

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

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

"The stigma and discrimination lies strongly within the each government sector and their ability to shift duty of care to another government department, through back door policies with no transparency for patients basic human rights. Community Organisations, have proven success through delivering a clear streamlined approach to mental health. Across the board they do not block access, discriminate, judge or compromise patient and family needs. If you want to improve stigma and discrimination ask Community Organisations to train Mental Health Professionals. "

### **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?**

"Children's Mental Health is in dire need of action across every sector, with high importance to children under 12. This current sector of mental health is extremely embarrassing for any State in Australia, as well as completely illegal, with no governance on any sector to stop this from happening, let alone help these children before it's too late and the damage is either life long, suicide. Sadly they are the voice that are too young to be heard and the most disadvantaged of all with mental health in Victoria. Online and Community Supports are leading the way in delivering better outcomes for anyone who has or is in need of mental health support. "

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

"Ongoing support, rather than help in the crisis and lack of care after."

### **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.**

"Improvements for Children Under 10 Ambulance, Police and Psych Triage to have a clear transparent approach to helping children in crisis. Police and Ambulance do not even have the correct guidelines for which hospital a child should be taken to for a psych evaluation. Accountability, Duty of Care with Information for families on what to expect during and after a crisis. More hospital facilities for children experiencing mental illness either long term or crisis support. Children's Hospitals refusing to help a child who doesn't live in their region, yet has no access to any other hospital which has their facilities. Actual diagnoses through tests with specialists, this ensures there is support and ongoing help for families to ensure their children feel safe loved and understood regardless if it is a mental health episode or long term mental illness. "

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

Child Protection do not have any respect for children experiencing Mental Health Facilities. Mental Health and Child Protection need to work in tandem to understand what a family and a child is

going through before the make any decisions.

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

"Listen to them, understand their concerns are real Stop deflecting a question when asked by a family Tools to help their family memeber not just a tick box of what should be done."

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

Accountability for their roles within each section Ongoing Training into updated manuals for mental health guidelines Systems with process flow and protocols aligned to duty of care per department

**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?**

Mental and Intellectual Disability has become so split that they no longer view people with intellectual disabilites as people who may also suffer or need mental health services

**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?**

"Alignment between goverment agencies, facilities."

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

Accountability

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

"My twin daughters who were 9 at the time experienced a mental crisis. One twin is diagnosed with an intellectual disability. Both girls had the mental breakdown, during this time they threatened to kill our oldest and youngest daughters as well as us. Not only did they threaten they made several attempts. After three days of calling psych triage, who called the police and for two days we had police arrive who laughed and walked away On the third day psych triage called police and asked for this to be taken serious as they had threatened to stab their oldest sister during the night and we woke up to find the other twin holding sissors over her baby sister, due to this they were taken to an adult hospital where they could not recieve a psych evaluation. We spent 12 hours in emergency, slept in short stay only in an adult hospital only for one twin to be admitted into a childrens hospital. On arrival at the childrens hospital, we were taken to a small childrens mental health ward. Where the other twin was turned away as they do not take sbiblings as they contaminate each others chance to recover. I argued this for several hours before i took the twin who was not allowed to be treated into the hospitals childrens emergency ward. I explained that i would need her to at least have a psych evaluation before i felt safe to bring her home, 6 hours later we were refused and when i asked if they could release her from their district so i could take her to another hospital, i was told no as this wasnt in the other twins best interest for her to also be seen at another hospital Both girls were involved in the attempts and threats to kill our family, both girls admitted this to police, ambulance staff and the only reason they picked her sister for treatment was due to the fact the she didnt have an intellectual disability. We were asked to remove her from the hospital as no one could her her. I called four alternate childrens

hospitals who all said they were shocked and when i cried and begged for them to see her they all said no as she wasnt in their region. Child Protection advised that this was mental health and not their problem. Mental Health stated other children were involved in their plans to kill us, if we were concerned for our other daughters safety we should call child protection. This went on for 6 months before my partner had a mental breakdown and our home became so dangerous for our oldest and youngest daughter that we have had to remove one twin from our home. How on earth can Mental Health allow this to happen Twin 9 year old girls have a what is through to be a trauma induced crisis in Oct 2018. Jan 2019- 1 ambulance, 3 police cars arrive out our home, to where they are taken by ambulance under police guard to hospital, whilst i drove behind the ambulance April 2019- As a family we make a heart breaking choice to volountarily remove one twin from our home. As a Child Protection request, as the threats to kill did not stop and as parents we were told they needed to close the case as it had been 90 days and they werent seeing any improvements to her mental health.. Mental Health Practioners working with our family were not even informed or agreed with this choice. Please know prior to this starting in Oct 2018 we have never had child protection, police ever arrive at our home, be involved with our family in any way. We still have no idea what caused this, how we could have helped her. "