

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

Organisation Name

SUB.0002.0024.0020

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

"Revise the nomenclature as reported in the media eg: reference to terms such as 'schizophrenic' and 'mental illness' to explain profile of alleged offender(s). Increase examples/stories of positive outcomes develop recovery champions. "

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?

"Psychiatric nurses provide excellent support for families undergoing lived mental illness experiences' .. involve these skilled people outside the hospital environment eg: community treatment/on going recovery teams and outreach support. Remove privacy of information barriers to enable familial primary carer support. Ensure that the Mental Health Act covers the private sector."

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

" Promote and allow appropriate primary (family) carer interaction on CAT teams."

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.

"Navigating the current Mental Health Act is too difficult for ordinary people. Revise the Mental Health Act to accommodate fluctuations of wellness. Revise the notion of 'competency' as levels fluctuate with levels of wellness. Mandate for 'assisted decision making' to include primary carer-familial member(s)"

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

" Service providers hide behind the mantle of their jobs. Service providers need to be made accountable to primary-carer and mental health client."

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

"Include primary carers in decision making process including NDIS even when the family member objects to their input (due to their illness). Provide appropriate channels for making complaints/feedback that is followed up in a timely and consistent manner (including the Office of the Mental Health Minister). Ensure that requests for meetings with the Office of the Mental Health Minister are addressed appropriately. "

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce,

including peer support workers?

"Provide consistent and good quality training eg: psychiatric nurse, not social worker training for staff dealing with the lived experience' of mental illness."

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?

"The system needs to swing back to a results-based' model, rather than the myopic client-focussed' system that does not deliver long-term mental illness recovery. Currently service providers take no accountability for making bad decisions, hiding behind the concept that they are just following their clients' wishes. Improved carer-advocate funding support. Implement easy access to a Public Advocate/Guardianship scheme to mediate positive outcomes for mental health suffers and their family members possibly through the CAT team intervention(s). For us this was the most supportive time I've had with regards to supporting my primary carer role. The trouble is that to activate this type of 'temporary' support, the Public Advocate/Guardian must be in tune with the family understandings, the implications of 'assisted-decision-making,' and not simply 'impose' their will to close-off the file. From our experience there is a pressing need to undertake a high-level review mechanism to investigate (fraudulent) misuse of taxpayer funds in government to government transactions. "

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

All said above.

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

"Watching families who struggle with mental illness I can say that over the past 30-years the mental health system has deteriorated, definitely not improved. This result is largely due to the client-focus' approach that does not concentrate on positive outcomes. We would like the opportunity to appear in person if possible to provide further information. However due to our need for complete anonymity - request a private hearing."