

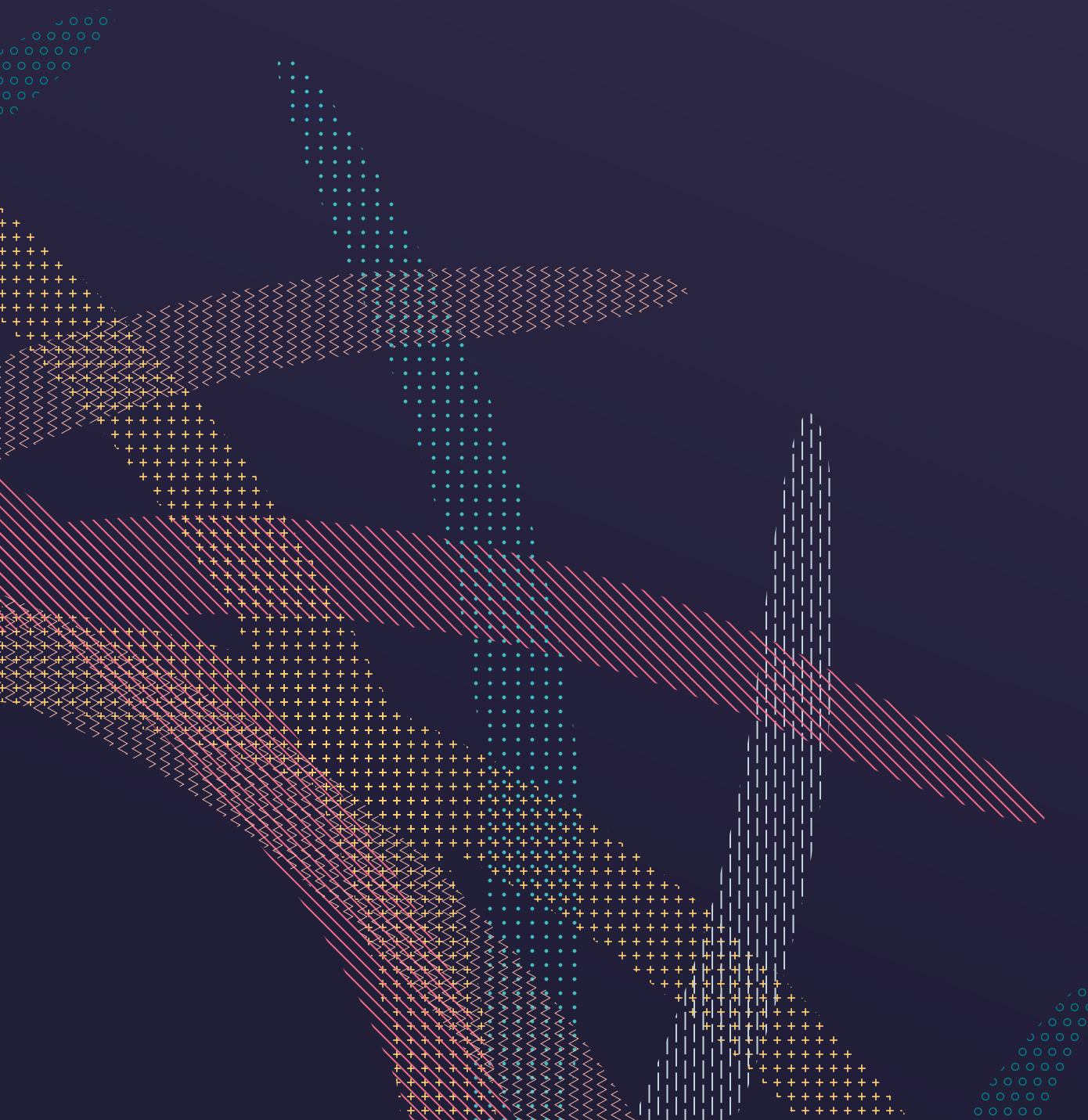


Royal Commission into
Victoria's Mental Health System

Final Report

What we found out

Easy Read version



What we found out

Easy Read version

Published February 2021

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Melbourne Victoria, authorised and published this document.

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This plain language report is a simplified version of the *Final Report*. The content and ideas presented in this report are similar, however, they are not the direct words of the Commissioners.

