

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

SUB: 0002.0025.0085

Name

Anonymous

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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: GPs are not trained, qualified or equipped to understand and manage patients with mental health issues. Some GPs are completely unethical when dealing with mental health issues. Comments such as ""you look fine to me"" is not appropriate from a doctor when dealing with psychological health. Many doctors have told me they are inundated with patients experiencing work related mental health issues and that they feel unequipped to deal with it or assist in any way. Poor and unhealthy workplace environments. This is increasingly a cause for mental health issues and not being dealt with appropriately by employers. When issues with an unhealthy workplace are reported it inevitably results in the person experiencing mental health impacts being disbelieved and disadvantaged. The insurance sector is not dealing appropriately with these types of cases or claims. They often do not accept or approve claims (also closing claims unlawfully) for income protection insurance or salary continuance, provide mental health support for What can be done: GPs should not be expected to identify, understand or manage psychological health problems. All insurance claims, cases, reporting, and reviews should be completed or carried out with psychological health care workers not GPs. There needs to be a lot more Medicare bulk billed counsellors, psychotherapists, psychologists provided. Currently the majority are working in private practice. The costs associated with private practice support is prohibitive, especially for people experiencing financial hardship, unemployment, illness. The maximum ten sessions provided under the mental health plan is not sufficient to meet many people's needs. When this is exhausted many people are then unable to get support when needed. There needs to be support groups available, the ability to find and access services and support groups. Employers and insurance companies and other entities should be able to point you to appropriate services and groups that can help. Currently it often means that the most able to research and seek out suitable services themselves are the ones who get best support. The Centrelink system needs to be drastically overhauled and improved to cater for people who are impacted by mental health issues. Currently many people impacted by mental health are

categorised as unemployed and referred to Newstart allowance. This results in not receiving the best support and services and care. The disability employment services providers need to be overhauled and improved. Currently they are not providing suitable support or the ability to recover and get back to health and work. My experience is they did not provide any mental health support, counselling services, training, upskilling or source any type of suitable work. They need to be more accountable and feedback and ratings should be able to be provided by users of their services. I experienced a very unprofessional and discourteous disability employment advisor, who was in practice doing the opposite of providing support. Their actions and behaviour actually increased the mental health issues rather than helping to improve the situation. I think there should be a single point of contact ie case worker, social worker or similar, to manage the patient/client holistically to ensure the right support is provided and keep things on track. Without this you're expected to manage your own situation whilst also being unwell and experiencing mental health issues."

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

N/A

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

Family members and partners should be provided with support as well. They are often impacted severely but do not receive associated support for their wellbeing. Joint or family psychology services should be provided in addition to individual counselling to ensure family and partners are able to get appropriate support.

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

N/A

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?

N/A

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?

"I have experienced trying to access mental health services twice due to workplace health issues. In both cases it did not go well. It would be good to see significant improvements in this area. It is vital for all Victorians in terms of health and wellbeing, productivity, quality of life, to have access to

appropriate care and support when experiencing mental health impacts."