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[I recommend working along side the wireframes to understand the layout of the content. <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6BjW-lR43DYdjdlMG5vNy10UFk&authuser=0>]

### Homepage

Banner with image

# Become a Mentor

## Change a Life

## Change Your Life

3 square block buttons

# Peers Working Together

Peer mentoring builds long-lasting relationships, boosts mental health, and integrates the disconnected. [links to the about page Where We Work section]

# Donate Now

Give hope and re-define the lives of at-risk and newcomer kids by investing in their future. [links to donate now Artez page]

# Activities

Get dorky, techie, sporty or lazy with our organized and open activities [links to

Donate Now / Mentee Story

# Donate Now

A little help from a friend is all a kid needs. At-risk and newcomer kids are waiting to be uniquely matched; more volunteers need to be trained.

The kids you help have a 98 per cent success rate of staying safe, schooled and smiling.

Be the change; give now to give hope.

## Where Does the Money Go?

Learn how the kids you help increase resiliency, confidence, and self-esteem, while making their mentors the leaders of today. Find out Where does the money go?

# Featured [Mentee Story](http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2015/2/5/the-best-decision-ive-ever-made-peer-project-mentor-jim-hron.html) teaser

*[1st paragraph of story from Our Stories > Mentee Story]*

Mentor story / Become a Mentor

# Featured [Mentor Story](http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2015/2/5/the-best-decision-ive-ever-made-peer-project-mentor-jim-hron.html) teaser

*[1st paragraph of story from Our Stories > Mentor Story]*

# Become a Mentor

Are you a focused, hard-working and selfless leader? Join a group of people just like you to go one-on-one with kids in need. The 6- to 15-year-old kids you can help are full of potential and just in need of a few nudges and bumps to attain the balanced, healthy and happy life they deserve.

The newcomer and at-risk kids need 16- to 29-year-olds (especially males) to step up.

Are you ready to change a life. Are you ready to change your life?

**First Name**

**Last Name**

**Email**

**[Become a Mentor]**

## What is it Like as a Mentor?

Mentors come from all different walks of life; an interesting thread running throughout their stories is their own unexpected growth and evolution. This experience can change you!

Want to learn more, find out what life is like as a mentor by reading Our Stories.

Footer

At-risk and newcomer kids meet their full potential through our unique peer-mentoring service, matching newcomer and at-risk kids ages 6-15 with trained and dedicated youth volunteers ages 16-29 who act as positive role models.

### About Page

About Content

When you’re young, you listen to your friends for what music, shoes and hairstyle to like. By harnessing the power of friendship, peer mentors promote healthy growth and development to help kids in need realize their full potential, while evolving themselves into the leaders our city needs.

Our one-to-one peer-mentoring program helps newcomer and at-risk kids ages 6-15 with a youth mentor ages 16-29. The kids you can help face behavioural, social, emotional and cultural challenges. Good kids who need a helping hand. Mentors are young people who want to change lives. They standup as role models, activity partners, and friends for kids who need someone to talk to, look up to, and have fun with.

Honed from helping over 30,000 kids since 1976, The Peer Project’s individually customized service uniquely recruits, assessew, and matches kids with a mentor. We take the time to get the match right. We also organized optional monthly activities and provide on-going training and 24-hour support.

Our mentoring program works. Our kids do better at school, they stay out of trouble, they give to their communities, and many come back to be mentors themselves. We have an evaluated 98 per cent success rate of keeping kids out of the criminal justice system and in school, but our need is still great with over 450 kids waiting for a mentor.

Issue rectangles - Boxed Stats

* 450+ Mentors needed
* 1200 Active Mentors and Mentees
* 98% Success rate
* 39 Years in operation

Where We Work

[I added the new wireframe below replacing the google map]



# Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

Peer mentors age 16-29 act as positive role models to help at-risk and newcomer kids age 6-15 reach their full potential.

# Clicks and Stones

An educator (and mother of a cyber-bullied child) goes to classrooms of grade 7 and 8s to educate and fight cyber bullying.

# Mental-Health Training

Mentors receive training on mental health to understand and help their mentee develop a healthy lifestyle.

# Girls-only Group Mentoring

Girls (mainly newcomer girls) receive customized mentoring over 10 weeks based on their needs, ranging from support for emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, self defense, health issues, and more.

# Saddle-up For Success

Newcomer and at-risk kids visit a horse farm to learn how to ride horses and connect with nature.

# Learning Disabilities Training

Mentors receive training on learning disabilities to understand their mentee’s unique way of learning and help them succeed in school.

Why We Are Different

Peer mentoring results in better outcomes than adult mentoring.

We help children that other mentoring programs won’t.

We offer expertise to help kids with mental-health diagnoses.

We conduct in-home assessments for every mentor and family.

