

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 *

Greg Patacairk

I'm running for *

Mayor

Councillor

If Councillor, what Ward are you running in?

Ward 5

Campaign Email *

gregforottawa@gmail.com

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?

Mental health issues need to be addressed immediately when there are crises and CHEO and Ottawa Public Health have programs to help in those situations. Supporting OPH and local hospitals in their efforts would be my primary CRISIS level care approach. Other levels of government need to pay more attention to mental health and staff up and resource up those programs to serve what continues to be a massive need for students. Compounded by COVID and the isolation that resulted meant that the few resources and contacts that students had were broken and overloaded. This problem requires the engagement of all levels of government, and I plan to advocate for further attention from those other levels.

But for longer term systematic approaches, what the City can do, and needs to do, is to look at the issue as an entire system, and do its part to mitigate and prevent mental health issues where it can. Some examples of those things are :

1. Increase community connectivity. Communities that promote mental health offer opportunities for social interaction through active transportation options, such as walking, biking, and public transportation.

By creating communities that connect people to other members of the community and services, residents can experience a substantially greater sense of community, along with greater feelings of trust and stronger attachment to place.

In terms of specific things rural areas like West Carleton-March can do, smaller communities may have unique needs, but active transportation networks are still a possibility. When upgrading our roads, we should have better shoulders and lanes so bikers feel safe. We should plan on leveraging existing community qualities that support active transportation. Local shuttles could increase each village's tourism potential: find where destinations are within walking distance, encourage young and active populations, and promote our outstanding natural surroundings that can attract new residents and tourists seeking recreation. These create economic opportunities for the city by investing in resources that attract people to our rural villages. Students must need to feel connected to the larger community and know that they are thought about and cared for, by their civic leaders. These are some concrete ways mental health will improve, as an example.

2. Increase access to greenspace. The benefits of green space in communities—especially urban areas—are well documented. Individuals who have regular access to and engagement with greenspace report reduced levels of stress, depression, and anxiety, and improved concentration and cognitive functioning. Students need places to decompress.

3. Invest in healthy housing. Homes are where we spend a majority of our time, so it makes sense that the type and quality of housing we live in contributes to our overall mental health and well-being. Healthy housing is housing that is safe, affordable, and accessible. Housing should also be well integrated into the community and 'fit' in their contexts. Students absorb the stresses of unhealthy living spaces.

4. Prioritize place making, encourage residents and their conservation efforts. When community design includes public spaces, community identity is strengthened. Elements such as street furniture unique to each village, communal seating, and natural features can encourage social interaction and place

attachment. Students need to feel connected to their home living spaces. Finding ways of identifying public space FOR youth is VERY important.

None of these ideas are new. Most come from well researched publications like PlanH - Planning a Healthy Community - and many other public resources which offer help for civic leaders like me to make good decisions in areas we were not trained in. I want to leverage the best resources available, produced in Canada for Candians, use well researched ideas that have already been put in place and shown to work to reduce public mental health issues. Evidence-based policy making.

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

Of Course

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

Expert opinions that use proven programs from other communities where they have measurable results is my preferred approach to use. If the City of Ottawa Youth Mental Health Plan does this to help youth and their mental health, I'm in full support..

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?

Marginalized communities should have additional focus and identification so that the answers I applied in Question 1 could be used - people in those groups need to feel and know that their city supports them and acknowledges their extra struggle. Ideally leaders who came from those communities would be involved in helping define the specific ways the city could highlight its support of those communities.

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?

Same answer as how I would treat other Marginalized communities EXCEPT I would expect and require that indigenous leaders would need to be explicitly involved and lead in planning the unique ways their community needs support. I want to learn from my indigenous partners and leaders.

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?

Senior centers or senior specific events should be made a part of every section of the city's programming, including in the villages of West-Carleton-March. Connection is so important for mental health so facilitating those connections needs to be a focus of seniors programming across the city.

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?

Additions are often created by unmet needs or trauma, and social connectivity, green spaces, good housing and place making all go a long way to avoiding these issues. The city cannot play the crisis medical role but it can play in the system and space design, as addressed in Question 1.

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?

Ottawa Public Health plays a coordinating role, so supporting OPH would be the primary way the city should support our hospitals and coordinate all our mental health programming.

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?

Ottawa Public Health plays a coordinating role, so supporting OPH would be the primary way the city should support our hospitals and coordinate all our mental health programming.

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. That is way too long and too many people are not getting mental health services in a timely fashion. I will do my part to pressure my Provincial and Federal counterparts to provide more resources to shorten wait times.

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?

Yes.

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?

I will commit to talking to youth mental health service providers to get their input on how to best bridge this gap in service for young people to the adult sector.

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?

Absolutely. I commit to having my door open and taking meetings with mental health advocacy groups so I can best advocate for the strongest mental health policies for the city of Ottawa.

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?

Absolutely. I commit to having my door open and taking meetings with addiction and harm reduction advocacy groups so I can best advocate for the strongest addiction policies for the city of Ottawa.

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

I support harm reduction strategies as they are proven to both save money and save lives. If the need is proven to show that these sites would save money and save lives in West Carleton, then yes. I am still, as of yet, convinced that this is needed or necessary in our West Carleton-March Ward.

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?

Yes. This aligns with my answer about harm reduction strategies. Updating high school curriculum about substance abuse using harm reduction strategies is appropriate. Encouraging healthy conversations on these topics in a non-judgemental safe space is key to saving our children's lives.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

Thank you for the opportunity to answer this survey.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms