

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?

"Stop calling it ""Mental Illness"". make any association on television and government initiatives be accessible and relateable to all age groups and diversities. Too many of these well-meaning (and im sure expensive) adverts for these things are incredibly cringy and really just don't nail it."

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?

"* The 10-12 MHP sessions is everything. I cant stress enough how much this program needs to have more hours.10-12 sessions just isnt enough. Waiting 4 weeks sometimes for your next session can feel like a lifetime when you're going through a hard time and need immediate help. I trully reccomend doubling the MHP to 24 sessions per year and watch how the hospital and medication rates drop as from personal experience - i know that i wouldnt have to medicate for my anxiety if i was able to talk to someone affordably. * Free group-style sessions are great (ie: specific for people with anxiety etc..) (however are sometimes far away). - these sessions are often ""volunteer run"" and the quality of service is questionable, however beggars cant be choosers. It would be wonderful to have more group locations established as a government initiative with an app service on where you can go etc.. * Lifeline is great. Enough said. Wait-times are low and their service is patient and kind. * An organisation called Headspace is incredible. There should be something like this for adults. Headspace was great when I was young as it took the ""shopping"" for a psychologist out of the game. Its a building filled with professionals, its a welcoming building and if you didn't like your psych on your first try they set you up with a new one and the whole place is bulk-billed. Why dont adults have this?!?! Literally just take this business model for adults!"

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

"- More time with psychs on the MHP - People can run in all the marathons, and post as much as they like to say that they support Mental health on their facebook - but the reality is that when you have a friend next to you who is crying out for help, you think of them as a burden and an eyeroll. Like Ifeline is over the phone, people need to feel accepted and be surrounded by safety. I truly think that when people are at their lowest, they usually need company and a compassionate listening ear Not everyone has this. Places like The Melbourne Clinic should accept people based on referrals and it should be widely known - taught in schools etc.. that if you need to get away and talk to someone etc.. that you can go there."

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.

"- Unstable Work (+ Unemployment) - centrelink needs the next royal commission to fix this. its a

huge cause of a LOT of peoples stress. It's just awful to try to redeem your federal rights there. - BULLYING Fixing this is a top-down issue. So many business' just dont care. I've experience female->female bullying in the majority of my workplaces and (unfortunately as I'm young) - it just seems like most organisations just dont care. You can put up all the Psychological Safety MUST be recognised by FairWork for this to make any kind of leaps and bounds in the future! This is a form of bullying and is not okay! (Psychological bullying is currently not recognised by fairwork) - Family issues. . . . It's very hard to ""shop around"" to find a new mental heath provider. I work in Digital Services and i wouldn't even know where to start! Almost none do bulk services and it's even harder for men to find a male doctor. the wait times are atrocious if you have an immediate problem. (esp. if your problem IS your low finanaces how are you supposed to pay for it?). Theres no website listing bulk-billing MHC providers. All anyone can suggest is to go to see ""training"" kids in uni and i mean..seriously? "

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

"Exclusion from ""things happening in city"". honestly im better becuse i can always get in my car and go up the street. or go for a walk. or go for a jog. some people dont have that luxury."

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

"Currently there is no support system in place (that i know of) for say ""daughters of people with cancer"". Theres no groups you can go to to go and talk about this with others and share insights. A community board (on my aformentioned site you could build) would be incredibly helpful to start this. More group classes and therapy - not rocket science you just need to add more manpower."

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

"I think there's probably thousands of youth graduating from psychology every year who would love a government job as a psychologist if there was a location (like the headspace for adults as i previously suggested) that could provide MHP services to adults. It's not about ""good services"" its about ""affordable services"". People CAN'T pay \$150 per session when they're truly flailing to go to weekly/fortnightly therapy. It's just out of reach."

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?

"Currently I'm aware of the app ""Meetup"" to meet new friends and create a bunch of new social circles. I think the ownness is on people to create these opportunities for themselves at the moment. After university it's extremely hard to create new social trends.Melbourne is good for providing lots of festivals opportunities and food things for people to go to - but they're not always free."

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?

"- Increasing the MHP to (at least) 24 session per annum! - Creating group psychology hubs (Like Headspace) for adults so that locating a provider is convinient and friendly - Creating a website for finding providers with a rating, location, and affordability service (including whats on this week,

group activities (like walking groups and therapy sessions) "

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?

"Inside corporate business practices need to change too. It's not just good enough anymore to just put a poster anymore and say ""oh we're compliant with ""HR for mental health"". During this overhaul process (and I cant stress this enough) **PSYCOLOGICAL BULLYING NEEDS TO BE RECOGNISED BY FAIRWORK**. It currently isn't and needs to be looked into. Currently you cannot lodge a psychological bullying claim against your employer, management or colleague for intimidation/manipulation or microaggressions which caused you physiological damage and stress to leave a workplace. This adamantly needs to be looked into so that people can report this appropriately and business practices can be changed! (Just because someone didn't ""yell"" at you or touch you does not mean they can't cause you psychological damage! I've been in organisations where my manger was elaborately gas-lighting me, another where antisemitic behaviour was happening and another where the manager was using direct intimidation to get what she wanted done. I urge the commission to look into this. "