

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

Organisation Name

Wodonga Senior Secondary College

Name

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

"- community education such as teen mental health first aid, particularly aimed at people at vulnerable transition points in life, such as transition to high school, pregnancy, etc. - normalising mental health in communication with the community "

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?

"What is working well: - once young people actually get in to a service, individual therapy is working well sometimes. - we have a well resourced wellbeing team at our school, however other schools do not and thus it's often too late by the time adolescents get to us in year 10. - locally, People on the ground who can actually case manage is great, once significant time has been spent on wait lists. What can be done better: - Families taking responsibility and being educated on how to improve/prevent mental health of their children eg diet, screen time, sleep, positive relationships - society taking responsibility for reducing the trauma of young people ie neglect, DV, sexual assault - we need as a whole to be speaking out, running programs, educating on bystander impact and increasing personal protective factors - locally, Headspace aren't early intervention because people are waiting too long to speak to someone (current wait time is 3 months in Wodonga). - Resilience building through community connection and belonging not purely falling back on schools - community connection - face to face connection is needed in the community as a prevention to feelings of isolation, disconnect and subsequent mental health. - Early screening of young people (such as that proposed in the proposed Wodonga project) with a focus on primary schools. "

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

"- As above in question 2, but also greater NECAMHS capacity is needed so that they can actually respond when a child is suicidal (currently this is very difficult to access their service with a child in crisis). - Drugs are tearing Wodonga apart, and homelessness and DV. what's working well: teen mental health first aid provided to all of our students at year 10. "

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.

"- extensive wait lists, - poor or non-existent communication between services, - services are not being proactive in seeking of consent for sharing info between involved services. - there appears to be a high prevalence within our school community of families with parents who are not education or proactive or resourced to understand or meet the mental health needs of their children, and are not proactive at following through with seeking support, even when this is

scaffolded and initiated by ourselves. "

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

"- drugs, - violence, - social media, - homelessness, - family breakdown, - low aspiration, - low SES, - lack of services/supports/early connections in regional areas - stigma associated with accessing mental health support in small communities with a lack of anonymity. - extremely long wait lists in regional areas"

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

"- Connection, - belonging, - advice, - support with stress, - education around mental health. - clear information about mental health services and the referral/intake/waitlist/criteria processes/policies of mental health services - there is a lot of confusion and parents often stop trying after one unsuccessful or 'inappropriate' attempt to seek mental health support for their child. - education and supports on how to bring up children - parents don't appear to understand the developmental stages and needs, particularly in adolescence. NB: once children are involved in ongoing support with our local CAMHS, NECAMHS are very good at working with both children and parents/carers towards the needs of the child. "

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

"- Employ people who are actually qualified, trained, experienced, so that they don't burn out. - Have realistic case loads and supervision and clear roles (with supervisors also being qualified and trained!), - longer term funding (so that people have I"

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?

"- We need to lower stigma which is not helped by financial support being based on disability' payment - lack of understanding of the NDIS increases stigma and decreases access to support. - peer support programs can work, as long as peer support mento"

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?

NA

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

"- Communication with all relevant stakeholders. - training psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, counsellors, who are willing to work regionally. - have a bipartisan long term grand mental health vision - it won't last if it's only for the term of the current government, obviously. "

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

"- people not profit! - however, even just financially, please understand how much crisis intervention is costing this country, and invest in early intervention to stem the flow for the future. Also, obviously, please also invest in crisis intervention adequately until such time as the early

intervention we hope for has had time to do its job! "