

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?

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?

"To encourage people to speak to a professional whether or not they have a mental illness. Continue reducing stigma. I didn't get help for a long time because I didn't really understand what was happening, I was confused and scared. "

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

Let people know it doesn't increase the chances of someone dying by suicide by asking them if they are thinking of suicide

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.

"Culturally the idea of resilience and a positive attitude is celebrated, however often not in a productive way. I grew up being told to never give up, whereas I have learnt since my mental illness that it is okay to remove yourself from a situation that is not healthy for you- you don't have to keep persisting. My doctor and psychologist are amazing and I am really grateful for them. 10 sessions is not enough. I am so out of pocket because of my mental illness and am lucky that I had savings prior. I could have applied for and gotten work cover for my mental illness, however the thought of that process is too stressful and triggering."

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

"Need more emotional intelligence and mental health awareness in schools, but by trained professionals, not ones who keep saying ""positive mindset"". It is not realistic or okay to expect young people to always have positive thoughts or emotions, as you can't control these. You can control your response but not the mind. Incredibly stressful work situations with no one to turn to. The cultural idea that ""busy"" is celebrated and 5 days of work a week is the norm. "

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

Free sessions for them to see same psychologist family member is seeing to gain strategies they can use to help. I had to use one of my ten sessions on this.

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce,

including peer support workers?

Make counselling compulsory for psychologists.

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?

"More than 10 sessions a year. When I was suicidal I needed one or two sessions a week to help stay alive. I was on Centrelink for a while and the lack of communication between them and job agencies was stressful and triggering. I had to explain myself too many times. However, the opportunity to have Centrelink really helped. "

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?

Thanks for doing a royal commission