



# BPD COMMUNITY

Volume 1, Issue 15

April 2019

The newsletter of  
BPD Community Victoria Ltd.

## The Ambassador Program is happening!

BPD Community and Mental Health Victoria have joined to present for you free training in how to best represent yourself and your bpd community.

### Dates:

9am - 12: Sat 22nd & 29th June and 6th & 13th July

### Venue:

Mental Health Victoria  
Elsternwick

### Contact:

barb@bpdcommunity.com.au  
To confirm your place.

## Exciting new opportunities!



Change doesn't have to be hard...it can be exciting! In life, change is constant. If we want to be happy with the changes that do happen, then it pays to be involved.

The world we live in is full of fears: whether they are big fears or nagging fears, there is a lot of fear about. And, it seems a lot of fear is very unnecessary. We worry about things we have no control over.

We can take control - and this is exciting.

We all know we can change ourselves. But, we know too that we can influence change, big picture change. How do we do this I hear you ask?

There are a couple of hints to understand how

we can influence the change. The hints for big picture change and individual change are very similar.

### 1) Doing it Together.

We need support if we want to influence the big picture. When we work collaboratively, collectively, we can make great changes.

### 2) Understanding what needs to change.

When we understand we are empowered and can find a way forward.

As a community, we need to know exactly why things are the way they are and what we want from change.

### 3) Understanding how to make change.

Saying I want to change

something isn't enough. We have to do it, but how?

There are skills and techniques that we can learn and apply. The sort of thing that the Ambassador Program will teach.

Finally, to influence big picture change, we need to understand what the big picture is because it is more than one individual's experience.

BPD Community is excited to be a part of this change and we hope you are too. Join us, let us know what you think.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Why a Royal Commission	2
Productivity	2
Confused yet?	3
A united voice	3
What can you do?	3
The Power of Telling Stories	4
On the Couch	4



## A big opportunity for change

The Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health is off and running. This is where we can all have input to help create change.

BPD Community has put in a lot of ground work for an opportunity such as this. We can make a big difference in the lives of people by influencing big

picture change.

As individuals we need to speak out and tell our experience and what we think needs to change. It is our personal stories that will make a difference.

We aim to keep you up to date with what is happening on our blog: <https://www.bpdcommunity.com.au/blog-1>

Go to the Royal Commission website and book a place now at one of the consultations - access through our blog.

BPD Community will be making a submission also. If you want to have input into that email: [barb@bpdcommunity.com.au](mailto:barb@bpdcommunity.com.au)



## Why a Royal Commission

Big opportunities don't just happen.. "Every letter, twitter, every public response has gone to support this change" commented Gus McClelland of Mental Health Victoria.

Gus spoke to an eager group from BPD Community at the Feb Info Night: 'Our Opportunity for Change', in Elsternwick.

The work of many people over time goes towards creating something like a Royal Commission. All the work of BPD Community other organisations and the individuals taking action calling out the prob-

lems in the Mental Health System, all have helped.

Our system in Victoria is especially troubled for everyone affected by mental illness, but especially of course those affected by BPD.

Gus made the point that presentations to the Emergency Department has increased by 19% in the year. And charities are overwhelmed. GPs are overwhelmed, Police and ambos are at a breaking point.

Mental Health Victoria estimated it would take \$543 million just to bring



*The Info Night 'Our Opportunity for Change' was held at the offices of Mental Health Victoria, Wed, 27 Feb 2019.*

Victoria up to the rest of Australia.

The good news is that the government has promised more than once to implement every recommendation of the Royal Commission. Also,

the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission are such that our voice should be heard, when we speak out.



*Happy faces at the Info Night*



## Productivity

Everyone in the BPD Community understands that mental health is more than being symptom free. When our mental health is compromised, we suffer in many different ways.

Recovery is about being able to lead a life where we can achieve our potential. We all want to lead independent lives where we are able to support ourselves financially, for example. Being engaged in society is important and work provides us with a way to contribute to our society, with social contact and a sense of identity. If it is paid work, it provides us with an income. To be productive means all of this and more.

It's still not too late to make a submission to the Productivity Commission but submissions close soon. The Productivity Commission is chartered to consider the "role of mental health in supporting economic participation, enhancing productivity and economic growth". So the focus is on the cost of mental ill health compared to mental health. The Commission will

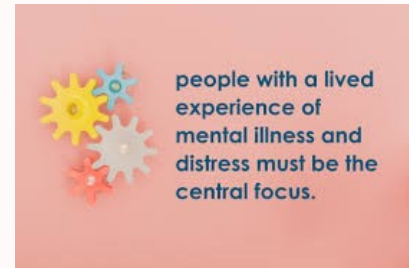
"make recommendations, as necessary, to improve population mental health, so as to realise economic and social participation and productivity benefits over the long term".

This means that the Commission will be looking at the social and economic aspects of mental health and its barriers.

Currently the cost of mental health in Australia is 4% of the GDP. Given 1 in 5 people (20%) will experience a problem with mental health, that is not much. In Victoria we currently spend 40% less on treatment than the rest of the country.

So, some changes can be expected in the future. We want to make sure that the voice of those affected by BPD are heard. Submissions will close soon!

Click here to make a submission: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health/>



## Confused yet?



*We are like babes in the world of mental health*

Understanding BPD can be confusing. Before we can influence change in how BPD is considered, it is essential to understand the current situation of BPD in the Health System. We are indebted to the work SANE has done: [click here](#)

### One in six Victorians is affected by BPD.

This figure is based on recent USA and European prevalence research (approx. 6%). There has not been any thorough research into prevalence of BPD in Australia since 1997 (1-2%). It is this outdated Australian figure that is used by the Mental Health Commission. One challenge we face is understanding prevalence.

### The criteria for diagnosing BPD is out of date.

The DSM is the American book of diagnostic criteria. Traditionally in Victoria the DSM criteria has been used to diagnose BPD. BPD criteria was first defined in the DSM in 1980, in the next edition, the criteria were increased from 8 to 9.

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) defines BPD with a different approach to the DSM. Criteria for Personality Disorders in general are defined, it then describes sub sets of 'Domain Traits' one of which is BPD. It also considers the severity from mild to moderate to severe.

Confusion over diagnosis creates difficulties.

No wonder we face challenges in our day to day experience with BPD. There is no agreement amongst the professionals.

When we add to this the stigma and discrimination many face: being blamed for emotional and behavioural dysregulation also, the diagnosis itself is discredited. It is no wonder we in our community are confused.

What we do have is our reality. We know how it feels, we understand what it does, we struggle with a system that should be our support and we want change.



## A united voice



Is a united voice possible? Yes it is.

While each persons' experiences are different, they all speak to the need for change in many aspects.

The value of individual voices is that they provide examples of what we know

is wrong; they illustrate the reality of living with BPD.

To provide the impact to influence change, our voices, while individual, need to be a part one response.

The advantage of speaking as a community with one

voice is that it bears weight and has greater influence.

The BPD Community Ambassador program is a way for us all to be able to be heard.

It is also possible for all the BPD organisations to speak with one voice also.

BPD Community has been working at this for quite some time now, behind the scenes. If all BPD organisations can speak with one voice, then that voice cannot be ignored.

Not only is a united voice possible, it is essential.

## What can you do?

Join with BPD Community to add to the voices telling their stories. The best way to do this is to join the Ambassador Program.

To know how to use your voice to best advantage, requires some advice from those with experience in how to write to communicate what you want. There

are skills that can be learnt which will make your story more persuasive. In the meantime, it is important to understand how this Royal Commis-

sion will work. So it pays to stay abreast of any news. Join one of the consultations taking part across the state, book now. Click here: <https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/whats-happening-now>



Info Night - Weds 31 July, 6.30pm

# The Power of Telling Stories

Once upon a time there was .....nothing more important to us than being told a bedtime story. It was a chance to have someone speak to us in close quarters, to tell us something that was important and interesting. We learnt from these stories - why the boy cried wolf, why the caterpillar was hungry - and our relationship with the storyteller became stronger.

Stories give us insight, they connect us with others and they can do more, they can change the world. Stories tell us about ourselves and our world.

Have you ever heard anyone go on and on, rambling about with no sense of purpose and nothing interesting to talk about? I am sure we all have. It's easy enough to do. There's probably only one thing worse than saying nothing, and that is saying it badly.

When we tell a story, we need to understand our audience.

At our next Info Night, we will have two speakers present their stories to us. One person with lived experience, one person who is a family member. They will be selected from amongst those who do the Ambassador's Program.

Telling your own story is not easy. The experiences of people affected by BPD can be especially moving and it takes a brave person to speak out. When we do speak out, we can help make change happen. Others can learn from our experiences; we can give back to our community. We also help to create the relationships that are so important in creating a community to support each other, to support recovery.

It would be great if you joined us to hear these brave people tell their stories on Wednesday 31 July.

Rsvp to save a seat to:  
[barb@bpdcommunity.com.au](mailto:barb@bpdcommunity.com.au)



**TITLE: The Power of Telling Stories**

**PRESENTED BY:  
BPD Community**

**TIME: 6.30pm  
DATE: Wed 31 July 2019**

**PLACE:  
Star Health  
341 Coventry St  
Sth Melbourne**

**Please RSVP to:  
[barb@bpdcommunity.com.au](mailto:barb@bpdcommunity.com.au)**

## On the Couch



Everyone with BPD has a different experience. But it is the things we have in common that makes our stories so strong.

At our Info Night we will have a skilled and experienced person (not a cat) who will sit with our speakers 'on the couch' and interview them once they have spoken. We are

looking for common threads in our experiences.

We will have the chance to ask our speakers questions on the night, to have a discussion on the state of things and what we can do.

It is so good to be in a room full of people who understand BPD, and that can make us all experts of our own world. A more vibrant and sensitive group is hard to find.

We are waiting to confirm who will be conducting the events of the evening and will keep you all informed and updated.

See you on the 31st July! Put it in your diary now and rsvp to:  
[barb@bpdcommunity.com.au](mailto:barb@bpdcommunity.com.au)