We offer extensive training for volunteers

We provide 24/7 emergency support

We run dedicated activities at free or low-cost

The average mentoring match lasts for five years

Where does the money go?

[ Infographic to come]

Meet Our Staff

[To come – Manual slide staff photos w/ name and titles – if names and titles could be added that would be great.]

Awards

* 2014 Bhayana Family Foundation Award (United Way) – Dedication, Mona Dogen
* 2013 Toronto Foundation – Vital Ideas Award – Youth Mentoring Program
* 2010 Bhayana Family Foundation Award (United Way) – Team Achievement
* 2010 State Farm Good Neighbour Award
* 2010 Toronto Foundation – Vital Youth Award – Girls Only (GO) Program
* 2012 Harlequin “More than Words” Award – Sally Spencer
* 2006 Dubai International Award for Best Practices
* 2004 Mayor’s Community Safety Award
* 2003 Ministry of Citizenship Outstanding Achievement Award
* 2001 Ruth Atkinson Hindmarsh Award
* 2000 Diana Princess of Wales Foundation
* 1994 City of Toronto Safe City Award

### Our Stories

Mentor Story

# Growing Up Tough, Mick Dickenson Pays it Forward

Emigrating from Jamaica at age four to Toronto and landing in the Jane and Finch area (and then Mimico), Mick Dickenson didn’t really know he grew up neighbourhoods that were known as rougher areas.

“You realize after you are older what was happening in your neighbourhood, you see a lot of domestic abuse, drug use, and prostitution and stuff like that,” says Mick.

Mick’s parents weren’t around much because they were working to help keep food on the table for Mick and his siblings. He was the oldest kid in the family and took on the role of parent to keep his younger brother and sister in line.

“I was sort of left in charge, so it caused me to grow up faster than most kids around my age and it’s those experiences that I use when dealing with my mentee,” says Mick.

Now as a martial arts instructor and security guard at the AGO, he is giving back to help a newcomer kid become settled in his new country.

“Your childhood can be a make or break time and I feel given my experiences in my life, I would be able to help with other kids in that situation,” says Mick.

**Finding Common Ground and Navigating the Line**

At first, his junior was very shy, “he didn’t say anything,” but Mick kept trying looking for common ground and soon landed on something they both liked: football.

“Because he is South American descent, I was thinking does he mean that kind of football or American football?” says Mick. “So I asked him ‘which one – the one where you kick or the one where you throw?’ and he said ‘throw’ and I was like yes – we are going to be good friends.”

The challenge for Mick hasn’t been dealing with issues that might arise because “The Peer Project training session prepared you for most thing,” he says. Rather, the challenge has been finding the right balance between being a friend and being a disciplinarian.

“You aren’t the child’s parent’s, so what is the line that you can jump in and say you can’t do this or you can’t do that,” says Mick. “So if they are having family issues, is it your place to say anything?”

“I don’t have any children and it is nice to get a taste of what that is like,” says Mick. “Now I have had experience dealing with these delicate fine line issues and I do feel better prepared and equipped if I have to deal with it again in the future.”

Mentee Story

<http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2015/3/5/from-mentored-to-mentor-the-growth-of-charlie-lo.html>

Why Mentoring Story

# Peer Mentoring Helps Stop Youth Violence

Stopping youth violence starts before a kid decides to pick up a gun. Through early intervention into the lives of at-risk and newcomer kids, a peer mentor can help steer kids away from making the wrong decisions.

“As a community we can help prevent our kids from dying from violence by investing in what has proven to work,” says Sally Spencer, CEO of the Peer Project – Youth Assisting Youth.

## Reducing Crime Rate, but Rising Youth Violence

[According to Statistics Canada](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14040-eng.htm?fpv=2693), Canada’s crime rate has been on a downward trend since a peak in 1991, reaching in 2013 its lowest level since 1969. As well, Toronto is the third lowest of all Canadian metropolitan cities on the Police-reported Crime Severity Index, which “measures the volume and severity of crime.”

Nevertheless communities in and around Toronto are home to gangs and incidents of youth violence that are a plague on our region. According to the 2008 [Roots of Youth Violence](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthandthelaw/roots/index.aspx) Ontario government report, during the 1970s, less than a quarter of victims were under 25, now it is over 40 per cent; gun charges for youth have increased by one-third since 2002; and, the homicide rate for Toronto’s Black community during 1992 and 2003 was almost five times greater than the average.

## Peer Mentoring Helps Save Lives

A recommendation in the Roots of Youth Violence report calls for the increased support of peer mentoring. Research reveals peer mentoring can help kids not only [stay away from violence](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/104/1/50.short), but also [live healthier lives](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/16/us-poverty-allostatic-idUSKCN0I52UP20141016), [improve school performance](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pits.20025/abstract), and reduce [instances of bullying](http://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=5bmNAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA177&dq=%22peer+mentoring%22+and+bullying&ots=NBrpZQMPAs&sig=GveiA4ULnOrVWbRAsESKBq7N30I#v=onepage&q=%22peer%20mentoring%22%20and%20bullying&f=false). A [meta-analysis of 73 papers](http://psi.sagepub.com/content/12/2/57.extract) found peer-mentoring helped improve outcomes for youth “across behavioral, social, emotional and academic domains.”

