

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

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Name

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

Why are you able to go to the GP - bulk billed etc as many times as you want and yet you only get 10 sessions a year to see a mental health practitioner? Mental health practitioners should be as available as GP services. Drug and alcohol rehabilitation support services should also be better funded and prioritised for people with children

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?

We must continue to destigmatise mental health and provide support for families not just individuals.

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

There are not enough services and not enough mental health beds available in Victoria to meet demand

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.

"People are often in housing stress, family dysfunction, low employment, all these factors impact a person's mental wellbeing. It is important that mental health practitioners are able to connect patients to a network of support services. Try to feel happy when you can't make rent and have a robo-debt from Centrelink is impossible "

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

"People are often in housing stress, family dysfunction, low employment, all these factors impact a person's mental wellbeing. It is important that mental health practitioners are able to connect patients to a network of support services. Try to feel happy when you can't make rent and have a robo-debt from Centrelink is impossible. Urban sprawl, debt, long commutes, social isolation, time poverty, all contribute to stress and anxiety, and reduces a family's capacity to meet the needs of a person in crisis. We need better urban planning outcomes and public transport to reduce the individual cost burden and better connect people to essential services without the need for a private vehicle."

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

"I am shocked that despite having a mother with mental ill-health and alcohol addiction I have never once been offered or advised to seek mental health support. Despite taking on a lot of

responsibility as a child, despite taking over care for my younger sibling while she completed school not once were we offered any support. There could be a threshold that isn't at the level of child protection but at least education material or a pamphlet of services that might have been available to us, or being offered a mental health support program by association without needing to go through the process of applying as an individual. "

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

"Employ more people, more funding, they are overworked and underpaid. "

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?

"The process of job acquisition is ruthless and solely destroying. There should be pathways for support not ""lets help with your resume"" but real help so people can get more on the job training and have a support person post job acquisition not just to get the job but to ensure it can be maintained and is good for the employer and employee "

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?

"A holistic approach - housing, financial planning, mental health services, legal aid, support for family, Build a comprehensive picture of the pressures that person is experiencing in their life and help them proactively navigate solutions - just talking about historical events and triggers is waste of time "

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

"Create a housing first approach: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Housing_First But by this it must include not just those experiencing homelessness but also those in housing stress because this is a bigger trigger. Renting is precarious, cost of housing is too high. We need more affordable housing solutions"

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

"You must spend money now or you spend more money later and you get the added bonus of many many more people having to suffer. Families need support! Kids need support! People want to contribute, we need to empower them to be their best selves. But they need to feel safe and loved by society and at the moment life is very, very hard, and everything is against them. "