

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

SUB. 0002.0016.0045

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

"that family law and its expert witnesses have an in-depth understanding of the impact of the trauma from family violence. that the trauma isn't misdiagnosed as a means for not wanting the perpetrator to have child access. that expert witnesses are trained in diagnosing mental health that the children's mental health is taken seriously in the long term when forced to be parented by the perpetrator and ongoing support is offered by the courts to help these children growing up as healthy young adults that services in our community working with survivors of FV have an in - depth understanding of the impact of the trauma from FV and stop viewing it as conflict that family law court orders do not hinder access to mental health services for survivors of FV and their children, especially in the early years of child development. perpetrators will never give the protective parent permission to address the children's mental health that the findings of one's mental health is kept confidential and services or court documentation be allowed to be used in defaming one's mental 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?

the only services I can say have worked for me and my two children are those that understand the trauma of Family Violence the services that don't force the engagement of the perpetrator to work with the victims impacted by the trauma police who have a in-depth understanding of the trauma of Family violence on its victims that our judicial system understand mental health and the impact on one's life

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

that children are not forced to be co-parented where Family Violence is present. to be protected so that they do not turn to drugs/alcohol/homelessness to escape the family violence intervention of DHHS removing children from the perpetrator services that do not force victims of FV and their children to re-engage with the perpetrator in any form of therapy judicial system and services to listen to how victims of FV are impacted on and that their trauma is real

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 experience has been that the obstacle for me and my children was the lack of respect from the judicial system and its court experts. they ridiculed my trauma which impacted on my mental health, they accused me of lacking insight into co-parenting and misdiagnosed me. they robbed me and my children of living a life free of further Family violence and the opportunity of a platform for the children to develop into healthy young adults. accessing services that understood our trauma have been hindered by orders that were set up to stop us from appropriate treatment and

support, that understood trauma from Family Violence. perpetrators involved in the decision making of appropriate services is dangerous. appropriate services is vital as early intervention especially with children can be life saving community services must understand mental health and stop putting trauma victims in further danger"

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

"lack of understanding of mental health understanding the triggers of mental health respecting the voice of trauma victims in different spheres of our community mental health is not a crime and being treated respectfully, not as criminals "

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

protective parents should be given better decision making power when their children are at risk of their mental health FL court orders should not hinder treatment for mental health issues early intervention for trauma is unquestionable access to drug/alcohol support for young teens should be affordable across all levels of society perpetrators of family violence should never be given medical authority for their children under the age of 21

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

"that they are supported in their workforce not burnt out regular de briefing provided for them excellent working conditions allow the experts to work with our mental health patients and keep the law decision makers away from mental health, they are not experts in that field"

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?

"that trauma from family violence be respected and that the victims are listened to in all areas of our mental health and court systems that services working with these survivors understand the impact of FV and the perpetrator is never included by any service, even the survivors are children that young children's mental health is at the forefront of the family law system and ongoing support where FV is present, that the courts and not families cover costs for trauma support expert witnesses in court system are medical professionals who understand trauma from FV and not recommending further exposure to FV. FV impacts on your mental health and FL needs to stop the continuation of derailing our mental health which is having a massive impact on our children/teens, this is nothing short of child abuse "

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?

"that I survived a violent and abusive marriage I got out alive but the trauma has left me with PTSD and a dysfunctional family unit i am alive to tell how my mental health has deteriorated because I was forced to co-parent with my abuser and endure further abuse, along with my two children, who have suffered further abuse and now dealing with mental health issues themselves how services in our community have put us in further danger with our perpetrator because they don't understand the impact of FV on our mental health. how we have been robbed of a life free of violence and mental health issues the toll it has taken on us physically/socially/financially/mentally and the impact on my career/children's education i continue to watch other adults/children/teens going through the same FL system which is impacting on their mental health /education/social spheres/work life the restriction to court medical professionals is endangering the mental health of children/teens and survivors of FV"