The images in this document only show models and examples of settings. They don't necessarily show actual services, facilities or participants. If the image is of a specific person or place, the document will say that. This document may include images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have died.

In this document, 'Aboriginal' means both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We use 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' when it's part of the title of a report, program or quote.

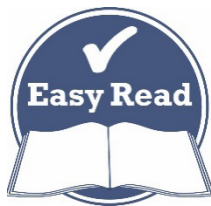
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Available at the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System website <www.rcvmhs.vic.gov.au>. If you have any questions about the Commission's work please contact the Department of Health <MentalHealth@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

How to use this report



The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (RCVMHS) wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means the RCVMHS.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 32.



This Easy Read report is a summary of another report. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website at **rcvmhs.vic.gov.au**



You can ask for help to read this report.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



In this report, we talk about some things that might upset some people.



If you read things that upset you, you should tell someone you trust.



In this report we also talk about suicide.
Suicide is when someone chooses to end their own life.

If you need to talk to someone, please contact:



Lifeline

13 11 14



Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

What's in this report?

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About the Royal Commission



A **Royal Commission** is an official way of looking into a big problem.



It helps us work out:

- what went wrong
- what we can fix.



This Royal Commission is about how we look after Victorian people with **mental health** needs.



Your mental health is about how you:

- think
- feel
- manage your feelings.



In Victoria, 1 in 2 people will need support with their mental health in their life.



The Victorian Government heard how people with mental health needs were not getting the right support.

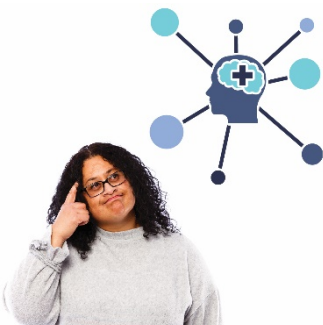
They wanted to find out about:



- mental health services and supports in Victoria



- how the mental health **system** works in Victoria



- what people think about the mental health system in Victoria.



A system includes things that are:

- connected with each other
- work together.



The Royal Commission found out that the mental health system in Victoria is not working well.

We wrote a report that looked at:



- the main problems we found



- how to make the mental health system better.

Who we talked to



We talked to lots of different people during the Royal Commission.

We talked to:



- people who need support with their mental health



- families



- carers



- supporters

We also talked to:



- mental health workers



- researchers



- service providers.

We talked to:



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



- **LGBTIQ+** people – LGBTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning.



- people from different **cultures**.

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up.

They told us what:



