

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Dr Bernard Hickey

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

"Education about brain function and health, emphasising neurology rather than psychology. Relate links to behaviours and habits that lead to ill health and health"

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?

"Acute services done reasonably. Cost of counselling difficult, restricts access. Encouragement of unhealthy habits by poor regulation of unhealthy product advertising will keep creating mental illness. Need encouragement and facilitation of involvement in healthy social groups. Links with Substance Use Disorders not being recognised, treating them as separate disorders, is ludicrous and disastrous at all levels from preconception to death and including forensic. Lack of graded supported recovery healthy housing eg SHARC model "

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

Study philosophy Practice and education of healthy living and importance of healthy social involvement including relationship to substances and behavioural addictions

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.

Prime business model is to promote a false need/ habit A culture based approach to what are basic health needs for humans and facilitation of same will have largest and sustained population effects

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

Money and power variables that lead to degree of self agency variables and access to health measures including education. These correlate with all health measure- mental health is part of general individual and social and cultural health

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

"Same as for everyone to be able to live healthily including access therapy themselves and support and mutual support groups. To be respected and listened to and valued. Respite relief, in many cases sufferer may need permanent supported accommodation but near family. Access to drug and alcohol rehabs. Mental illness including Substance Use Disorders who offend be diverted to treatment with long term plan eg 5-7 years as takes this long to establish healthy living habits"

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

Integrate mental health into an all of life health approach thereby destigmatising and so attract workers and not isolate them and also keep them healthy. Peer support- stop tokenism and start truly supporting peer support making it an essential part of service Eg make use of mutual support programmes for Substance Use Disorder recovery a mandatory part of residential rehabilitation programmes

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?

Participate in a healthy group and groups and belong. Involve families in therapy discussions and paths- this is the most important starting group . Promote family involvement. Promote atheists to develop group meaning. Leaders especially politicians but also others including business to promote and live healthily openly to inspire and lead direction and unity/ meaning / purpose to living therefore creating hope and desire to live well

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?

"Cultural change to promote what health is and restrict unhealthy habit promotion eg as has been done for tobacco smoking, needs to be done for alcohol, gambling and junk food. Integration of Substance Use Disorder treatment with mental health treatment "

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

Make rehabs attend Mutual support groups . Introduce Portuguese model of substance addiction treatment . Junk food taxes and advertising regulation- if you advertise to promote junk consumption you will make more junk people

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

"Elephant in the room is the uncertainty of the near future health and sustainability of the earths ecosystem and human geopolitical systems I think this uncertainty is a base worry for people pushing them in to the many unhealthy habits advertised and available , an ostrich head in sand approach Leadership and healthy changes to these systems will help long term , but a message that leadership starts with my life is empowering and healthy"