

Peel's Community Safety and Well-being Plan

Resident stories

During community consultations for Peel's Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Plan, participants were given the opportunity to submit stories in whatever format they chose. Stories were to detail experiences with the CSWB Plan areas of focus: family violence, mental health and addictions and systemic discrimination in their own words.

The following stories were received.

A Piece of Me: Mental Health

There are days where I don't know the person who is looking back at me in the mirror and then there are days where I wake up as someone who is more approachable. I confuse my struggles and pain with who I am rather than a piece of who I am. Sadness and anxiety is a part of every living being who can breathe fresh air. Some experience more of it and for me that's the case. I grew up in a family where mental health was not talked about due to cultural stigma. Because of this stigma I had a hard time navigating through negative feelings triggered by difficult situations I would experience. However, as I got older I used my privilege to learn more about mental health for myself and my community. There have been countless times where I reached the epitome of a breakthrough and I allowed myself to cry through my pain and let it all out. I have won endless battles to my ego whether it was on my bathroom floor or even in a public space. But those moments have led me to open up my heart to different opportunities whereas if I was stuck in a bubble of my thoughts I wouldn't have been able to step out of my comfort zone and witness myself grow into the person I aspire to be. My safe haven became writing and speaking out about the things I believe in. A year ago I joined a public speaking club and since then it has given me an outlet to not only be myself but to bring my voice to the forefront of important conversations. The first time I presented my poem I didn't expect one experience would withdraw my heart to other forms of storytelling and expression but it did. I was in front of many people and I felt as though my anxious feelings were bleeding out from within. It was so surreal that I was able to undo my fears in a matter of seconds. It's as if reciting a couple lines of poetry was all I needed to battle my fears. However, fears are not easy to unravel because our minds are intricate. Whenever I make a decision which could be as simple as sending a text, I wonder if I am doing the right thing because I am scared of being a burden to society, if I am wasting someone else's time, if it's truly worth it to take action against something I believe in. During those few seconds when it's harder to breathe you realize how powerful even a whiff of breath can be. My anxiety has come in the form of a person, a situation and even a certain feeling that I cannot shake. But those negative experiences that felt like a large rock tumbling towards me have actually liberated me because it taught me how strong I truly am. Even in the moments when I couldn't pick myself up, I knew for a fact that I could rely on myself. It felt like I was leaning against thin air because I felt so empty in those moments. I don't claim to be an expert on mental health or someone who has suffered from a mental illness. But I can say this, when I was younger, I always looked to others whether it was to find belonging or love. But anxiety taught me that even in your worst times the only person who can help you is yourself. You can fall as deep as you want into those negative feelings but as humans we have the constant tendency to never give up. It's a skill that has been invested into us ever since we entered this earth and it is something that we should never let go of.

Broken Mirror: Mental Health

If you could live in the body you wanted
I am pretty sure you wouldn't be happy
Which is why you will never know what it's like to be the girl, guy, person who's trapped in the mirror
They are exactly what society wants to see
They are the definition of "perfect" but they don't think so
Even if you told them a million times they are good enough they would just shrug the shoulders
they think are too wide for their body
You tell them that they are beautiful, thinking it will help
But "beautiful" isn't enough for them
You could wrap them in words of encouragement
And they would get tangled in them trying to escape a story they don't want to face
They don't want to face a possibility of happiness because it isn't a possibility for them
It's a dream that won't come true

This person I am talking about may not be you
You might not fit into society's vision
But trust me, I predict precision in your journey
You may have been told to measure every inch of your body
Even if that means facing societal pressure
No you can't break the mirror for showing you the truth
Even if you tried your heart would have more blisters than your knuckles
Your mind isn't a small capsule for positivity
You can take as much of it as you want and still not feel guilty I promise
The negativity will come and go, it's something you cannot completely polish
Your weight won't tell you how much your worth weighs
But I can tell you that it weighs more than this negativity
In the beginning, this journey will feel like a mistake
Until you have escaped
In the meantime allow your tears to fall
As long as you don't fall in the same way they do
Take a deep breath, you will be here for a long time
You can turn their negativity into a mime
Just turn their truths into a lie
And you will be fine
Picture your wounds as a sword
And be prepared for a lifelong battle



Maybe one day
color wouldn't
matter so much
&
black and white
would just blend in
together!



Light of Inspiration

Anxiety.

I can't breathe.

The panic attacks keep me up at night.

I keep my struggles to myself,

Even the million thoughts that run through my head each minute,

Because it is more convenient to fake a smile.

But you were the teacher that changed my life.

Even when I couldn't say what was on my mind, with tears rolling down my face

because at times the anxiety would get the best of me.

Those million thoughts turned into anxious moments.

But yet despite it all you sat in silence until I was ready.

Even with my guard up and at times you wish you could read minds,

You shined your light to guide me through my darkest moments.

You taught me that my purpose is greater than the pain, that I am enough,

So for that I can only say I will be forever grateful for you being the light of inspiration
that I didn't know needed.

