

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Ms Vrinda Edan

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

"I support Janet Meagher's comment that Stigma is a weasel word. Stigma is used to hide discrimination, in many years of teaching about consumer perspectives I have never had a person accurately define or provide examples of stigma in mental health. The best example of programs to reduce discrimination is the NZ 'Like Minds, Like Mine' program from the early 2000's. People telling stories of their own experiences alone does not reduce discrimination, showing people as part of the community before identifying that they have mental health challenges can and does."

### **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?**

There is very little that is working well. The public and government has well and truly had the wool pulled over their eyes by [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]. There is very little evidence that people having used these services avoid adult mental health services at a greater rate than people who don't.

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

"One of the first things we need to accept is that we will never be able to prevent all suicides, particularly with a mental health system that is focused on mental health challenges being a health issue rather than response to trauma, adversity and oppression. We should instead be talking about alternative supports such as the Alternatives to Suicide approach:

<http://www.westernmassrlc.org/alternatives-to-suicide> "

### **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.**

"What makes it hard: Oppression, discrimination, trauma, adversity, state sanctioned violence (ie the Mental Health Act) What can be done: repeal the mental health act; provide peer led services in the community; abolish inpatient mental health units and provide peer run alternatives such as Piri Pono in Auckland, Soteria Houses (UK and USA) and the Leeds Crisis Centre (UK)"

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

see above

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

"If you provided better care to consumers, less support will be needed by families and carers. The so called 'burden of care' only exists because of neo liberal policy that has reduced services and

