

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

SUB: 0002.0025.0114

Name

Anonymous

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

"Access for parents to seek and receive support and or/ rehab for their teenage child. According to policy at this time, a person can after the age of just 16 refuse assistance for serious depression and alcohol and drug issues. Therefore the burden of supporting /caring and constantly monitoring a child's safety and mental health rests with the parent."

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?

"Nothing, absolutely nothing is working for our dearly loved mentally ill grandson. He has attempted suicide twice, has self harmed three times. Has threatened his father and destroyed property. Each occasion he has been transported to Emergency, sobered up, been stitched and bandaged, then released back to whence he came to start the devastating cycle again. Highly intelligent but emotionally fragile. Marriage breakdown affected him severely and things have spiralled down ever since. Four years. School refuser. Left/ expelled end of yr 10 , accepted in to another school but refused to attend, claiming the rule was white socks and he only wears black! Sleeps until mid afternoon but plays fortnite computer games all night. Unmotivated/sad/depressed."

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

"Nothing is working. As his grandmother I am terrified he will succeed with suicide. The lad is 17. We have him here with us whenever he wants. We are his soft place to fall but he chooses every time to return to his home and thus back into the unhealthy habit of often roaming the streets, drugs with undesirable 'mates'. His father, our son, is in a desperate position of watching, waiting and doing his utmost to support his child but he's suffering and it is taking a mental and physical toll."

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.

"Sometimes tough decisions need to be enforced. Our young man will never be healed until HE chooses to accept professional help. Why can't an appropriate department support the parent to access in house rehab, paid for by the health system. He will not accept or keep appointments with doctor. Every day and night we're waiting for terrible news. I'm terrified he will die, either by intent or accidentally.. His father has contacted every department possible but the buck is passed. Their edict is simply ""unless he reaches out himself nothing can be done"""

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

N/A

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

"Physical hands on support. Real people skilled and trained to be empathetic, supportive and pro active with the authority, the means and ability to obtain real change. People of all ages are dying because no one is listening. "

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

"Training, listening and enlarge the limited resources available. Programs for disengaged young people. Schools for young people who cannot or will not attend or engage with formal education. Live in facilities for those who require 24 he support to overcome drug and alcohol addictions. Counselling in an informal and safe space conducive for troubled, desperate individuals. Weeks, months of free programs to ensure the mental and physical health until recovery."

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?

I have limited knowledge of what's available but know plenty of what's unavailable. See above 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?

Prior comments cover my thoughts entirely and I don't want to be repetitive.

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

"More money. More stringent overseeing of how that money is used, because it's not working for our situation . Too easy for individuals to back off and say no, sorry, we can't do anything."

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

"Just listen. My husband and I have been married for 51 years, have four children and eleven grandchildren. Our lives and the lives of all whom we love, is in abeyance waiting and hoping our beautiful 17 year old grandson will become well, will grow and be happy and healthy. His life is so sad. He's lazy, unmotivated, meaningless and very sad. He's been in this state of emotional despair for four years. It can't continue. Please just do something. Thank you for reading."