses. I've heard the staff in Emergency hear that I've got Borderline personality disorder and actually say I'm a narcissistic attention seeker! Maybe change that name from BPD to EUPD like the UK. Emotionally unstable personality disorder. Educate staff on diagnosis. Ever heard of PMDD!? I've been told I'm making it up. It's just bad PMS! No, it's a diagnosable condition, in the DSM 5 since 2013 and now recognised by WHO. I'm sick of doing my own research and paying psychiatrists to educate 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?

"Not even [REDACTED] who is a women's mental & health based in Melbourne has enough information on one of my mental health conditions PMDD. End the stigma. Educate. I'm sick of being told it's just hormones, all women get hormonal at 'that time of the month' For God's sake use the words period or menstruation it's not dirty or taboo and yet so many health professionals still use naive words. If PMDD was a condition that solely affected men it would be bloody cured by now! Women are sick of being fobbed off. "

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

To be honest the only thing that works for me is peer support. I've called life lines. Beyond Blue. The local health care crisis teams. I've been fobbed off. That I'm being over dramatic. Go to sleep and it will be different in the morning. For God's sake it's a joke. I don't bother seeking help anymore. Unless you are Aboriginal no one wants to know.

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.

"Educate your crisis teams, psych nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, emergency department teams that women aren't just hysterical. Teach them that we are diagnosed with a legitimate mental health condition that leads us to losing at least 2 weeks every month, that's 26 weeks a year where I am actively suicidal just because my brain doesn't recognise my own progesterone! "

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

Money! All seems to go to those who identify as Aboriginal/ Torres Strait or on meth. And if you're a woman who is not Indigenous don't even bother. No one cares. It's not in fashion to look

after non indigenous Australians

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

Help them with education and counselling. They will get PTSD living with us being in total dysphoria for 26 weeks of the year

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

"Educate them better Pay them better Protect them better, they get abused way too much from drunks and druggies who have inflicted a lot of their issues on themselves. Give THEM counselling They need to down load what crap they see and get from us!"

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?

Again. Everything seems targeted at indigenous or druggies / drunks. No point in even attempting to get help a lot of the time You are made to feel like an hysterical woman who is wasting people time

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?

Womens mental health. Education in schools on womens mental health in relation to menstruation

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

Funding Actually keeping the same policies in place long term not just change again when new politicians are voted in

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

Engage with menstruating women Put PMDD pre menstrual dysphoric disorder in your policy We are not just hysterical hormonal women We have a legitimate diagnosed mental health condition.