

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

SUB. 0002.0028.0569

Name

[REDACTED]

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

Increase education on the range of mental health issues. It's not just mental health. Put it in people's faces so it's not so easy to ignore. Put more focus into television. Everyone watches the footy. Everyone watches Home and Away. Everyone watches the news.

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?

People are scared of the system. Change the perspective of it and it may work better. My brother was put into a psych ward so therefore he was seen as a psychopath. He was far from.

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

Increasing the effects of suicide on loved ones left behind.

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.

Money. People think they can't afford a shrink because it's costs heaps. The cost of help is the biggest problem in getting it.

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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 Victoria's 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?

N/A

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

"I don't know how to answer the questions. They aren't just questions, like in a conversation. It's too test like. I feel like I'm doing a test and not telling my brothers story to help. "

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His Story

My name is [REDACTED] and today I write to you about my younger brother [REDACTED], known to us all as [REDACTED]. Born in 1996 he was 16 years younger than me. My mother suffered terribly with post natal depression and my father had no interest in his children, so I practically raised [REDACTED] myself. People often thought he was actually mine.

He was a happy kid, cheeky, and super cute. He loved his big sisters, myself and our other sister [REDACTED], very much growing as a little kid.

When [REDACTED] was 5 years old our mother killed herself. She left the house and took [REDACTED] with her one night and was uncontactable. Then late one night a very old friend of my mother's arrived at our door with [REDACTED] in tow. She said our mother had shown up

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and asked her to take [REDACTED]
home. She said our mother
wouldn't tell her where she was
going. The police found my
mother a few days later in her car
on the side of a country road. She
had taken her own life.

What followed was years of
moving back and forth between
our father and myself and my
other sister. [REDACTED] never had any
sort of counselling and our father
was barely a good man let alone a
good parent.

[REDACTED] often ran away and had a
very troubled life from the age of
about 10 to 16. He became
entangled in the wrong crowds
while he sought acceptance from
anybody who would take him in.
My father died in 2012 when
[REDACTED] was 16. [REDACTED] came to live
with me after a brief period of
being missing and uncontactable.
He had started smoking drugs
and soon became reliant on

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harder drugs as well. As much as I tried to help him and steer him in the right directions he always fell back into the same patterns of a drug fuelled life. But he always managed to find his way back to me. He lived with me for the longest period from 2013 til 2017. He would often come and go, sometimes for as much as a week, but his home was with me.

Early one morning in 2015, after being gone for a week or so, I woke to find [REDACTED] sitting at the end of my bed. He was crying and had attempted to slash at his wrists. He just kept saying "I need help, I need help." I called an ambulance and they took him to the [REDACTED] Hospital. He was admitted to the Psychiatric Unit and stayed there for about a month. During that time he escaped and came home to me but I convinced him he needed to go back, which he did. I

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discharged [REDACTED] myself into my care after a brief meeting with one of the doctors as I could tell that being there was doing him more harm than good. They let him go without so much as a wave goodbye. He came home to me and I tried my best to help him in every way. He went back to school and over time, seemed to be heading in the right direction.

In 2017 [REDACTED] moved out of my house and in with his girlfriend. He had a good job as a concreter and seemed to be going well. Things didn't turn out well and he had to again move back in with me after a horrible break up and volatile situation with the ex girlfriend.

I managed to once again bring him out of a dark place and back into my home. He bounced back with some help and soon had a new job and a new girlfriend and all seemed on the up and up for

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him.

On [REDACTED] 2017, my
brother [REDACTED] ended his own life.

He was 21 years old.

And while this story is only a very
small snippet and a quick
summary that does his suffering
no justice, I can confidently say
the system failed my brother.