

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

SUB. 0002.0029.0382

## Name

Anonymous

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

"Through my experience with the mental health system in Victoria over the past few months, it is clear that there is still a stigma attached to any form of mental illness. The main stigma, which has detrimental impacts on the level of care and access to care that one has when experiencing mental health issues, is that young women are the focus area, and if you happen to be a male experiencing such issues, you are afforded very little attention and options, let alone access to care."

### **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?**

"I have seen that there are amazing counsellors/psychologists out there dealing with mental health issues, in my loved ones case, post traumatic stress disorder and borderline personality disorder, but when it comes to seeking formal treatment beyond counselling, this is where the system lets you down. The stigma attached to mental illness will not allow early treatment and support; no one will seek such treatment until the stigma is removed. The reality is, it is intelligent, well-raised, successful people who are suffering from mental health issues, just as much as it is individuals from broken homes and less than desirable upbringings."

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

"██████ is a great offering; but have seen first hand that a desperate individual, who feels that there is no other option than to end their life, is still left waiting on hold for significant periods of time. We simply need more resources, better resources, and more accessible resources."

### **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.**

"My loved one is a male. He has sought counselling from a psychologist, who has provided an exceptional level of service. His GP has done the very best that he can do. My partner needed to access DBT therapy (dialectical behaviour therapy) which is deemed the most successful therapy for borderline personality disorder (BPD) but was told there would be no spaces because he was a male and not a teenage girl. The cost of such therapy also means this is out of reach for many people. We have since explored the option of a stay in a mental health facility, and the experience with such organisations such as █████ █████ and the facility itself, in this case █████ Centre in █████ less than desirable. The level of empathy is next to none, the responsiveness is very slow, and the offering at █████ Centre for what is a \$3500 per day service, is awful. Worse than a public hospital stay. Literally left in a room to fend for themselves."

### **What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental**

**health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?**

I am not aware.

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

"Mental Health is a growing concern. I work for a corporate organisation who offers learning and development options around mental health, and who focus on mental health as an employee benefit, however not every organisation offers this. "

**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?**

"My loved one is an active contributor to social and economic participation - he works in a well paid corporate job but is suffering from a condition at this point in his life. He doesn't need support in this respect, he needs better options for care."

**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?**

"Minimum standards of care, minimum standards of offering in patient care, more out patient care options, better government funding (the private system can't even get it right)."

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

it all comes down to awareness and funding.

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

N/A