

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

Organisation Name

Find our Way Psychology & Life Coaching

Name

Mr Joseph Gagliano

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?

"Some states have advertisements, and campaigns, about awareness into mental health. However, many campaigns are published or displayed very late at night, and not in peak hour of media watching. Governments need to be encouraged to put more money into proactive programmes. Mental health community centres, hubs, may be very useful to decrease stigma of mental health. Possibly introducing programmes into school syllabus to explain it as part of overall health issues may be of good use. Importantly, having affordable access to psychological treatment is crucial. While the Medicare rebates are useful, two levels of rebate stops large numbers of people needing treatment from psychologists who are experienced who often can only have their existing or potential clients entitled to a lower rebate. "

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

"Having Lifeline and beyond blue is crucial. But it is not sufficient, and there require proactive interaction with people at risk. This requires more psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers who are aware of people in danger or at risk, access more affordable and timely treatment. "

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.

"Many personal issues. Access to services, support , community to help "

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

N/A

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

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?

"A crucial element which is missing is timely, appropriate treatment for people experiencing mental health crises. In the 1980's many mental health institutions (such as Sunbury, Larundel, North and Mont Park) were closed down. At the time the justifications were that these places were outdated, and inappropriate. It was also suggested that the community would care for these people. However, services in the community were not put in place. Also, there have been increase in populations in Victoria and the services are insufficient. While in the 1980's the criminal justice

system had places such as [REDACTED] which were inappropriate, it was not suggested these place be closed down, and allow the community to care for the prisoners. More money and services were developed by building new prisons with better facilities. Currently, Victorians with mental health crises predominantly have the mainline and mainstream hospital system to access. This often interacts with police to access the hospitals. All of this creates further distress for those in crisis. For those having a mental health crisis, or episode, it may be quite different to what is expected (it may not be pure anxiety ? could be a psychotic episode, with many variations). In emergency departments many staff (nurses, doctors) are not experienced purely in mental health. Many doctors, specialists who attend in emergency may be cardiac, orthopaedic, emergency specialists ? not necessarily mental health. And for people having episodes, sitting in a bright, noisy, loud, energised environment is the antithesis of best treatment. When these people often escalate behaviour due to delays in treatment, or their distress, it can become a code grey, which requires attendance of security ? exacerbating the episode. A solution is to have dedicated mental health facilities, hospital, homes. Modern versions of the psychiatric hospitals is necessary. Private mental health facilities are expensive, and have limited numbers. What is required is large public hospitals which specialise in mental health ? in the one location. An emergency department staffed by mental health nurses, social workers, psychologists and doctors, would decrease many problems. If these hospitals have specialists in mental health (such as psychiatrists, psychologists) on site, like in public hospitals where specialists do rounds in wards, then if a serious episode occurred in emergency, then these specialists would be on site. And by having specially trained security staff would allow safety for patients, and staff. These public mental health hospitals, with comfortable settings (many gardens, greenery within) would need to be located in various areas. One hospital alone would be insufficient. There would be a requirement for a number of hospitals, in different area, regionally. Hospitals in central area (such as between St Vincents's and Royal Melbourne); One in the southern region (possibly located between Moorabbin and Oakleigh); Northern region ? possibly around Epping or Thomastown or Craigieburn); Western area "

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

N/A