

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Mrs Marlene Chignell

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

"Wider understanding of people who do not fit the usual mental health categories. eg, those who have severe PTSD not caused by defence forces service. People trained to see behind the brave facade. More staff to keep in contact with patients who have ongoing issues that don't necessarily require constant counselling. Rapid response when there is a re-emergence of a condition that seems to be going well."

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?

"I don't know. I have never had early support or treatment, It has always been at crisis point."

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

Beyond Blue is wonderful. Helping those who are ill to understand the effect of suicide on their loved ones. This does not ease the pain but it helps to shift the focus from one's own pain to not inflicting similar pain on others.

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.

Better trained psychologists who can do more than listening to the sad stories and sympathising. Medication helps but it is not the only answer for someone who has been struggling for years. I am talking about PTSD.

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

I don't know

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

LOTS. Recognition that there is a problem and seriously asking what will help them. When I was completely ill and suicidal my GP (at the time) gave me pills and left my 20 year old son to deal with the situation by himself with the result that he also has mental health issues now. I have read the next page. It would take all my courage to be identified but I think I could do it. My situation doesn't seem to be recognised but I am sure it is not unique. It has been helpful to produce this submission. At least there is someone who wants to know on an enquiring level. Thank you. This comment is in the wrong place but I can't write it again. It is about the privacy.

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce,

including peer support workers?

I don't know.

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?

There doesn't seem to be an answer. I am very unwell at the moment and my attempt to contact a psychologist yesterday was met with a rebuke for cancelling a previous appointment about a year ago. At that time I was coping and gave days of notice. Today I feel suicidal (ridiculous over something so trivial but true) but I won't do anything about it for reasons I have already mentioned. Beyond Blue is my only place to turn to.

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?

"I really don't know. Perhaps I could make a suggestion later but today I can't think clearly."

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

Sorry. I have no idea.

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

"This is a plea for help/ I am going down fast, I am old and don't matter that much. I certainly mattered more twenty years ago when I need help desperately and didn't get it. Please make sure that people like me are understood. We appear to be fine but we hide the really bad times from everyone. I am a high achiever and present well but underneath I am full of pain which, sometimes, is almost unbearable."