



Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition

MEMBERSHIP PACKAGE
2024-2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

To enjoy life to the fullest and realize our full potential, it is important that we take care of our mental as well as our physical health. The Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition (OBMHC) makes this its priority for Black communities. We have worked very hard to put in place a framework, services and tools to support our communities towards greater well-being. Of course, there is still much to do!

I am very grateful for the efforts and achievements of OBMHC members to build together and inclusively create a quality mental health system for our Black communities. To take care of one's mental health means seeking a balance between all aspects of one's life: personal, family, social, and professional. OBMHC is here to support you while respecting your needs.

Papa Ladjiké Diouf, M.A., Clinical Director / Clinical Supervisor
on behalf of the OBMHC Executive Board



OUR PURPOSE

OBMHC works collaboratively and collectively to improve mental health outcomes for Black communities in Ottawa.

Our Black leadership comprises key stakeholders, community members, academics, health, social service providers, and other partners who are embedded within the mental health and social service sector, with a commitment to dismantling the systemic barriers that exist within our health system.

This Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition has come together to identify ways to work collectively to amplify our individual impact and ensure a strong, united and coordinated mental health response in Black communities. Members collaborate to create more integrated services to support those with lived experience of mental health challenges, those in crisis, family members supporting youth and seniors, and those Black clinicians and mental health workers who provide direct services in the community.

The Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition seeks to achieve a more equitable mental health system by improving access to culturally appropriate mental health supports and resources offering healthier outcomes for Black residents in Ottawa. To achieve these outcomes, our strategies need to be grounded within Black communities and centered around Black voices.



OUR PRINCIPLES

Our current mental health system provides varying levels of clinical care and emergency services to support individuals in times of crisis. However, culturally appropriate supports that address local community needs, minimize mental distress, foster hope, support recovery and build resilience are insufficient to meet demands. Our members are committed to working within an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework and fostering diverse and inclusive approaches in our collaboration with communities.

For the Community. By the Community

Our Coalition is Black-led and engages a for community, by community approach to collaborating and finding solutions that:



Address local community needs



Minimize mental distress, increase mental wellbeing, and support recovery



Reduce stigma and normalize dialogue about mental health



Foster hope and build resilience

COMMUNITY IS THE KEY

Recognizing that we are stronger together, OBMHC members work collaboratively to ensure diverse representation from across the diaspora, including LGBTQIA+, francophone and newcomer voices. The Coalition endeavours to foster positive relationships between individual members, our wider Black communities, and regional community stakeholders.

Member Activities

The activities of the Coalition are informed by the community and developed by member organizations based on Priority Areas of Focus identified during ongoing strategic planning exercises.

Our three Priority Areas of Focus are:

1. Advocacy and Systems Change (ASC)
2. Mental Health Awareness (MHA)
3. Mental Health Supports (MHS)

OBMHC has a working group for each of these Priority Areas of Focus along with one Community of Practice Group.

OBMHC's member organizations are involved in delivering direct client services, developing programming, and ongoing advocacy work as part of their daily operations.



Public Engagement Activities

Black Mental Health Week

Held annually during the first week of March, Black Mental Health Week highlights the programs, services and issues impacting Black mental health in Ottawa. OBMHC members and community partners collaborate to deliver 7 days of engaging activities, panel discussions and informational events to a wide community audience.

Canadian Mental Health Week

This event in May is another opportunity to focus on the issues and highlight leaders in mental health. OBMHC partners collaborate to deliver an event aligned with the national theme, determined by CMHA annually.

OBMHC Intersections

This monthly webinar series features an OBMHC member organization or community partner through a 1-hour lunch and learn format. Topics include youth substance use, child/youth mental health, peer support, newcomer mental health and more. Watch on Facebook and YouTube. Videos are released on the last Wednesday of every month.

Community of Practice

This program provides facilitated group sessions for clinicians working with Black communities. Developed in collaboration with our experts, these sessions introduce culturally adapted tools and resources to mental health professionals. Using evidence-based practices, attendees address the unique challenges faced by both Black clinicians and clients.

Counselling Connect

OBMHC partners, in collaboration with more than 20 Ottawa agencies, support the provision of short-term counselling services through the Counselling Connect website. This service allows individuals, family members or support staff to arrange a counselling session with a counsellor from the Black community in English, French, and other languages. Sessions are free, available remotely, and anonymous.

Ottawa Guiding Council for Mental Health and Addictions

Under the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, OBMHC is working to develop the 24/7 Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Response Strategy for the city of Ottawa. This work involves several Coalition members collaborating with City, Police, Social Services and Healthcare partners to address the need for an appropriate, non-police-reliant solution to mental health crisis calls.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Training:** OBMHC holds training for its membership twice per year. Training sessions are closed to members only, and focus on responding to the needs expressed by members for capacity building in specific areas.
- **Funding:** The OBMHC encourages its members to collaborate and co-apply for relevant funding. We are able to provide letters of support for OBMHC member applications. Members seeking letters of support for applications can contact the OBMHC Coordinator at ottawabmhcoalition@gmail.com to discuss details.
- **Communications:** The OBMHC promotes member organizations' programs and services through LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube and in the OBMHC e-newsletter. Members are encouraged to cross-promote and share resources across the Coalition. Members can do this by contacting the OBMHC Coordinator at ottawabmhcoalition@gmail.com.



