

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

SUB. 0002.0032.0172

Name

[REDACTED]

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

"Education and awareness, so many people still don't understand the challenges some people face with mental illness because there is often little physical signs. People are often told to get over it Smile you'll be fine Education needs to cover all areas, depression, bipolar, suicide, anxiety, adhd, autism, global delays. PTSD, post natal depression etc "

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?

"Mental health care plans are working well but need to be unlimited if required. 10 is often not enough and the rebate needs to be higher or fees capped. Families just can't afford help and with massive delays in the public system these people are waiting too long for help and like a friend, committing suicide. "

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

"The inclusion of lifeline info in tv shows or stories relating to mental health or suicide. More mental health first aid workshops are needed, specially around rural communities where resources are scarce and suicide rates are high. "

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.

"Unless you fit in a perceived box, you're pushed aside because the services are overloaded. I'm struggling to help my son, but he's not a priority because he won't engage and we are left with no one. No help. No support. I spent over \$800 last year on a private psychologist to only be sent off to ICHMS. Who in turn told me they can't do anything because my son wouldn't engage and I'm parenting as they expect. We have no where else to go. No where else to seek support of help. My sons mental health and self esteem is on a downward spiral and Im supporting him the best I can but he needs specialised care to intervene before it becomes worse. Before he turns to drugs to dull the pain or suicide. "

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

"Stress, fatigue, over work, money issues, lack of local resources, the need to travel hours for specialist appointments, costs of local private resources, long wait time or no public services available. "

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

"Support for families. Some one to listen, not be given false hope and then be moved along. Even if you can't work with the child because they can't engage, support the parent. I'm burnt out. My relationships are breaking down because I'm honestly tired. "

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

"Better pay, training and support. Make the area attractive to work and specialise in. "

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?

"More community events, more support workers, more awareness and education on mental health. Reduce stigma so people aren't afraid to ask for help. "

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?

"By the time an ADHD child becomes a teenager they will have heard 12,000 more negative messages. What do you think this does for their mental health? It needs funding, parents need support, teachers need education and support to understand and manage. These kids need support NOW. This support also must be offered rurally and be affordable and accessible. "

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

"Funding changes and attitude changes. The lack of understanding, recognition or acknowledgment of the ADHD kids and adults we have now only adds to the stigma. Making sure any changes are locked in by government funding and seen as a priority. The royal commission has the power to change the perception of ADHD and make recommendation for changes to support children, families and schools. "

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

"The royal commission has the power to change the perception of ADHD and make recommendation for changes to support children, families and schools. I generally fear for my child's future. He needs help and he needs help now. Don't let these kids become the mental health or drug issue of tomorrow. The Royal Commission has the power to make changes NOW. You have the chance to change lives, change the stigma, change the system so that parents have support and don't feel so alone. So that kids can get the coaching and support they need. So teachers can access training, resources and funding for the classroom. "

To the commissioner,

I'm submitting today about the lack of support for adults and children suffering from ADHD and the many co-morbid conditions such as Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD) anxiety and so on. This is even more so in rural areas.

The lack of specialist mental health experts available to work in the Wimmera region is shocking. In April 2019 at age 7 my son was diagnosed with impulsive ADHD, ODD and anxiety. This is after seeking mental care professionals including (ICHMS) to deal with his symptoms since 2 years of age. We were sent to ICHMS after seeing the only available child psychologist in the area (now moved to Adelaide) on a mental health care plan that still left me over \$800 out of pocket. To only be passed off to ICHMS because things were escalating.

The level of care I feel I've received with my son has been extremely poor. Their reason is that because my son won't engage and I'm doing everything expected as a parent they cannot help us.

Meanwhile my son is struggling at school, unable to engage with his peers and will often come home and say things like:

"I'm a dumb kid, no one likes me."

"Everyone hates me"

"I wish I was dead"

"If you got a new better kid then I would just leave so you don't have a dumb kid like me."

"I do want to be kind, I don't mean to hurt my friends."

"I have no friends, no one wants to play with me."

How can my son and his struggles be continually pushed aside? There's very little resources available locally, without the need for hours of travel or at an affordable rate for young families to achieve finally. My son is struggling, I'm struggling as a parent to be able to help and support him. It's having an affect on my stress and mental health, relationships and work. I very honestly believe my son is on the path to be tomorrow's drug problem, wayward teenager or suicide victim.

There is no NDIS funding for kids with ADHD over seven years of age. There is no financial support in any way. Even if there was, there is an extreme lack of professionals that specialise in behaviours locally and easily accessible without huge travel and appointment wait times.

The royal commission has the power to change the perception of ADHD and make recommendation for changes to support children, families and schools.

Don't let these kids become the mental health or drug issue of tomorrow. The Royal Commission has the power to make changes NOW. You have the chance to change lives, change the stigma, change the system so that parents have support and don't feel so alone. So that kids can get the coaching and support they need. So teachers can access training, resources and funding for the classroom.

I sincerely ask you to review ADHD and other behavioural disorders in your review. Without you, kids will continue to fail and families will fall apart.

Thank you,



Below are a few facts sources on the rates of ADHD and the amount of negative messages this children will hear compared to a normally functioning child.

In the 1950s 1 in 25,000 children were diagnosed with Autism.

in 1975 1 in 15,000; in 2000 1 in 2500; in 2012, 1 in 33 children between 5 and 9 were diagnosed in Australia (ABS figures)

Based on trends since 1980, it is estimated that by 2020, this figure will reach 1 in 20 and unless prevented, will reach 1 in 5 by 2030. The incidence of ADHD has already reached 1 in 10 and still rising.

Source: Autism-ADHD foundation - Doncaster Vic.

ADHD. The kids are struggling with no support or funding available and families are struggling. These 1 in 10 kids will be tomorrow's mental health crisis.

By the time an ADHD child becomes a teenager they will have heard 12,000 more negative messages. What do you think this does for their mental health? Source: Lou brown – ADHD coach, Perth.

It needs funding, parents need support, teachers need education and support to understand and manage. These kids need support NOW.