

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Miss Molly Tilbrook

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

"Mental illness is a complex topic, because each individual's experience with mental illness will be unique. There is not one way to treat mental illness. I do not believe that the focus should be on treating mental illness, but rather on helping individuals cope and introducing more preventative measures. Most people that suffer with depression, for example, will likely have to deal with this their entire lives. I believe we need to focus on helping people develop the skills and have access to necessary resources to help them better manage their depression. The emphasis needs to be taken off the word "treat". This word suggests that we have not achieved our goals if we cannot cure people. Mental illness is not something that has a quick fix. We need to focus on helping people live their best lives so that they can manage their symptoms. Rather than using drugs as a coping mechanism, we need to empower people to identify situations where they are happiest and best able to cope. "

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?

"Psychiatric units do not support individuals. After spending time in one myself, I grew to hate myself and my life. They take away freedoms and the rights of individuals, and suggest to them that they have caused their own mental health problems. People should not feel at fault or like they are to blame for their mental illnesses. They should be made to feel empowered and like they are in control, not like they do not belong in the work. Taking away individual rights, as well as access to the outside world, does not support people in developing coping mechanisms to reduce their mental health symptoms. "

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

"There is more awareness in schools and workplaces. However, people are made to feel at fault for their illness and this contributes to people feeling like they want to end their lives. The increasing work pressures and social media does not help. "

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.

"Accessing resources is expensive and not everyone can afford them. Additionally, people are concerned that if they confess how they are really feeling they will be taken away from their current lives and placed in hospital-something that no one wants. There is fear over getting help, because there are repercussions to reaching out. "

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

"There is increasing pressure to work hard, look a certain way and be constantly connected. We need to reduce these pressures and stresses and support each other. "

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

"Financial support, training on how best to help loved ones deal with symptoms. "

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

"Make it more financially appealing, the pay is currently low and people don't feel supported to enter the mental health workforce. "

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?

N/A

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A