

Lynda Knight

<p><b>Your contribution</b></p> <p><b><i>Should you wish to make a formal submission, please consider the questions below, noting that you do not have to respond to all of the questions, instead you may choose to respond to only some of them.</i></b></p>	
1.	<p>What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian community's understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?</p>
	<p>For people who have spent time in the prison system I believe that there needs to be more opportunities to promote recovery. This needs to be in the form of supportive accommodation, counselling &amp; employment.</p>
2.	<p>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?</p>
	<p>More education for families to identify potential issues &amp; seek meaningful help. This may be in the form of support groups aimed @ more sectors of the community. More promotion and discussions need to take place to encourage people to seek out support from Family Drug Help, Al Anon, and Centre Against Sexual Assault. All free to the community</p>
3.	<p>What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?</p>
	<p>Taking the stigma away is important. I love the fact that after conversations on challenging topics there is always a disclosure on how &amp; where to reach out for help if triggered. Sportsmen recognising that there mental health is more important than living a lie. Honest communication.</p>
4.	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Many people that I have become aware of are struggling with substance abuse that is coinciding with mental health issues. It is extremely hard for individuals trapped in this space to be able to go through the steps &amp; maintain a window of clarity to seek recovery &amp; gain freedom for health issues.</p> <p>Many come before the courts &amp; magistrates need to have more options available to them to sentence people to in house residential services rather than prison. Prisons are not conducive to recovery for young offenders. The Government need to find compulsory rehabilitation centres as the cost may be similar however the opportunity may be for more beneficial better value for money.</p>
5.	<p>What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?</p>
	<p>Lack of community activities. Lack of small town investment. Established families seem to be stand offish towards newcomers. Community is too open &amp; engaging. Everyone seems to know every ones business however tend to engage in honest communication. Alcohol is often the centre of socialising.</p>
6.	<p>What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?</p>

They need to have support groups more available which offer education and an opportunity to share in a confidential & safe anonymous environment. Give more resources to groups like this to make visits to secondary education centres, sport groups etc. Consider the Family Drug help & al anon. FDH are willing to accept funding .Al Anon will not however there could be more introducing from Health professionals to these support groups.

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

Pay the better and give them greater support. They need not to feel isolated & overwhelmed. Their needs to be triage structures to prevent too much personal reliance. People with mental health issues need to be engaged and enjoy aspects of recover. There needs to be a chance to have fun and engage in mainstream activities. Too much time is spent in isolation or likeminded substance users.

8. 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?

There needs to be a greater willingness for business & employment agencies to have an allocation of job roles available to help people affected to feel inclusive in society. Mirror positive behaviour is a great start.

9. 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?

No one is to give the magistrates more power/options to send people to compulsory rehab which is great funded. Too many don't know they have an issue. Given space from an environment via early intervention could saves lives and family relationships. Family & support people should be provided with @ least 6 weeks of 2 hour education on how to understand mental illness and the influence from drugs. Refer Arrow Health and Sharc in focus programs .Awareness of services needs to be more prominent in courts, schools and grass roots sporting clubs.

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

Make some decisions and provide funds communicating expectations and give KPI expectation & guidelines. Ensure that there is a balance of employed professionals with the relevant skills to offer guidance and material to be used in peer support groups for families & these struggling with mental health/substance abuse issues.

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

Be brave ,open eyes ,be realistic

Something needs to happen as there are too many homeless & marginalised people in our community. Making services such as Centrelink easier to navigate would be an advantage. This service is inflexible and lacks compassion it is too challenging for people with mental health issues.

Odyssey House is fantastic and the WD plan provided by Fines Vic is brilliant. It could be more publicised by legitimate service providers to help people who are struggling with recovery. The stress of finances can be overwhelming.

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acknowledgement

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Yes  No