

# 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](http://www.yhmcanada.ca/ottawa).

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Name \*

Rebecca Bromwich

I'm running for \*

Mayor

Councillor

If Councillor, what Ward are you running in?

17

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?

It is important to support and bolster existing services and to consult with those providing them as well as parents and other caregivers, as well as youth themselves, about what changes should be made. As a mom of four teens, I have seen first hand how difficult the COVID lockdowns were for kids' mental health in particular. I am deeply committed to supporting youth mental health.

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

I would consult with existing service providers and youth themselves and support efforts to ameliorate youth mental health.

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

yes

## 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?

Ensuring mental health services are supported is important as well as more holistic work towards ameliorating the conditions of marginalized communities generally so we can get to some of the root causes of youth marginality.

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?

Work towards ensuring equity and equality for LGBTQ+ communities and otherwise marginalized youth as well as reconciliation work for Indigenous communities are important to me. This is why I am past-Chair of the Carleton County Law Association Diversity Committee and worked as EDI Manager for Gowling WLG. Working towards equality for all in a meaningful, substantive way, will contribute to youth mental health.

## 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?

I will consult and align with existing care and service providers to support their work.

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?

It is important that we ensure seniors are supported, not isolated, and that elder abuse is addressed. I will consult and align with existing care and support providers and do what I can to bolster their work.

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?

Again, I don't have all the answers but I have the skills, training, and experience as a mediator to bring the right stakeholders together to come up with good, constructive solutions that are realistic and workable.

## 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?

Again, I don't have all the answers but I have the skills, training, and experience as a mediator to bring the right stakeholders together to come up with good, constructive solutions that are realistic and workable

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?

I will work constructively with all levels of government to address this. Because health care is in provincial jurisdiction, it is advantageous that I will be able to work constructively with the current provincial government towards finding solutions.

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 approve of this and will work collaboratively with all levels of government to implement this.

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?

Transition to adulthood for marginalized youth has been the subject of much of my research and legal writing. I will work constructively with experts and all levels of government, in consultation with service providers and the youth themselves to ease these transitions.

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 will work with and listen to mental health advocacy groups. My training and experience as a mediator prepare me well for collaboration and my twenty year career as a lawyer prepares me to be an effective advocate on their team.

### 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, My training and experience as a mediator prepare me well for collaboration and my twenty year career as a lawyer prepares me to be an effective advocate on their team.

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

Yes.

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?

The high school curriculum is a provincial jurisdictional matter. I will work constructively with the provincial government as well as with advocates, community members, and youth to ensure this situation is remedied.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

I mentioned a few times here that I don't have all the answers about mental health. Having dealt with the mental illness of close family members, I know how important and complex these issues are. What I do bring to the table are skills, training, and experience with working collaboratively with a diverse range of people and stakeholders to solve complex problems. I can work constructively with all political parties and all levels of government. I am committed to finding and implementing pragmatic solutions that bring meaningful change.

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