

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

SUB. 0002.0025.0106

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

N/A

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?

Access needs to be readily available.

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.

"In my experience the system is pretty useless in some aspects. I know several young people who have, over the last several years, been severely let down by the Victorian mental health

system..... The first was experiencing problems and was rational enough to seek help without any provocation. As the young man concerned was of extremely high I.Q. and extremely straightforward, criticising the doctor's conclusion because it was not fitting his symptoms, he was committed to an institution for his attitude. The doctor was unable to accept that the person concerned had an opinion and the doctor was too ignorant (and/or) arrogant to admit his diagnosis was possibly flawed..... The second had slightly higher than average I.Q. and was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, he would seek help, but would be able to convince doctors of whatever he wished, quite a charmer is a way he may have been described. He would sometimes use his prescribed medication, sometimes not. His mania became worse over the last few years, but he could only access a certain amount of help before the free consultations STOPPED. He was also able to walk out, without being committed on numerous occasions, even though he was in a very bad way. His inability to financially access services (as he always put food on the table for the family before his own needs) was probably contributing to his spiralling condition. He became quite strange and irrational, it seems he was attempting to alienate people. The reason became apparent when he committed suicide, He called me, and threatened the lives of all the family and within hours he was dead, leaving a widow and three young children. The third young man was of an average to low I.Q., would become quite paranoid, and seemed to be depressed often. I encountered him one night during my regular walk, he was in a somewhat agitated state and was paranoid in the extreme. 2 days later he suicided. He too had been able to walk out without being committed, even when he was in dire need.. Three young men, only one still with us, five children left without their fathers, who will now need state/federal support because the two fathers are now deceased. The financial cost alone will be immense, and will far

outstrip the cost of proper treatment, let alone the emotional cost.."

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

"Cost is prohibitive for many, they simply DO NOT have the money to get much needed treatment. Treatment should be available for ALL, at NO financial cost, as in my experience this has been a contributing factor in the mental instability of one of the mentioned cases, resulting in suicide."

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 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?

"Review the professionals, so that there are only open minded and caring people in the system. Perhaps limited tenure for all, and a review prior to reemployment.

..... A young man I know was experiencing problems and was rational enough to seek help without any provocation. As the young man concerned was of extremely high I.Q. and extremely straightforward, criticising the doctors conclusion because it was not fitting his symptoms, he was committed to an institution for his attitude, NOT his symptoms. The doctor was unable to accept that the person concerned had an opinion and the doctor was too ignorant (and/or) arrogant to admit his diagnosis was possibly flawed..... ALSO The limited amount of help available before it COSTS the patient financially is, in many cases never enough. Unfortunately many are put in the unenviable position that they would rather put food on the table for their children, than have to pay for their own mental health treatment. This scenario has resulted in the suicide of one very productive member of society, leaving a widow and three children."

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?

"Unfortunately there are people roaming the street, who are in need of help. I do not know of their circumstances, but there are some that are disruptive, abusive and violent, among other problems. I myself have been attacked by a young man who was deranged, perhaps he was insane at the time , perhaps he was drugged..... Also there is one very bad case of a man that hangs around my local area, who emits a continual stream of abuse, that seems to be aimed at an imaginary

companion. This man causes many to retreat to avoid confrontation. It is strange to me that a person like this can actually be walking the streets, I feel he, and society would be better served by the man in question being institutionalised and treated, hoping that the treatment provided would boost his quality of life and make him a productive member of society. In scepticism, perhaps the government would prefer he was suicidal, to solve the problem another way.."