Manpreet R

The need for morrow

She's gone
I'm alone.
She is gone,
and I am alone

Long ago it was she and I,
she and I long ago.
Long ago side by side,
side by side long ago

Now she is gone,
She has gone with my light.
My soul,
all gone.

Enveloped in darkness,
where the monsters hide and play.
Hurting me,
scaring me.
I am alone.

She is dancing,
I am dying.
She is laughing,
I am crying.

Crying.
Silently,
silently crying.
Suffering,
silently suffering.
Suffering silently.

I tell myself:
Tomorrow is going to be a good day,
Tomorrow she will be there.

She is there,
Wearing black.
She is there,
Holding white roses.

She is there,
Without a smile.

Yesterday,
A silver blade,
A silent cry,
A red drop on the carpet floor.

Death,
It's a lonely thing isn't it?

Alone

They always say that everything is and will be okay. They think it is magic. You feel a certain way and it goes away. But, not Depression. Depression is a strong feeling. You are always sad and you can't talk to your friends anymore and your life is not working out. That is how much pain I have to go through. Everyone has to go through. I am almost 14 years old. I always feel this way and this never stops. No one ever understands me, no one listens, no one cares. I get bullied. I hate it! Everyone hates it. Depression is the worst. When I started having Depression, it changed my life. It made me the worst version of myself. If you feel the same way as me, at least I try everyday. I reach out to a love one and tell them about what is going on. You are never alone and you never will be! Thanks for listening! Listening to someone will always make a difference.

Shattered Homes

- *Rimsha*

We come from shattered homes; who chose this life for us? Why do they keep yelling and telling us "it will be okay?" Switch places with me and say it again, stop whispering now. "You can do anything you put your mind to," my mind is trying to mend my mental health and undo the physical and mental abuse; they lied, it's not that easy. Stop yelling at us "I understand," you don't. Who chose this life for us? I know I didn't. We take it day by day, hour by hour, and sometimes all at once. We are stronger, not because we have trained to fight against physical abuse, but because we've managed. Some days we feel alone and some days we feel whole. We learned to manage money, to cook, and to depend on no one but ourselves, we had no choice. We became adults quicker, self-actualized faster and loved deeper. I grew-up at age 12, you have to when you lose everything all at once. Who chose this life for us? I know I didn't, but why go back? I have come further than I would have if I came from any other home.

By: Narmada

ALONE



I FEEL
EMPTY



TRAPPED



I'm
BROKEN





A Change In Our Society

After years of inequality, why can't we put our egos and prides aside for them and make peace?

What about the next generation, will they have to live in fear of being discriminated because of their race?


What about the word freedom, it has lost its meaning; lost along with those innocent men, women and children who have been the victim of racial discrimination.

Let me ask you this,

How many more men, women and children will pay the price of death until we all realize that we are making mistakes? How many more families have to mourn the death of a loved one until we see change? And how much longer will people wait to change their perspective and put their pride aside.

Is it too much to ask?

A change in society.



What I want

Whenever I look at myself in the mirror
I think about what I want but
Then I go back to sleep and all my thoughts
Break down.
My wants turn into needs and my needs
Become irrelevant. But I still don't know
What I want, what my needs are.
I think I know what I want
Yet every time a small slip happens
I fall back into a trap
Of never-ending worry just because
I have no meaning. Meaning
Is always described by what we want and
Not what we need. I don't have it and
I feel like I never will. I need the same things
As this person or that person but our wants are different
And that is what I can't find in myself.
One fragment of my life is washed away and
Floats aimlessly around my mind,
Followed by an avalanche or a waterfall
Of things I can't control but
I want to.
Shards of glass I step on just to
Get to a path that leads me to
Some sort of realization but I realize
There is no path. I woke up and
I have no time. I refuse to sleep because
I am afraid I have no time.
There is no path
Because unlike all the other times
I worried and thought at night
This time I did not wake up to a fixed mind.
I woke up staring
At a broken mirror
With no reflection of
What I want.

7:35 ↗



< Notes



I lie awake. At the edge of disaster. Not knowing what to do. Not knowing who to go to.

I lie awake. The voices in my head keep telling me im not strong. Keep telling me I cant go on.

I lie awake. Doing everything I can to keep the tears at bay. Doing everything I can just to get through the day.

And I lie awake. Trying to relive the past few weeks. Reminding myself of the good times spent on these streets.

But thats all i can do. Just relive the memories i made here. Its all i can do. Its not like anyone else seems to care.

I'm on the verge of giving up. But i'll put up a fight. Just like i do every single night.

I'll cancel out the voices that tell me I can't. I'll cancel out the voices and play the memories instead.

I'll do it till I cant anymore. I'll keep going till i reach my core.

But I cant do this alone. No matter how hard I try. And I cant bear the thought of saying goodbye.

Im not ready to let it go. Life is already tough on its own. So i promise to fight till im just skin and bone.

