

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

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Name

████████████████████

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

"My daughter ██████████ died by suicide in 2011. Whilst in the public psych ward of the ██████████ in 2009 or 2010 (I am unsure of the exact date) she was abused physically by staff. Including security guards using pressure point physical assault on her. ██████████ weighed approximately 42kgs and was 5ft 3in tall. She was tiny and she was on by 6 staff and security. I was on the phone to her when this happened. They attacked her for being depressed and teary. It was so distressing. ██████████ was LUCKY she had private health insurance and I moved her to ██████████ clinic. The difference between public and private is night and day. She was constantly abused and mistreated in the private hospitals by STAFF. it's a culture that's needs to change. I 100% applaud a royal commission inquest. "

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?

Private mental health. They care. Public don't. It's abusive and inhuman.

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

I honestly can't answer that. But not abuse or mistreatment of vulnerable mentally unwell humans. The public hospital was like prison.

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.

It is a very hard system to navigate and find help. Public are all about the patient being acutely unwell and kicked out as soon as they (a dr wants a free bed) feel like it. It's absolutely disgusting. There needs to be a flow chart to give clear guide to finding appropriate help. Especially when the patient in a crisis.

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

Not enough education in schools and especially teachers. Some kids are labelled trouble makers. When really they are mentally unwell. Education sessions for parents to know the signs. And teachers.

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

Parents are not allowed to know anything because the patient has privacy rights. I get that BUT parents are left in the dark and yet we are the ones that are the main support for them in most cases the only support. Mental health patients are trying and it's so difficult and draining to cope

as a parent when you are only trying to keep them alive.

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

Firstly get rid of the staff that are not suited to working in mental health. I as a nurse myself know for a fact that working in psych is commonly spoke about by staff as a Bludge. In their training they need to have REAL parents speak to humanise these patients. I can give a real account of how mental health patients are commonly discussed as nuts in the nursing industry and put down as attention seekers. It's disgusting. Real change needs to happen.

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?

Real opportunities to help them work and improve their day to day skills. Workshops in hospitals to help them. Not gave them sitting in a hospital doing nothing.

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?

"Caring staff for starters. Staff that want to make a difference not just turn up to work to socialise with other staff. Have the staff involved with patients to engage not just sit at a desk on their phones. Cameras in common areas. Improve with therapies. Photography, art, story writing. Most people with mental illness are very creative. Drama. Singing. Etc..... . "

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

Improve the settings of the hospitals. They are like old and scary buildings and not welcoming at all. Clinical

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

██████ was treated so badly it still haunts me. As a mother I felt helpless and I couldn't protect her from the monsters in the public system. I was so grateful I got her out of the public system but there were plenty left behind and they had no one to advocate for them. You can't even tell you how bad it was.