

Hamilton City Council Candidate Survey

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

As a candidate for Hamilton 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 Hamilton 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 ymhmcanada.ca/Hamilton.

Sections

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

A report by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found 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 Hamilton, but all schools?

I think you mean "Within Hamilton" not Ottawa. Mental health was ignored in the past " shake it off you're fine" was what people were told. We don't have enough Doctors to treat mental illness, as most are going into research not practice that is a huge issue for people seeking treatment. We need to educate people and remove the stigma around mental health, the way to do that is through education and awareness, allowing those with mental health issues to come forward and seek the help they need. We need to work with other levels of government to obtain funding a resources, we need services that people can reach out to that are safe and constant. My family has experience with mental health, and know how difficult it is getting help. I would seek out and listen to those directly affected, and work on a real plan, I don't believe I have the answers to solve this without having those conversations.

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

Absolutely

If elected, would you support the recommendations for youth mental health and addictions set out by the City of Hamilton Youth Strategic Plan that was created by HamOntYouth?

<https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/youth-strategy>)

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?

People in marginalized communities don't trust government, they don't trust institutions. I get it, and understand why. I will do everything in my power to change this and advocate for these communities, this is why I am running, to bring their voices to the table, to develop trust and communication

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 Hamilton?

Our Indigenous families has lost their pride, they have lost their self worth, they need that back, my father is mi'kmaq first nations his pride was destroyed, to much to talk about in this forum, but we need to bring our indigenous community into the conversation, seek their advise on so many levels, we need to educate people on the value of their voices. Bring back their pride and dignity, and educate people on the real stories. The 2SLGBTQ community as well need to be proud of who they are. in the 80's my self and others stood in solidarity in front of what was know in those day's as " the gay bar" which was outrageous on king William and John st we stood out front to protect and advocate for the 2SLGBTQ community, against the violence that was happening regularly. Everything comes back to education, awareness, and bringing their concerns to the table. People are at risk of suicide because they feel lost, abandoned, criticized, ignored and more, by city hall ,by the police,, from those that are supposed to protect them, and others. I am running for their voice, I am here for them and will fight for them every step of the 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?

I believe the answer to this question and following question would be the same. Many other countries recognize the value of their seniors, they have programs to keep them engaged and active, as well as mentoring others, I would like to examine some of these initiatives and implement them here. Isolation and loneliness is a big contributor to metal health of our seniors. I would like to set up a seniors advocacy group as well, so their concerns, and ideas will be listened to.

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?

See above

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?

I am not going to pretend to have the answer, this is a complex issue, with a lot of history, for each individual. I will however listen, learn, and do all I can to assist in a real solution.

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?

First we need to know, what are hospitals need to implement and maintain proper programs, that's the first step, and then work on a viable solution.

Wait times in Hamilton for mental health services can be as long as 710 days. If elected, would you commit to working with all levels of government to ensure that people within your ward and Hamilton are able to access services within a shorter amount of time?

Yes, I will work with all levels of government, getting them to listen is not an easy task. We will need to have research, solutions, and the voices of those directly and indirectly affected, can it be done? Yes it can, the work this group has been doing it at the heart of the solution.

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, and I would support 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?

I need to know where the problems are, what is causing this gap, then work on a solution. Again this comes down to having those conversations.

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

Yes

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

Yes, there is a right way and a wrong way, safe injection sites must be safe for everyone.

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?

Education curriculum it is under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government, again we would need to will need to have research, solutions, and the voices of those directly an in- directly affected, bring it to the Provincial Government, and fight for those voices

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

It is all about bringing the people affected by mental health into the conversation, I don't have all the answers, but dialog and a willingness to work together is the best way to start.

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