

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.ymhmcanaada.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 *

Leigh-Andrea Brunet

I'm running for *

Mayor

Councillor

If Councillor, what Ward are you running in?

Ward 21 - Rideau-Jock

Campaign Email *

electleighandreibrunet@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?

As best as I can from the municipal level, I will support initiatives that encourage the province to provide education and supports surrounding mental health in all schools.

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

I think we need to make teens, pre-teens and their parents fully aware of programming available and ensure that it is accessible to all residents, urban and rural and that is is sufficiently funded.

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 am certainly open this idea.

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?

We must continue to offer supports and break down barriers.

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?

It is going to be through ensuring the mental health services are sufficient in number to be available and accessible to all who need it.

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 have some amazing outreach programs in our city, one I can highlight is ROSSS - Rural Ottawa South Support Services. Among their services they provide social programming and a newer initiative called a friendly voice. Which is a free, confidential "warm line" for older Ontarians, 55+ who just want to chat with a friendly person who cares, without expectations or judgment. It is important that residents know what resources are available to them and/or their parents.

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?

Our community groups and city are working hard to help remove the stigma surrounding mental health. We should raise awareness and as mentioned above ensure that residents know what resources are available to them and/or their parents.

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?

As a councillor, I can support the programs and initiatives that are working to provide education and prevention to reduce harm.

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 will be available to speak with hospital representatives to understand what they need from the city. I would be willing to work with them to ensure that support is there.

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

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 bridge this gap in service for young people?

I don't know enough about this gap or what type of programs are lacking or what type of programs could be created to specifically address the move from youth to adult services but would be supportive of new initiatives needed to not interrupt care.

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

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

No. We not have great access to other aligned services that would need to be provided.

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?

Creating and implementing such a curriculum would be done provincially. However as a parent for many reasons, I would not be supportive of such a program.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

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