

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.

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Name *

Tyler Cybulski

I'm running for *

Mayor

Councillor

If Councillor, what Ward are you running in?

Ward 12 Rideau-Vanier

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 highschoools within Ottawa, but all schools?

Our young people, especially our teenagers, are dealing with elevated levels of stress, anxiety and depression. Those of us who have passed that stage in life can probably remember feeling many of the same things. However, there are factors now that increase the severity of mental illness in our younger populations. Social media, online activities and a lack of social engagement have created a generation of children who are prone to suicidal ideation.

We are witnessing a generation of young people who have grown up without hope or positive influences. Many teens boys are consumed by a world of violent video games, vulgar music and internet pornography. Our teens girls are conditioned to believe that their value lies in their outward appearance, popularity and social media followers. When it comes to uplifting and inspiring our young people, we have failed miserably.

If elected, I would like to explore funding more mental-health services in schools and youth mentorship programs. Our schools need to be a place where students can open up to a councillor, teacher or mentor that they trust when they are experiencing mental health challenges or suicidal thoughts. More importantly, we need to get our kids away from the negativity of the internet and off their phones. We need to encourage face-to-face contact with others, normal relationships, and healthy behaviours. We need to engage with parents as well on this. Too many parents have stepped away from active participation in their child's development, allowing negative thoughts and behaviours to become normalized.

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

I would advocate for better funding within our schools to provide mental health services for youth.

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

I absolutely would support such an initiative. Our youth are living in a challenging time and we need to support them in every way possible.

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?

Regardless of what community someone belongs, there needs to be support available for anyone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts and mental illness. Councillors are somewhat limited in what we can do regarding provincial healthcare matters.

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?

Our Indigenous population deals with many issues at disproportionate rates when compared to their non-Indigenous peers. The trauma that many of our Indigenous brothers and sisters have endured has been passed down to many more generations. We need to better identify at-risk individuals, especially those who possess multiple risk factors. Once again, I do feel that city councillors are very limited when it comes to a direct remedy for this issue, but we can better equip and fund local organizations that serve marginalized communities.

With respect to LGBTQ suicide rates I can only suggest that we need to restore a level of objective truth and reasoning when it comes to supporting teens and children that are confused and questioning their sexuality or gender. Rather than exploring the reasoning, rationalization and thoughts of a confused young person, we as a society have incentivized membership into what are regarded as marginalized communities. Support and acceptance of LGBTQ individuals is extremely high throughout our country and the Western world. Therefore, we must question why so many youth, seemingly supported by the majority of people, are still feeling confused, unaccepted and depressed.

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?

The actions of the Federal and Provincial governments are largely to blame for creating a mental health crisis amongst our older populations, specifically those in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. The inability for seniors to receive visits from family members or friends was extremely cruel and heartless. If elected, I would work with council to ensure that the seniors within our community are never subjected to such abuse in the future. Public health measures must make sense and provide a proven benefit before implemented on a massive scale.

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?

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?

I believe that the city needs to work in collaboration with our amazing hospitals to offer treatment to those who may be suffering from mental illness. We need more community engagement to ensure that nobody falls through the cracks.

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! We need to reduce wait times for urgent mental health treatment.

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?

I would support such an initiative.

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?

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?

I would support this!

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! We need to hear from the individuals who have decimated themselves to the frontlines of our addiction crisis.

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

I do not support safe injection sites. While they do provide a safe space where aid can be rendered quickly in case of an overdose or adverse reaction, I have seen no evidence that they reduce drug abuse or benefit the communities where they exist. Within the framework of safe injection sites, there is no tangible off-ramp to recovery and sobriety. There is merely more and more drug abuse. Programs that aid in drug consumption are neither caring or compassionate to the individuals who are suffering from addictions. They do much more harm than good.

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?

Our young people need to be educated about the risks associated with illicit drug use. Many substances have been glamorized and widely accepted by society as party drugs for recreational use. However, these drugs are highly-addictive, dangerous and sometimes deadly. We should not stigmatize those who suffer from addictions, but we must also not leave our young people with the impression that substance abuse is harmless fun. For those who do choose to consume, it is essential that they are equipped with naloxone kits and use around people they trust.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

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