

Ottawa City Council Candidate Survey

Mental health has never been as important as it is now.

As a candidate for Ottawa City Council (HCC), we here at the YMHM Canada ask that you please complete the following survey to the best of your ability regarding mental health and what you would work to do to ensure mental health in Ottawa if you are elected this October.

Your answers as well as your name and ward, as well as your answers will appear on our website at www.yhmcanada.ca/ottawa.

Sections

1. Mental Health in Youth
2. Mental Health in Marginalized Communities
3. Mental Health in Seniors
4. Mental Health Supports and Services
5. Addiction Supports and Services

Name *

Param Singh

I'm running for *

Mayor

Councillor

If Councillor, what Ward are you running in?

Campaign Email *

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Mental Health in Youth

A recent report has shown that 1 in 5 students has a diagnosed mental health problem and that about 27% of students between grade 9-12 reported poor mental health and 16% seriously considered suicide in the past year. If elected, what are you going to do to ensure better mental health within not only highschools within Ottawa, but all schools?

There is already a School Mental Health Ontario program in place that provides a Provincial support team. They assist school enhance mental health for students through evidence-based services and strategies. We can make sure that these strategies are followed within our capacity.

If elected, what would you advocate for better to ensure the mental health of youth in Ottawa?

I advocate for everyone's mental health. With youth, a push for more Provincial and Federal funding to invest in our programs and seek to enhance the mental health services that are already in place.

If elected, would you support the creation of a City of Ottawa Youth Mental Health Plan to better support youth and their mental health?

Like previously mentioned, we need to invest in our programs and enhance them to really treat the root cause of mental health. Mental health is different for everyone, getting to the root cause can help boost mental health in a positive way.

Mental Health in Marginalized Communities

Members of marginalized groups are at a higher risk for mental health-related disorders, suicide, and more. If elected, what are you going to do to help ensure the mental health of those in marginalized communities?

Like previously mentioned, we need to invest in our programs and enhance them to really treat the root cause of mental health. Mental health is different for everyone, getting to the root cause can help boost mental health in a positive way.

Indigenous rates of suicide can be as high as 9 times non-Indigenous peers, and LGBTQ youth can be as high as 14 times more at risk for suicide than straight counterparts. If elected, what are you going to do to reduce the rates of suicide within marginalized communities in Ottawa?

Like previously mentioned, we need to invest in our programs and enhance them to really treat the root cause of mental health. Mental health is different for everyone, getting to the root cause can help boost mental health in a positive way.

Mental Health in Seniors

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the Senior population and has led to more people having feelings of depression and loneliness. If elected, what are you going to do to ensure the care of seniors and their mental health?

We need to make sure that our Seniors are not left alone. We have to create greenspaces that are suited for them and have programs or community centers that cater to their needs.

Older adults, men in particular, have among the highest suicide rates in the world according to the WHO. If elected, what are you going to do to help ensure the reduction of senior suicide and self-harm in our community?

According to CCSMH, substance misuse and dependency among older adults is a growing but neglected issue. If elected, what are you going to do to help ensure the reduction of senior substance misuse and/or dependency that could possibly lead to an overdose in our community?

When it comes to older adults and substance abuse, we must make sure that we continue to push the Provincial and Federal government for funding and invest in the programs that are needed to ensure that the older adults get the help they need in a timely fashion.

Mental Health Services and Supports

If elected, what are you going to do to ensure that hospitals are properly supported by the city to provide help to people seeking mental health treatment or programs?

Wait times in Ontario for mental health services can be as high as 919 days. If elected, would you commit to working with all levels of government to ensure that people within your ward and Ottawa are able to access services within a shorter amount of time?

Yes, 919 days is unacceptable. We must ensure that wait times are reduced.

The House of Commons has approved a National 988 Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Line (as of 2020). Do you support such a number and if elected, will you commit to working with all levels of government to help ensure such a number is implemented?

Any programs set out by any level of government is good. If this helps one person, then it is a success. When creating such a Crisis Line, it should be created via evidence-based facts in order to ensure that the program meets the needs of the callers.

There are little to no supports for youth transitioning from youth mental health services to the adult sector. If elected, what will you do to bridge this gap in service for young people?

This gap is depended on several things. First off, which level of government supports what programs. We must make sure that every level of government works together and that there is a support mechanism in place to ensure the transition.

If elected, would you commit to working with and listening to mental health advocacy groups in Ottawa to help aid in giving input into mental health policies for the city?

Yes

Addiction Services and Supports

If elected, would you commit to working with and listening to addiction and harm reduction advocacy groups in Ottawa to help aid in giving input into addiction policies for the city?

Yes, and they will also have to listen to the neighbourhoods in which they already serve to make sure that all parties are on the same page.

Do you support safe injection sites in Ottawa and/or in your ward (if elected)?

Yes I do, but not in the current model.

According to the Office of the Chief Coroner, in Ontario up to and including 2020 acute drug toxicity has been the number one cause of death in youth 15-24 years old since 2017. Education about overdose prevention and response with naloxone, harm reduction, and how to use drugs safely can reduce the number of overdose-related deaths in young people as they will have the knowledge and tools to make informed choices about drug use. If elected, how will you ensure that highschool curriculum includes better education about substance use in a non-judgemental safe space?

This is something that will have to be taken up with the Provincial Government as the School curriculum is not a municipal responsibility.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

I am a huge supporter and advocate for Mental Health. I live with PTSD and am a Peer2Peer supporter with the Ottawa Police Service. This is not an easy task but a task that we will have to pursue head on to ensure that everyone in Ottawa is respected and receive the help they need in a timely fashion.

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