

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Miss Christina Ammazalorso

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

'-Training on how to CARE for/HANDLE people with mental illness. This training should be mandatory for every private and public organisation. -Hiring people with mental illness. -More education in primary schools and high school.

## 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?

"- Psychologists and organisations helping us - More organisations. - Open up a public mental health hospital and living centre for people with all kinds of mental illness. Only extreme serious cases are seen in hospitals and I have struggled with depression, borderline personality disorder and bi polar my whole adulthood. I have had manic episodes, depressive episodes and can't rely on friends and family to be at my side when I need them because they are working and are busy. I have attempted suicide 3 times. Myself and others need somewhere to go to, a public hospital for mental health is what Victoria needs."

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

"If a company (eg. psychology centre) is going through a restructure, then they shouldn't lose people's files and then potentially lose a life. 3-4 years ago, that happened to me. I saw a psychiatrist and then I never heard back from this centre for an appointment. I needed treatment, I needed to talk to somebody, and I couldn't talk to family or friends, and I attempted suicide. I ended up going to my appointment with my mental health nurse and she was appalled to have learnt this, she called them and demanded an answer. Basically, there were changes with management and I ""fell through the cracks"". "

## 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.

"I have been on Centrelink for a bit now. I was unable to work for a long time, and then I started going back to look for work. I was placed with an employment agency that deals with people with disability. In the year I have been there, I have had 5 people assigned to me (and others). Why? because they keep changing staff. 5 different people, who don't know me, who don't know what I am like, don't know my illness. It may have said on their notes what illness I have, but they still don't know me and I don't know them. Now, I am enrolled in a course and start on the 15th of July. [REDACTED] the lady at the job agency, told me I will still need to find a full time job even though I am studying full time. As someone with a mental illness, and experiences high anxiety, the thought of a full time job and full time study along with 160 hours of work placement is too much to comprehend. I sent in a complaint, and the woman who called me to deal with the complaint, [REDACTED] told me that they can't get paid if I don't go to the appointments. To me, that doesn't

sound like someone who cares for my well being. Each time I have dealt with this job agency, I have had panic attacks and the anxiety has flared up my nerve pain in my uterus (caused by Endometriosis). I had to BEG my Centrelink assessor to change job provider, which he has done. This job agency is called [REDACTED] and I don't think they should be working with people with disabilities since they CANNOT provide any level of emotional care or sensitivity. Now as I write this on the 25th of June, [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] has just called saying she needs to book an appointment with me for two weeks. I told her Centrelink has changed my job provider and that will not be necessary, she continued to say that ""It doesn't show on her system"". I told her my assessors name, and what he told me to say to them, and she would not listen to me, would not let me talk. I proceeded to tell her that I don't want to be contacted again by [REDACTED] because I am with a different job provider. The amount of calls I have received from [REDACTED] has felt like harassment. "

**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?**

"Understanding from work. My mother works at [REDACTED], and her management team don't provide enough support for her when she needs to help me with an issue which is causing me extreme anxiety and stress. Her work causes her anxiety if she can't meet a requirement because she needs to provide emotional support."

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

Take the people that don't offer emotional care or sensitivity out of management positions.

**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?**

N/A

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

"More homes for people with mental health. More support, as in more appointments with psychologists, mental health nurses. provide more nurses for mental health. More financial support."

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

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