

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

SUB: 0002.0016.0084

Name

[REDACTED]

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?

It was a constant frustration and stress point that some mental health practitioners focused on his alcohol abuse as the main cause of his mental health issues rather than the self-medication of an underlying mental health condition. Eventually this was identified but not diagnosed prior to his suicide.

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

"Person that we are advocating on behalf of suicided in a mental health facility in 2018. Concept of Mental health team (GP, drug and alcohol worker and psychologist) available within his regional town available as and when needed. Local residence care units required within regional town to prevent isolation and dislocation from family and current mental health team."

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.

"Lack of public understanding/education for mental health issues in the general community, schools and workplaces. There was no early intervention options when symptoms were first experienced in childhood and again in adolescence. Negative workplace culture and stigma. Publicans operating outside of current laws for service of alcohol, supporting and prompting/taking advantage of alcohol abuse. "

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

Lack of affordable ongoing mental health support and treatment for those experiencing chronic mental health conditions. Lack of experienced professionals dealing with complex mental health conditions. Very limited options for drug and alcohol in-house withdrawal programs. Lack of support and understanding of mental health in workplaces. No crisis support or post-withdrawal planning

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

Families need to be supported and educated to be able to assist and support with management of treatment plans. Families need to be included in the development of treatment plans within the

constraints of patients privacy.

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

Targeted mental health training for professionals to deal with complex mental health issues. Students need to be exposed to all areas of mental health during course placements including suicidal patients. Established referral pathways

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?

N/A

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?

Increasing the number of sessions available within a mental health plan. Multidisciplinary to support those with mental health issues. Support and inclusion of families. Local residential options for rural communities. Stricter adherence/policing of responsible serving of alcohol laws. Develop positive and supportive workplace culture. Destigmatisation of mental illness. Early identification and intervention for children displaying symptoms of mental health illness. Mental health workers in all primary and secondary schools with screening tools in place. Availability of immediate assistance for times of crisis from the individuals mental health team. Formal discharge planning. Quality of care and communication within residential care units. Regulation of health care facilities

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?

My partner/our family member suicided inside a private mental health facility in [REDACTED] approximately 1.5 hours from his home. Prior to this voluntary hospitalisation he was discharged from an alcohol rehabilitation facility in [REDACTED] with no formal discharge plan or communication with his GP and mental health team. This lead to a downward spiral of his mental health condition and subsequent admission to the [REDACTED] facility. During his two week stay prior to his suicide there was no useful communication with family and no communication with his mental health team. He saw the consulting psychiatrist twice. He was initially detoxed for a four day period before being offered a choice of unaccompanied leave in substitution of medication. Following his suicide policy and protocol was not followed. This case is currently being reviewed [REDACTED] [REDACTED] It took years to find the support and he needed and was helpful. He was constantly worried about his security of employment because of his mental health. Cost of accessing these services was enormous and added more stress. Adequate public health support was not available.