

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

SUB: 0002.0028.0315

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.

N/A

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?

"Better education and realistic expectations provided by medical staff. It's good to have carer support workers, but more full time workers available on every campus rather than just in the main campus of the hospital would increase the support available for families and carers. "

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

More support as it is very hard to work in mental health. As consumers rights have increased (not a bad thing) the rights of nurses have decreased. They are subjected to verbal abuse and physical assault especially those working in aged mental health as they get assaulted by those with cognitive impairment due to dementia/Alzheimer's. Increased staff ratios to ensure staff and consumers feel safer. No body likes to work in an environment where they get hit everyday and management say there's nothing that can be done. Mental health nurses care about their work and people they care about and it's very easy to get burnt out when constantly abused and feeling unsupported by management.

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?

"Aged mental health has changed over the last 10 years quite dramatically. We used to have consumers with mental health issues but now the majority have dementia/Alzheimer's. The system needs to look at how to best care for those with cognitive impairment without blocking mental health beds. These types of consumers have nowhere to go and this results in long stays which means those who have mental health issues have reduced chance of an admission. It is also not the best environment for someone who is depressed or anxious for example to be on a ward with aggressive confused people all the time. Creates an unsafe and scary environment. I understand the increase of aggressive behaviour in dementia is a whole health system problem which needs to be looked at itself, so it will be hard for the mental health system to solve this issue on its own. If the issue of beds being blocked by cognitive impairment cant be resolved then there needs to be better community services and support to reduce the need for admission for those with mental health issues. Being treated in their home environment will improve recovery as it may be a safer environment. Community care should include more phone and online services and people feel more comfortable being more confidential and younger people use technology."

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

Increasing community support networks. More phone and online services.

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

N/A