Charlie Lo, a Peer Project mentee turned mentor, saw some of his peers get caught up with the wrong crowd.

“There was this kid…that kind of hung out with the wrong crowd and he got shot and he lost his life,” says Charlie. “It’s a shame because he was actually on the list to become a mentee.”

The positive role model isn’t a one-way street, The Peer Project CEO Sally Spencer recounts the impact of mentoring had on a Peer Project mentor.

“One of our mentors Billy, living in a low-income neighbourhood, had a choice to make one morning, he could either pick-up a gun with his friends that night or live the positive lifestyle he advocated to his mentee. He decided to stay home and his friends were arrested - being a mentor saved his life,” says Spencer.

“We have a 98 per cent success rate keeping kids in school and away from the criminal justice system, but with over 400 kids on the waiting list to get a mentor, the need in this city is high - too high.”

Community Story

<http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2015/2/26/spinning-wheels-changing-lives.html>

Mentor Story

# Mentor Stephanie Butler Learns To Ask Questions, Not Just Dispense Advice

Working as a social housing advocate in Toronto, Stephanie Butler’s job became “a lot more real” when she became a Peer Project mentor. Her mentee it turned out lived in community housing.

“This is why I do my job,” says Stephanie. “I know the outcomes are better when a family is living in a home they can afford – seeing that makes it all the more real and makes me want to work harder.”

Stephanie’s first and now second mentee come from new Canadian families living in the big city, while she came from a small town in Canada. Stephanie says “working and doing fun things” with people from different backgrounds has been “a little bit eye opening” and made her think hard about the city she lives in and her own privilege.

“The girl I am mentoring now came to me and told me a couple of her girlfriends are pregnant – I am like oh my goodness how do I talk about this,” says Stephanie. “My values, perception and gut reaction might be different – so it is learning a way to choose your words and ask questions, instead of just dispensing advice.”

So instead Stephanie asked her mentee: “How do you feel about that?” and “What would you do in that situation?”

“It’s probably better she had that conversation with me instead of with Mom,” says Stephanie. “

**Teaching Life Skills**

Working with teenagers, Stephanie has tried to impart life skills into her outings. She helped create living scenarios to demonstrate what a high school grad working a minimum wage job and a university grad working an entry level office job could afford.

“We sat down together and figured out how much that person takes home after taxes, how much they can afford to spend on rent each month and then we went on craigslist to see what was available,” Stephanie says. “Things like that are really important.”

She also took her recent mentee to the college information fair and by the end her mentee, who is pretty shy, was the one asking the questions.

**Why She does it**

Stephanie was thankful to have really smart and caring papeople in her life guiding her through adolescence. She joined The Peer Project to give back what she was lucky enough to receive, plus she really likes doing “fun dorky stuff” and hanging out with teenagers.

“I see a lot of value there and I see a lot of potential,” says Stephanie.

Mentee Story

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Why Mentoring Story

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Community Story

http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2015/1/29/bowlers-are-striking-people-peer-project-bowling-bonanza.html

Mentor Story

# Mentor Alex Eusebio Rises Up to Gives a Hand

Alex Eusebio wanted to have a meaningful impact on his community before getting into and dedicating himself to law school. When he came across The Peer Project, he knew he had found the right organization.

“My parents are new immigrants to Canada, they didn’t go past grade six in school, so I didn’t have much guidance going through the academic system and getting used to the Canadian lifestyle,” says Alex. “[I wanted to] help a youth avoid the problems I had faced – that means a lot to me.”

What started as an effort to provide the guidance he had lacked expanded into a strong mutually supportive relationship.

“To be the best mentor that I can be…I really need to be best person I can be for myself,” says Alex. “It really just motivates me a lot.”

Besides that he gets to have fun.

“I get to do stuff people who are my age are too old to do,” says Alex.

**Unsure Start**

Going into the process to become a mentor, Alex was unsure of how to effectively help a kid with serious problems, but in the end he says The Peer Project pairing process worked well.

“My case worker Carol, I can’t thank her enough, she matched me with a perfect mentee – I think that really works out, the whole training and pre-interview process,” says Alex.

In the early days of their relationship, Alex had trouble finding the balance between friend and authority figure. School came easy to Alex and socializing was harder, but for his junior, it’s the reverse.

“He is a social butterfly but sacrifices his academic performance,” says Alex. “I used to stress homework and that at first put a strain on our relationship.”

