

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

Organisation Name

Wellschool

Name

Ms Eva Migdal

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

"Mental health is portrayed as if it is the norm, when in fact we are now all living in a new normal'. These new norms are all contributing to the multi-layered systemic mental health challenges. I believe we need to consider mental health through the multitude of systems or frames that impact it. Statistics are indicative of the fact that mental health is not a natural outcome of living in western culture. It would be useful to reframe the conversation to consider that the physical, emotional and social determinants of mental health in modern society orient its population towards mental illness. This can be linked through observation and research to multiple factors which include: Nutrition depleted and junk food laden diet Technologically focused and concurrent isolated lives. Sleep deprivation linked to the stimulations of the technological world. Moving from the extended family to nuclear and single parent family structures Feeling isolated in the new structures and technological influences "

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?

"Phone support and online support systems such as Lifeline, Suicide line. Online support such as Reach Out However, these services are over-stretched and telephone and online workers are suffering as a result. Their mental health and training needs to be a priority. Ensuring the management structures are creating peer learning, wellness focused systems rather than recreating the very culture they are intending to treat or prevent. Strategies need to be implemented to prevent the tragic mental health challenges and suicide rates within the medical students and young doctors. Despite attempts to improve the wellbeing of this population, it is not integrated in a successful manner as the systemic issues and cultural mindset of hospital staff. Some wards in hospitals in Victoria are now using SIBR. One highly cost effective and flourishing focused approach to improving the health and wellbeing of both patients and staff in hospitals is the SIBR approach. SIBR promotes teamwork and transparency where the interdisciplinary team, works together with accountability to each other for shared outcomes. This model is being used in NSW and Queensland hospitals successfully ."

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

Increase opportunities to participate in evidence-based lifestyle peer support groups at a community level. The writer has been involved in the development of one such peer coaching wellness model called Wellcircle. See attachment.

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?

"Wellness Literacy and Peer Coaching are valuable skills that can help support people with mental health challenges to understand and take changes towards change. Provide these tools in a range of accessible formats (online, face to face training) for family, communities, hospitals, schools and workplaces so there are accessible people who can provide support no matter what context. Especially encourage family members and carers to learn these skills so can use these coaching strategies to support simple and highly effective lifestyle skills to support improved mental health. "

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

Improve the quality of training so that people feel more able to contribute usefully. The free Mental Health Peer Support Cert IV is a fantastic initiative that improves mental health of participants.

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?

We need a systems thinking approach.