

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

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

"Staff in hospital to have better understanding of different mental health diagnosis, mood and personality disorders. Community forums or information sessions to allow people to learn about it. Early intervention within schools. "

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?

"Early intervention in schools. The funding put into the [REDACTED] for mental health that was taken from the public system would be great if it was actually accessible to those with mental health issues... Or there to be more mental health support workers rather than a disability worker who doesn't know how to work with mental health. Changes to the 10 Medicare sessions, those with complex needs need more sessions than that. A lot of people with poor mental health early 20's age out of youth services (free services) Those with complex needs can't afford regular doctor + psychology appointments and check ups. Since ageing out of youth services I feel left with no support as I have struggled to keep jobs I cannot pay for sessions, its either sessions or bad financial strain with increases poor mental health. Something for adults who have low or no income. To try to keep them in therapy and treatment as Centrelink rejects a lot of those with severe struggles... "

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

"Better support in hospitals, and in emergency rooms. As its clear to me if your not psychotic they don't care and you get treated like you shouldn't be there although unsafe from suicidal ideation and severe depression. "

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.

"How hard it is to get into a lot of services. The fact a lot with mental health issues are low income earners and can't afford treatment. My personal experience has been ok, besides when leaving CYMHS when I aged out and was rejected from the [REDACTED] and was left with no support at all. I felt I had a lot more access to places that helped me eg. [REDACTED] now since aged and and rejected by the adult service I can't access those supports. I think I could through hospital but the stigma and horrid treatment I received the last time I went... I would never go back... "

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

"Homelessness, the gap between leaving youth and getting into adult services and trying to navigate it"

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

Unsure as my family are unsupportive and disconnected.

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

"Just general better knowledge within workplaces to acknowledge those who struggle. Maybe provide mental health first aid? I lost my job as my mental health declined and became less 'reliable'. I feel if the workplace understood and we worked together to sort out ways to have kept me employed. It would have given me some purpose, rather than being sacked and feeling like life crumbled. "

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?

Groups that are more accepting of mental health. Or just a larger range of community groups

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?

The gap and helping young people navigate leaving the youth system. You lose the supports you have worked with through your youth to try navigate a completely new system is stressful. I feel people are so focused on youth mental health or psychotic adults... Theres not much support for those with mood/personality disorders as adults or newly left youth services.

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

I think putting some more funding back into the public mental health system as no one can get the ndis and if they do most support is denied...

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

N/A