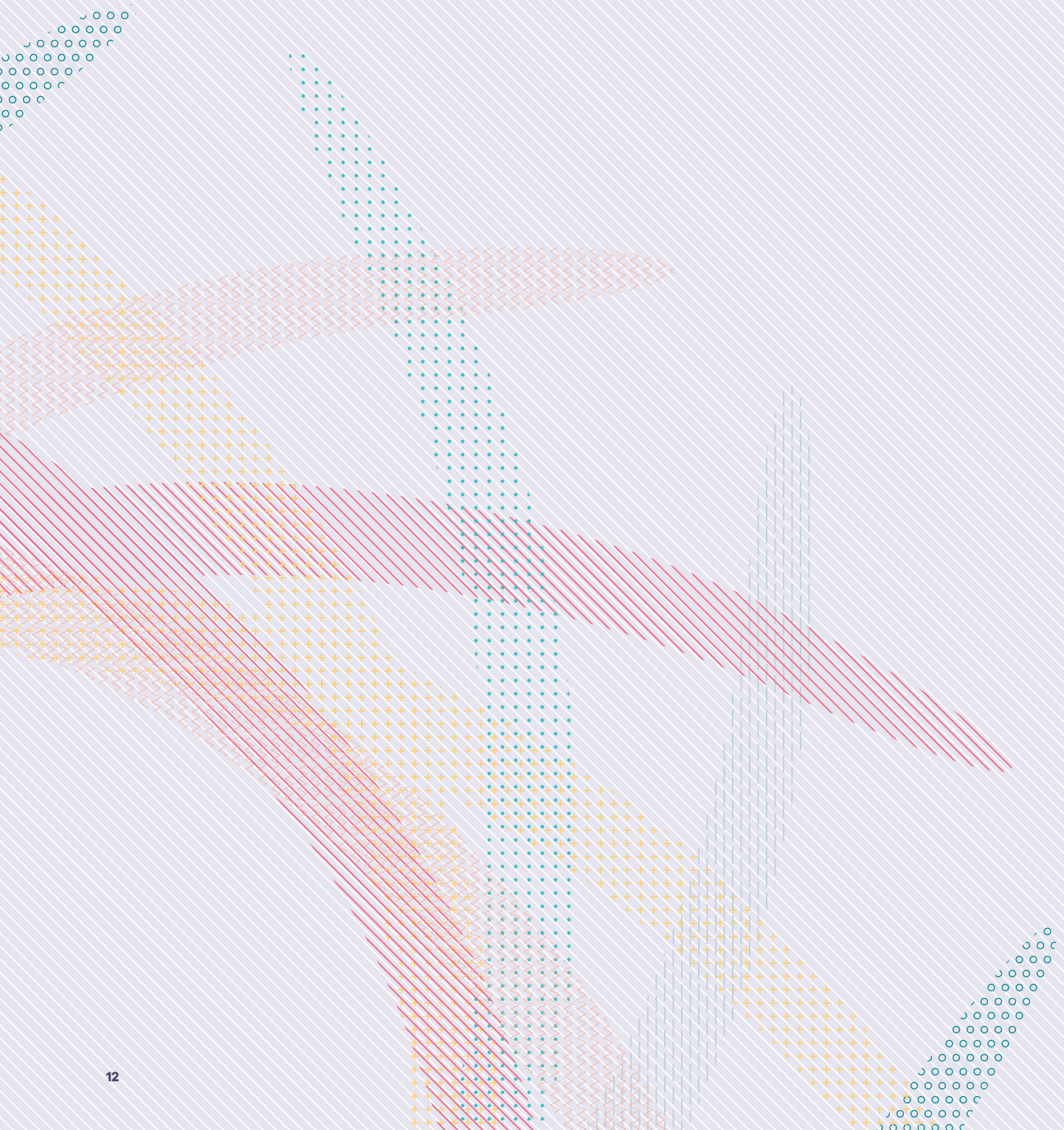
- is good about the mental health system



- is bad about the mental health system



- they think the mental health system needs in the future.



The problems we found



We found out that lots of people were having the same problems with the mental health system in Victoria.



We looked at the main problems for:

- people who need support with their mental health
- mental health workers
- the mental health system
- the community.

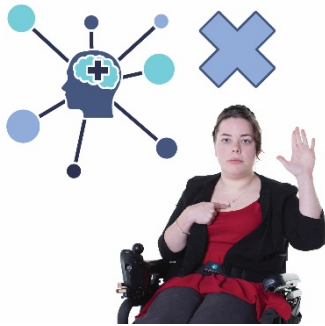
People who need support with their mental health



There is not enough support for everyone who needs it.



People who need support with their mental health also need different types of support.



But the mental health system in Victoria does not meet these different needs.



And it does not meet the needs of:

- families
- carers
- supporters.



People can wait a long time to get the support they need.



Some people cannot pay for the support they need.



Some mental health services are too far away from where people live.



For example, if they live in areas far away from big cities or towns.

There are groups of people who need more support. They include:



- children under 12 years old



- people under 25 years old



- older people over 65 years old.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cannot always get support that meets their needs.



People in the **criminal justice system** do not get the support they need.



The criminal justice system includes:

- police
- **courts** – a place where a judge and/or a jury fix legal problems
- prisons
- services that help keep people out of prison.

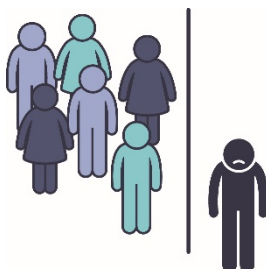


Lots of people who use mental health supports are not treated with respect.

Some people are:



- given treatment they do not want



- kept away from other people



- stopped from:
 - moving
 - doing what they want.



People who need support with their mental health do not get enough support to make their own decisions.



They also do not get a chance to say what services they want.



Or services do not listen to what people want.

Mental health workers



Mental health workers need to better understand how to support people with **trauma**.

Trauma is something bad that happens to you that can make you feel:



- sad
- scared
- stressed
- worried.



Mental health workers need to focus more on **personal recovery**.



