

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 *

Erin Coffin

I'm running for *

Mayor

Councillor

If Councillor, what Ward are you running in?

Kanata South - Ward 23

Campaign Email *

info@erincoffin.ca

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?

I am committed to working with Ottawa Public Health and our school boards to ensure our youth have the educational tools to be aware of how to identify mental health symptoms, and what access they have to supports in public mental healthcare.

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

Access, access, access, and education. We need to eliminate the stigma of mental health, and we need to ensure that there is access to services.

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 support this initiative for you, and I also support a mental health plan for all Ottawa residents - we have seen that the mental health of a loved one, friend, colleague, community member affects us all - and we need to support those who have mental health as well as those who love/respect/work with someone who is struggling.

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?

Education, partnerships with stakeholders, and reduction of stigmas and barriers to ensure our neighbours are supported, respected, and loved.

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?

Education, partnerships with stakeholders, and reduction of stigmas and barriers to ensure our neighbours are supported, respected, and loved.

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 support programs that educate on mental illness, minimize the stigma of mental health, and provide support to live with/heal/mitigate the impact of mental health on ourselves and those we care for.

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?

Encourage education, support, and reduce stigmas of mental health.

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?

Encourage education, support, and reduce stigmas of mental health and dependencies due to health issues.

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?

Health is a provincial responsibility. However, at the city level we can educate on mental health and work to find the supports for our residents. I want to ensure that we find resources and capacity to ensure that we can support those who are struggling in our community and those who are loving/working to support them. I am interested in working with all levels of government to increase access to services and programs, as well as make it easier to access these services.

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?

Absolutely.

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?

Of course - but we need to ensure that there are resources at the other end of the crisis line to support our residents in Kanata South, Ottawa, Ontario, and Canada, and would work with all levels of government to ensure that exists.

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 would work with our partners in public health and health services to better equip our youth transitioning to adult sector services. I think this would also be better if we had more health care professionals to support families and individuals as they transition into adulthood.

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. Call me.

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. Absolutely.

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

Without support and programs to manage addiction and harm reduction across the city, we will be living with the negative results of this void. We need to help and reduce the stigma for our struggling neighbours and their families by supporting programming across Ottawa to care for those in our communities.

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?

I am supportive of this initiative. I know that Ottawa Public Health is competent and can ensure that there are educational tools and services to support - and I am willing to work with other levels of government as well other stakeholders to ensure tools and services are accessible and known.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

Mental health can affect an individual at any point in their lifetime. We need to educate, reduce stigma and barriers, and provide services to support mental health.

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