

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Ms Alemitu Furssa

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

Listen to the family who know the person with the mental illness the best..... I told the psychiatrist at the psychiatric ward at [REDACTED] Hospital [REDACTED] that my son was not well enough to be discharged. He did not listen and my son died only a few weeks later.

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?

provide real ongoing serious support. Like if you had cancer. Then my son would have had a large team of medical workers around him.

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

Listen to the family. Do not discharge people just because they are the least unwell . Do not have rules like the Doctors have to discharge 3 people a day. Because when people are discharged too early they die!!!! T

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.

No follow up after discharge. Follow up not taken seriously.

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

English is my families second language and this has been very a very difficult to talk.

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

"Include us in the meetings, to gather information, get to know us, take us seriously and keep us in the loop. My son was only 18 years old. He was in Stepping Stones at Monash hospital when he was 16 and 17 and at that service we were included in all the decisions and the meetings. My son would still be alive if the Adult service operated like the young person's service."

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

My best support was from the Family Peer Support Worker. She was the only one that explained things to me and tried to help me keep my son in hospital. She understood what I was going through and how bad the decisions were.

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?

Individual programs that are set up before they leave the hospital. Make sure the patient is stable on their medication before they leave the hospital. My son was discharged to the Community Care Unit. There was very little supervision at CCU. It was so casual and felt like no care. He was too young to be in this Adult service. I told the workers at the CCU he still needed to be in hospital and they agreed but the hospital would not agree. I knew he was at risk of suicide and I was ignored.

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?

Longer term secure community beds for at risk patients. There are only few available and a 8 month waiting list!

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

More money and take people's mental health SERIOUSLY!.

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

My friend helped me fill in the form because my English is not good. This is the second son I have lost due to suicide. My first son died at the age of 19. He was very sick and the support was useless. I knew my son was very unwell and the Doctor and the hospital ignored me and now my son is dead. He died on the 18th April 2019. I hope the coroner's inquest and the Royal Commission brings about changes to helping young people like my two sons. my family and myself will never be the same again.