Personal recovery is when someone does not just get support to deal with their mental health needs.



They also get support to live a good life:

- with mental health needs
- without mental health needs.



Sometimes mental health workers give people:

- too much medication
- medication when they do not need it.



There are not enough mental health workers to support everyone who needs help.

The mental health system



The mental health system is too hard to:

- understand
- use.



The mental health system focuses on helping people with a lot of needs.



But it also needs to help people before their problems get too big.



Too many people use emergency services to get into the mental health system.

This is because:



- they do not understand how to get help
- there is not enough support in the community.



Some services are out of date.



They do not meet the needs of the community anymore.



It can be hard to understand how mental health services work.



People get confused.



Mental health services do not work well with other services.



For example, if a person has a mental health need and a physical health need.



These services do not work well together to support this person.



The mental health system does not listen to what people:

- need
- want.



Families, carers and supporters are not included when a person gets support.



The mental health system needs more money to do a good job.

No one is checking enough on the mental health system to make sure:



- it works well
- workers do a good job.



The mental health system still uses old ideas.



It uses hospitals and emergency services too much.



It needs to use ideas about getting care in the community.

The community



Services provided in the community do not have enough support to do a good job.



This means that lots of people cannot get support:

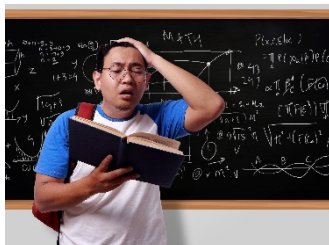
- close to their home
- in their community.



People do not share ideas about good mental health and wellbeing:



- at work



- at school



- in the community.



Some people in our community face extra **barriers** to getting support for their mental health needs.



Barriers are things that stop you from doing something you:

- need to do
- want to do.

These groups include:



- LGBTIQ+ people



- people from different cultures



- refugees.



A refugee is someone forced to leave their country:

- because of **violence** – when someone hurts you physically
- so they can stay safe.



People with mental health needs face a lot of **stigma**.



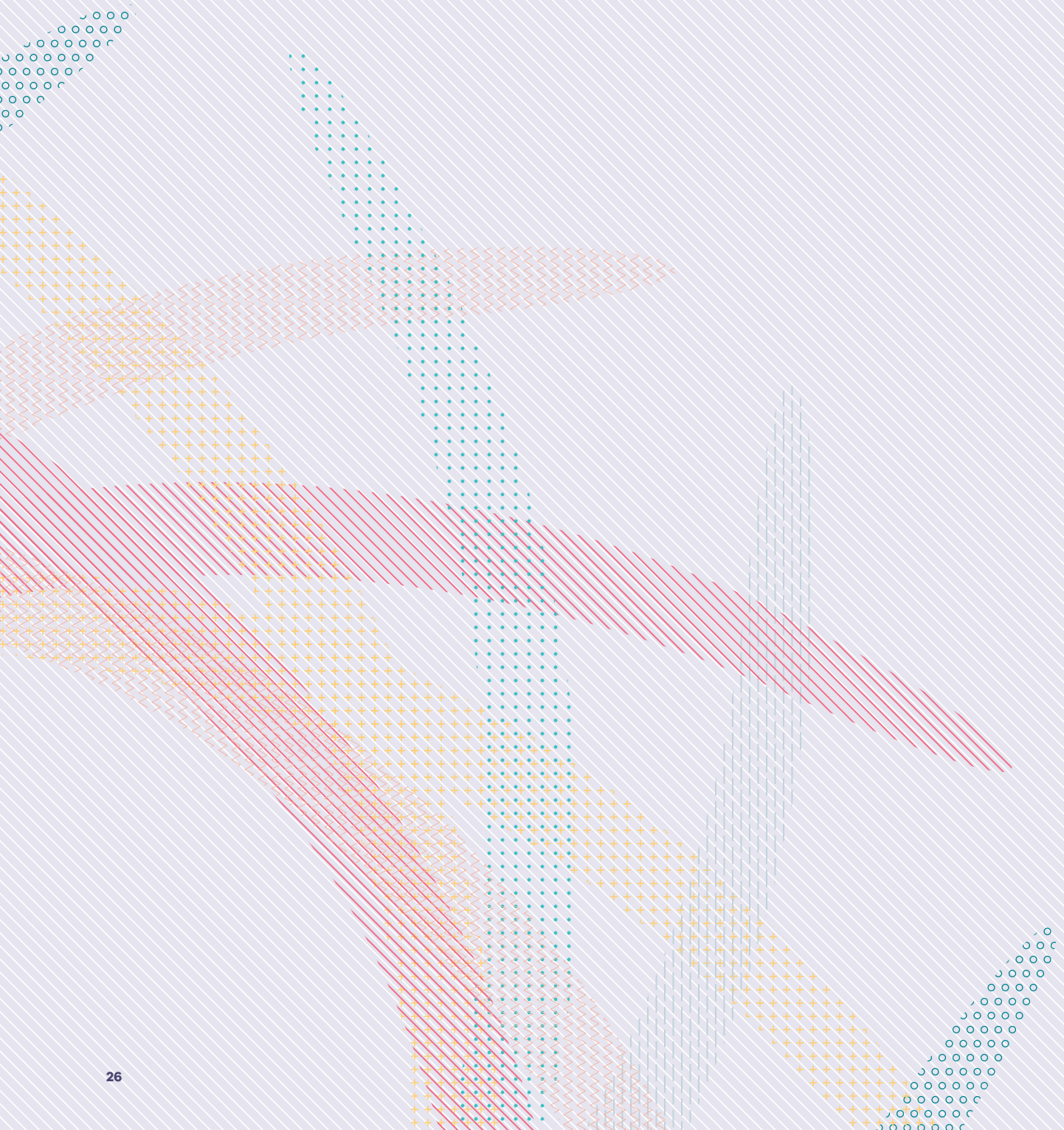
Stigma is when you think badly about someone because of something about them they can't change.



