

**From:** [Sarah Niver](#)  
**To:** [WebMail - CCD](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for 11/8  
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Hello,

My name is Sarah Niver and I've been a resident of Whittier since 2019. Since it came up at the end of the last council meeting, I wanted to note that the concern over brightly colored Fentanyl (or commonly known as "rainbow Fentanyl") to deceive children as candy is primarily a moral panic. As [the "Why this expert says 'rainbow fentanyl' is no real threat to your Halloween this year" article from PBS](#) reasons, "One obvious hole in these concerns is that drugs tend to cost more than candy...Fentanyl is considerably more expensive. It is not unreasonable to wonder just what a fentanyl dealer's overarching goal might be if in passing the drug off as candy. The suggestion that a school-age kid would go from accidental user of fentanyl to a paying addict is far-fetched."

This moral panic is based on irrational fear and I feel the city council should be aware so that they do not further this panic, spread misinformation or take action that may have negative consequences on the community, as much drug enforcement has. I commend the drug take-back program and have seen other cities' programs distributing narcans. I would urge that the city council would consider that as an actionable move as well. I would go so far to suggest drug decriminalization as well. Often, criminalizing drug use is expensive and police could better focus on violent Part 1 crimes.

On the topic of public health, I've been hearing that mental illness and mental health is declining through the recent years and there are studies to support that adolescents and adults should now screen for anxiety. If Whittier schools have not started doing so, I want to urge the city council to mandate screening for mental health issues for children 12 and older as they do for hearing and vision. It would be best that Whittier doctors, urgent cares, etc are mandated to screen patients as well, if possible within the power of city council.

Furthering the conversation of mental health, there is a homeless man that frequently comes in front of my residence. He yells to himself at odd hours and I am a little too afraid to approach him, even though my boyfriend and I would like to offer water or food. He needs to get help but I do not trust the police to handle him and not escalate the situation or arrest him. I once was in the terrible position of having a panic attack in public at 3am many years ago and when police arrived, the options they gave me was either waiting until I felt better or taking me to jail. I find these options inadequate and a failure of public safety. So I do not trust police generally in handling mental health situations. I find it very discouraging that the city of Whittier itself does not have resources to handle this sort of situation. Or that if we do, somehow I've lived here 4 years, my boyfriend over 10 years, and neither of us don't know of them!

Cheers,  
Sarah Niver