MEMBERSHIP

Membership has 3 designations: Voting Members, Participating Members, and Community of Practice Members.

Voting Members of the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition are member organizations represented by an individual. Voting members can participate in collective decision making through votes and nominations. Organizations can have only one vote in decision-making processes, regardless of the number of staff participating in meetings. Individuals can only represent one organization for the purposes of voting.

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Participating Members are non-voting members, both organizations and individuals. Participating members can engage in all activities and comment on action or policy items. Non-voting membership is beneficial for organizations and individuals who want to be involved in supporting mental health initiatives, but do not meet the criteria to be voting members.

Community of Practice Members are individual clinicians and mental health workers who are registered and in good standing with professional regulatory authorities. Community of Practice members have access to OBMHC consultants who share best practices to support one another in the delivery of services, knowledge sharing, and feedback to improve client experience and build the capacity of professionals.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

Voting Member Criteria

Eligible individual members must be employed by a mental health service provider, social service organization, academic institution, or organization that has a mandate to foster the mental well-being of Black communities or groups within Black communities. Voting members are committed to representing their organizations in decision-making processes. OBMHC works to ensure voting members represent a multitude of voices including francophones, youth, seniors, newcomers, LGTBQIA+ communities, and others, who are facing systemic racism and mental health challenges. Voting Members must agree to abide by the OBMHC Member Guidelines to remain in good standing and active membership.

Participating Member Criteria

Individual members may be employed with a mental health service provider, social service organization, academic institution, or organization that has a mandate to foster the mental well-being of Black communities or groups. Participating Members may include community members with lived experience, regional organizations with an interest in advancing mental health, front-line service workers, and community stakeholders.

Participating Members must agree to abide by the OBMHC Member Guidelines to remain in good standing and active membership.

Community of Practice Members

Members must be registered mental health professionals and in good standing with a professional association or provincial regulatory body within Canada to remain in good standing and active membership.

MEETINGS

The Coalition meets twice annually at All-Members meetings in April and October. The Coalition may meet more frequently as needed for the execution of duties. Attendance at meetings will be recorded. Members should make every effort to remain active and attend all scheduled meetings. In turn, OBMHC will make every effort to schedule meetings with a minimum of one week of notice in writing.

Meetings will be chaired by a Coalition Executive Board member and/or the OBMHC Coordinator.

Progress updates will be provided by the Working Groups at each of OBMHC's All-Members meetings, and may be provided more frequently as the work requires.

OBMHC's Executive Board members meet in in, January, March, June, September and November on the third Friday of the month. Additional meetings outside of the normal schedule may be called to address specific items, and are at the discretion of the co-chairs. Reasonable notice will be provided in advance by email and calendar invitation.

OBMHC's Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Coalition members every 3 years to make updates and approve any revisions.

Executive Board leadership and co-chairs will be reviewed by the Coalition every 3 years. Coalition working group co-chairs will be reviewed and confirmed annually.

This information is adapted from the OBMHC Terms of Reference. For a detailed copy of the OBMHC Terms of Reference, please refer to the website at obmhc.com.

COLLABORATORS

OBMHC MEMBERS INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS FROM THESE ORGANIZATIONS

African Canadian Association of Ottawa (ACAO)
ACB Wellness Resource Centre
Black Health Alliance
Britannia Woods Community House
Canadian Women of Colour Leadership Network (CWCLN)
Canadians of African Descent Health Organization (CADHO)
CoCREATH Lab - University of Ottawa
Community Development Framework
Councilor Rawlson King's Office
Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health (ICBH)
Jaku Konbit
Le Conseil Économique et Social d'Ottawa Carleton (CESOC)
Le Regroupement Ethnoculturel des Parents Francophones de l'Ontario (REPFO)
Muslim Family Services of Ottawa
Mythra Counselling
Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)
Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP)
Ottawa Public Health (OPH)
Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre (ORCC)
Parent Resource Centre
SALUS Ottawa
Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario (SCAGO)
Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO)
Somali Centre for Family Services (SCFS)
Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC)
St. Paul University
Mehari Centre
Upstream Ottawa
Vulnerability, Trauma, Resilience and Culture Research Laboratory (V-TRaC) –
University of Ottawa

LEADERSHIP

OBMHC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS 2024 - 2025



Jacklyn St. Laurent, PhD



Kadra Good, Clinical Supervisor



Bo Turpin, Executive Director



Papa Ladjike Diouf, Clinical Director



Mohamed SOfa, Executive Director



Nuradiin Mohamoud, Team Lead



Sophia Jacob, Founder CWCLN



Olivier Engoute, Psychotherapist



Buuma Maisha, Professor

COORDINATION

OBMHC Member Coordination

Michelle James has more than 20 years of experience working in education, business, and social services. She has built her career around serving diverse and vulnerable populations including children and families, people with disabilities, and racialized communities. Michelle holds a BA in Psychology from the University of Windsor and a graduate certificate from Humber College and spent the last 20 years living and working with diverse communities in Japan and Canada.



She now brings her leadership and expertise to facilitate, support and grow Black Mental Health programs in Ottawa through the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition.

Contact Us



613-323-5626



ottawabmhcoalition@gmail.com



www.obmhc.com



<https://www.facebook.com/OBMHC>



Ottawa Black
Mental Health
Coalition

The Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition is grateful for the support of our funding partners:



United Way
Centraide
East Ontario
Est de l'Ontario





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