

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

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Name

[REDACTED]

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

People with Mental illness sometimes have no control of their emotions and outcomes and are misunderstood by these actions as unless you are known to this person it is hard to deal with their actions not knowing the background. I guess family members or friends are the most reliable source of information outside of professionals in these cases.

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?

"Our experience has not been a good one overall at all. Our brother has never really been diagnosed properly and has been a part of the mental health system for many years. Much of it under his own steam, due to privacy issues. When we were involved it was very difficult liaising with health professionals particularly in the hospital where he was admitted due to the time allocation and the type of illness and the medication which didn't seem to be right on most occasions and could never be adjusted due to the fact that our brother was never really followed up to see if it was the right medication. Hence, it felt like a circular system, nothing was being addressed properly. "

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

"Again, as mentioned before, it seems in our situation that following up on patients is crucial. Ongoing long-term care is very crucial. Leaving follow-up care to the family is not fair or right as family are not trained or equipped to deal with this. In our case, our brother became psychotic and a danger to himself /family and public, but because he was not violent as such nothing could be done by us. We contacted Mental Health, but were told that he must be alerted as to who contacted and at the time we were afraid of the consequences. Hence his actions escalated and neighbours alerted police and he was then incarcerated into the mental health system once again. This was the last occasion. Things have not improved since. "

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.

As above

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

NO COMMENT ON THIS TOPIC.

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

Better resources and knowledge as to how to deal with someone who is out of control of their actions and consequences of their actions. Knowing that there is help to deal with this in real time.

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

Possibly better outcomes leading to job satisfaction.

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?

"Allowing them to integrate in the community and feel worthwhile and needed. Most feel unable to help themselves and it can become a vicious circle. Dealing with the mental health issue and also trying to be a part of the working community, even as a volunteer would be a great morale booster for some."

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 resources when it comes to dealing with real time issues and communication with family members who are on the coal face so to speak dealing with the patient

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

"Making sure that those suffering mental illness are monitored for a long time after being admitted and released from the system. I feel this is very important and seems like we fix them and let them go. This has been the case for us anyway. Currently, our brother is not being monitored by Mental Health and will not address this problem by himself so he is lost in the system. His current medication is not correct and this cannot change unless he sees to it himself which will not happen in the present situation. "

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

Not at this stage. Just wanted to be involved in the discussion as I feel there could be a lot more done that is not being done My brother has been in and out of mental health system for many years and nothing has been resolved. Wasted life!!!! There needs to be more follow up with patients and families who are the ones on the 'cold front' so to speak. The families have no idea how to deal with these issues and are usually the ones left with the problems to try and sort out with little or no support. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible as it does not seem to be getting any better.