

Your contribution

Should you wish to make a formal submission, please consider the questions below, noting that you do not have to respond to all of the questions, instead you may choose to respond to only some of them.

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

- Active community engagement / awareness work from grassroots and government levels, and all between
- Zero tolerance of mental health - based discrimination in work & schools; safe reporting when such things arise
- A focus on lived experience from individuals & carers that demonstrates & gives a voice to recovery and the person as a whole rather than an illness or diagnosis.

2. 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?

- Increased funding & staffing of early intervention services
- Greater GP, school wellbeing coordinator, etc. awareness and screening capacity, & thorough referral pathways.
- Universal, ~~and~~ indicated, and targeted approaches to increasing knowledge of available healthcare services and how to navigate mental health system.
- Increase 10 Medicare session to higher number, &/or decrease gap.

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

- Increased engagement & follow-up w/ suicide survivors, and individuals experiencing acute and/or chronic suicidal ideation & behaviour
- Safe & available supports, on phone & in person.
- Address & change language around suicide. "Completed suicide / suicided" ~~rather~~ or "died by suicide / due to mental health" rather than "committed suicide".

4. 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.

- Sociocultural pressures, culture of hard work driving people toward physical, emotional, psychological burnout.
- Disconnect between self, others, world, role.
- Must normalise that mental health fluctuation is common.
- Stigma w/in health profession field, and workplaces individuals exist in, making access to support difficult.
- Thresholds of being "sick enough" vs "not sick enough" should be erased

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

- Lack of access, financially { in terms of geography, knowledge of services, difficulty navigating same.
- Socioeconomic divide
- Cultural and linguistic barriers and easy to access
- Empathetic, patient, non-judgemental "services should be the rule, not the exception."

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

- Access to sound information, hope, and support.
- MHCPs, carers' days of leave.
- Messages of hope from professionals & others w/ lived experience (peer work).

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

- Good, sound, empowering support models w/in workplace
- Encourage of balance and recognition of needs spanning work, physical, social, emotional, and psychological domains.
- Positive work culture free from stigma/discrimination.

8. 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?

- Peer mentoring improves both social & ~~economic~~ economic as it increases access to adjunct & vital services that save lives and enhance wellbeing across all domains of life, including returning to work/study and connecting.

9. Thinking about what Victoria's mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?

- Comprehensive care provided/available/accessible to all persons, irrespective of SES, background, demographic, mental ill health type/severity.
- Do not streamline incongruent services etc. solely to save re: budget/money.

10. What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victoria's mental health system and support improvements to last?

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

It is absolutely vital that mental health remains a key priority. People are dying everyday, and countless more consumers and carers are living with the incredibly spanning and harmful effects of mental health challenges. Everyone deserves a right to & opportunity for relief from mental ill health, and the role of psychologists, GPs, nurses, psychiatrists, teachers, peer workers, counsellors, workplaces, and all individuals in fostering this is irreplaceable, invaluable, and undeniable.

Privacy
acknowledgement

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Yes No