

For municipalities that cultivate mental health

Municipalities play a key role in promoting positive mental health. By leveraging their expertise in culture, recreation, social development, and land use planning, they help create inclusive living environments, strengthen social connections, energize community life and break isolation, to build cities where people enjoy living*.



How to make a difference?

1. Design living spaces that foster social connections

- Provide communal and gathering spaces throughout the year, such as parks, community halls, sports facilities, and public squares, to strengthen social cohesion and reduce isolation.

2. Encourage citizen participation in local life

- Involve residents in municipal decision-making through participation mechanisms such as youth committees or quality of life and well-being committees, to enhance their sense of belonging and collective engagement.

3. Support and energize local community life

- Collaborate with community organizations and support their activities, especially those working with more vulnerable populations, to offer the community a continuous, coordinated, and accessible program of social, sports, and cultural activities.

4. Prevent violence and promote social harmony

- Implement local violence prevention initiatives, especially for youth, such as awareness workshops, mediation spaces, or sports and cultural activities accessible to the entire community.

Get inspired, take action!

Collective and gathering spaces

- The **International Cittaslow Movement** brings together municipalities that promote a more balanced pace of life. In Québec, **Lac-Mégantic**, the only certified Cittaslow city, values « well-being » through its welcoming spaces that foster social connections: public markets, green corridors, parks, youth centers, and an international dark sky reserve.
- The City of Montréal is known for its **pedestrian streets** during the summer. These streets enliven the city by giving pedestrians full access to a variety of spaces such as local shops, lively terraces, relaxation areas, and entertainment venues.



Citizen participation

- More and more municipalities are seeking to strengthen youth involvement in local life. The Union des municipalités du Québec offers a **tool** to support those wishing to better understand and increase engagement among youth aged 15 to 29. For example, Saint-Donat created a **municipal youth council** and allocated a budget of \$5,000 to support projects led by and for young people.
- The Cittaslow certification in Lac-Mégantic is driven by a vibrant citizen-led project that encourages dialogue between residents and the municipal council. A case study is available for inspiration (coming soon).

Community life

- Several municipalities maintain a directory of community organizations active in their area. **The City of Longueuil**, for example, offers these resources organized by theme.
- The **Ça se cultive toolkit** provides a multitude of resources for the community to promote positive mental health among youth. These tools are developed by organizations with expertise in mental health.

Violence prevention and social harmony

- The Borough of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension developed its **youth Strategy** to combat violence committed and experienced by young people aged 12 to 25. This strategy funds local organizations' projects, including physical and cultural activities, youth equipment, and hiring workers to improve social inclusion for young people.

Want to learn more about these priorities and positives
mental health initiatives?

Visit aspq.org | **Mental Health** and **Ralentir**.