

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

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Name

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

"Need to reduce the stigma and discrimination against whistle blowers who report workplace bullying: they suffer in silence After workplace bullying is reported, there needs to be some 'meaty', tangible support for whistle blowers: at the moment everything is stacked in the favour of the employer. The bully loses twice if they do anything (once because they are unfortunate enough to be on the receiving end of workplace bullying, twice because if they report to HR they are branded as 'weak', a 'trouble maker', not a 'team player' and may be targeted with more lies and bullying ...) "

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?

"Working well: the GP-linked access to mental health services. GP support and understanding of mental health issues and workplace bullying -I think there needs to be more focus and attention given to highlighting the effects of workplace bullying on mental health; and -In schools, introduce a mandatory professional development (PD) for all staff who hold a position of responsibility (meaning that they are responsible for other staff e.g. from Coordinator level upwards) about what actions, behaviours and treatment constitutes workplace bullying. Make them aware of the consequences of the workplace bullying. Support that PD with legislation and penalties that apply to those school staff - so that those who practice workplace bullying might think twice before they proceed to bully staff in their care. -Link the legislation to the PD. Support some test cases against schools where workplace bullying is occurring. leuictas and/or WorkSafe need whatever it takes to prosecute workplaces where workplace bullying is rife (at the moment my experience is that at such workplaces, HR covers up the bullying by protecting the bullies, having window dressing' public displays of anti-bullying policy to give the impression that they care about workers who are bullied (when such actions are inconsistent with the actions of HR, of do nothing/believe the line manager who is both a bully and liar) and poo-pooing' workers who report bullying to HR) Give greater support for whistle blowers Provide a financial lifeline for whistle blowers (that's something that already happens overseas) The downside of being a whistle blower is currently you potentially lose everything including your mental health by speaking the truth. To be done better: -provide more beds and services/support at hospitals"

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

Working well: the GP-linked access to mental health services .GP support and understanding of mental health issues and workplace bullying To be done better: provide more beds and services/ support at hospitals

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.

"In my experience, when the mental health decline is caused by ongoing workplace bullying (and workplace culture is to implicitly support the bullies, even when it is shown that they are lying about the worker), it is hard to experience good mental health in such a workplace. To improve this, please read my other comments/suggestions. "

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

"Some students and staff at Christian schools are part of a community that is experiencing poorer mental health outcomes. I have heard from bullied school students and teachers at [REDACTED] that they experiencing poorer mental health outcomes. Behind that school's slick marketing and hype of using a message of 'love' and loving thy neighbour', the reality is very different. For LGBTQ students, they are treated with distain; thinly-veiled discrimination. For teachers, management/HR works really hard at appearing to comply with workplace requirements, by putting up posters, creating window-dressing policies or talking about having a fair' workplace (really, all just for the purpose of compliance). The reality for any member of staff at the receiving end of workplace bullying is they soon enough discover that there is a hidden well-established culture of workplace bullying. The bullies lie away to their hearts content, knowing that management will completely support them (once they get a position of responsibility at that school it seems to be a free pass' to find a target and start bullying them)! HR is said to have zero interest in reports and/or any documentary evidence that their staff in positions of responsibility lie. So, at that Christian school it is 'okay' to break one of the Ten Commandments? To improve this situation, please read my other comments/suggestions. "

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

"Due to the flow-on effects of mental illness on the other family members, have a means-tested umbrella' support program (e.g. counselling for other family members who are directly impacted too, such as wives/husbands/partners /carers). "

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

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?

Please read my other comments

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?

Please read my other comments

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

Please read my other comments

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

"yes, I think that the Royal Commission is long overdue. It is a great idea and I really hope that significant long-term, positive changes come out of it. "