This can stop people from getting the help they need.



There needs to be more support to help stop suicide.



How to make the mental health system better



A good mental health system must treat people with respect.



It must support people with mental health needs to take part in their community.



A good mental health system needs to include:

- families
- carers
- supporters.



A good mental health system must provide care to everyone who needs it.

This includes people who:



- do not have a lot of money



- live far away from big cities and towns



- are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



- take part in the criminal justice system



- are LGBTIQ+



- come from different cultures.



A good mental health system must be available in people's communities.



A good mental health system must work well with other services.



A good mental health system must have good workers.



A good mental health system must include people with mental health needs in planning.



A good mental health system needs to keep working to be better.

It needs to:



- do research



- find out what it is doing well



- find out what it could do better.



A good mental health system must support people with different mental health needs.



A good mental health system needs to support people before their needs become urgent.



A good mental health system must support different ages in the right way, including:

- children
- young people
- older people.



We wrote a list of **recommendations** for the Victorian Government in a separate document.



Recommendations are ideas about changes that can be made.



You can find the list of recommendations here – **rcvmhs.vic.gov.au**

Word list

This list explains what the bold words in this document mean.

Barriers



Barriers are things that stop you from doing something you:

- need to do
- want to do.



Courts

A place where a judge and/or a jury fix legal problems.

Criminal justice system

The criminal justice system includes:



- police
- courts
- prisons
- services that help keep people out of prison.

Culture



Your culture is:

- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up.



LGBTIQ+

LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning.

Mental health



Your mental health is about how you:

- think
- feel
- manage your feelings.



Personal recovery

Personal recovery is when someone does not just get support to deal with their mental health needs.



Recommendations

Recommendations are ideas about changes that can be made.



Refugee

A refugee is someone forced to leave their country:

- because of violence
- so they can stay safe.



Royal Commission

A Royal Commission is an official way of looking into a big problem.



Stigma

Stigma is when you think badly about someone because of something about them they can't change.



Suicide

Suicide is when someone chooses to end their own life.



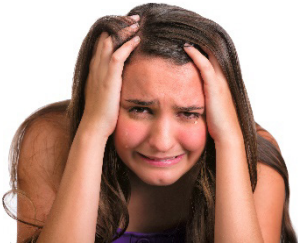
System

A system includes things that are:

- connected with each other
- work together.

Trauma

Trauma is something bad that happens to you that can make you feel:



- sad
- scared
- stressed
- worried.



Violence

When someone hurts you physically.

More information



You can find out more information about the Royal Commission at – **rcvmhs.vic.gov.au**



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