

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

SUB.0002.0020.0020

Name

[REDACTED]

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

"There needs to be more education and discussion of mental health issues. The fact that there has been very little press reporting this royal commission speaks volumes. Quite a lot of attention seems to be given to suicide prevention, which is great, but other areas around chronic illnesses need to be understood as well. People with mental health issues need to be treated with greater respect and understanding by many professionals, particularly those in emergency departments. People in recovery should be encouraged to tell their stories, if they want to, so that we can better understand."

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?

"I can only speak from my experience as a carer. There are very highly skilled practitioners in the psych wards who treat patients with respect and great care. They have also treated carers and family support with equal patience and attention. I also think that [REDACTED] are for the most part effective. You are however put on hold for a long time when you ring and if you are in an emergency situation this is a real problem. The main problem has been in emergency departments. The staff have given very little time to assessing the individual. My daughter presented four times at emergency departments over a three day period in full psychotic states after several violent extreme episodes, both causing harm to others and threatening to kill herself. [REDACTED] Upon presentation and the briefest of assessments she was turned away each time with no plan, no medication, no support, nothing. In emergency departments individuals are asked to wait a long time and this can escalate their condition. I would recommend that there is a separate emergency department for psychiatric cases where they can be seen quickly and gently minimising stress."

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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?

"When sick people present at emergency departments family members can give information to help assesment. Family members should be given that opportunity as often the sick person is unable to so, particularly if they are psychotic their thinking is not clear. We should be listened to as well. We need to have a voice. "

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?

"They need housing and they need appropriate, fleible and understanding employment. They need ongoing support in the community. They need recreational and social opportunities. They need agency."

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?

"I would like to see the presentaion and assessment of people in emergency wards be quicker , more thorough and calmer. There needs to more beds available so that people are not turned away from hospitals as my daughter was.. There needs to be more beds for poeple who are not in an acute phase but rather need a longer time in recovery."

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?

"The continual presentation we had to have to emergency department using multiple use of police and ambulances, increased the stress to my daughter and worsened her state. it was an added trauma to herself and we her family. It was also an incredible waste of tapayers money. From what I could see I largely blame the assessing staff whether they were psychiatrists or nurses . I do question their competency. "