His pressure worked, he did get his marks up but Alex admits it was taking away from the experience. Alex’s Peer Project caseworker suggested he focus less on schoolwork and more on just “being there” for his mentee.

“That really worked,” says Alex.

The relationship went from being tense to being more relaxed and fun, he says.

“Without that pressure of always being on top of him, he was a lot more open with me and maintaining that openness and lack of tension is key to the relationship,” says Alex.

Besides the motivation to be a better person, Alex says he has “learned a lot” from his junior and his family, gaining guidance himself and a new cultural perspective.

Now that Alex is off at Western University studying law, he still remains close with his junior and plans to be around for a long time.

“You can’t do anything in your life without thinking about how that is going to affect your mentee,” says Alex. “I have gotten really close with him and I don’t want to pull away from the relationship. I want us to keep pushing each other to be the best that we can be.”

Mentee Story

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Why Mentoring Story

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Community Story

http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2015/1/15/the-peer-project-playing-for-keeps-and-the-pan-am-games-1.html

Mentor Story

Jim Thronis

<http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2015/2/5/the-best-decision-ive-ever-made-peer-project-mentor-jim-hron.html>

Mentee Story

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Why Mentoring Story

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Community Story

http://thepeerproject.ca/blog/2014/12/10/glen-jamie-host-the-best-bash-ever.html

### Mentor’s Toolkit Section

Help With Stories

# Steps to help stop cyber bullying

Is your mentee being cyber bullied? Did they tell you or are they showing signs of distress, perhaps shuddering when they see your smartphone?

You can help by listening and providing advice, but do not get involved directly by confronting the bully!

## Steps to help stop bullying

Here are some steps you can help your mentee deal with cyber bullying.

1. Tell them to ignore the bully. They will go away on their own if they don’t get the reaction they were looking for.
2. Encourage your mentee (if appropriate) to confront the bully calmly and respectfully.
3. Get the parents of you mentee to contact the parents of the bully and discuss the situation in a non-judgmental way.
4. If it continues, get the parents to contact the school and if necessary the police.

## Steps to Prevent Cyber Bullying

Here are some steps your mentee can take to help prevent cyber bullying

Do not…

1. Give out your password
2. Post messages when angry
3. Become Facebook friends with people you don’t know personally
4. Text or post anything you wouldn’t want your parents to see
5. Participate in spreading mean things about others

## Peer Project Training & Help

The Peer Project runs training programs on cyber bullying, so contact your case coordinator for more information.

As well, if you need immediate support dealing with an evolving but immediate problem, your caseworker is available from 9 am to 5 pm. And 24/7 support is available using the Peer Project’s Emergency Protocol contact list.

## More Resources

Also check out these cyber-bullying resources:

* [Needhelpnow.ca](https://needhelpnow.ca/app/en/)
* [CBC Doc Zone: Sext Up Kids](http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/episodes/sext-up-kids)
* [Get Cyber Safe](http://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx)

//////////

# Overcoming Learning disabilities

If your mentee has difficulty with reading, writing, math, fine motor skills, language, hearing different sounds or interpreting visual information, they may have a learning disability.

Your mentee may not have the confidence to tell you they have problems learning because they may feel they are alone with this problem or they are embarrassed. It is not your role to diagnose a problem, but being aware of the

If you suspect your mentee has undiagnosed learning disabilities after spending some time helping them with their homework, contact your Peer Project caseworker.

## What can I do to help my mentee

You can help to build resilience and encourage positive outcomes in your mentee:

* Become better informed about the issues faced by young people that may hinder academic success,
* Contribute to the de-stigmatization of learning disabilities, and
* Learn to interact with your mentees in a positive and supportive way.

## Strategies for support

Here are a few tips to help support you mentee with their learning disability when you are trying to help them with homework or explain new concepts.

* Be concrete and explicit in instructions by demonstrating what you mean,
* Break down tasks and instructions into smaller, manageable parts,
* Give immediate feedback and praise for event the small successes,
* Emphasize their strengths and interests,
* BE patient and try to explain in a different way, and
* Get ready to learn because your child has a unique way of seeing the world.

## Peer Project Training Available & Help

The Peer Project runs training programs on learning disabilities, so contact your case coordinator for more information.

As well, if you need immediate support dealing with an evolving but immediate problem, your caseworker is available from 9 am to 5 pm. And 24/7 support is available using the Peer Project’s Emergency Protocol contact list.

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# Understanding Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a brain-based disorder that primarily affects the prefrontal cortex. ADHD diagnosis is the result of a complex assessment process.

Today approximately, 10-15% of children and teenagers have been diagnosed with ADHD with boys more likely to be diagnosed. About half are on medication and some 20% are not receiving medication or therapy.

## Facts about ADHD

Here are some facts to help understand ADHD – a growing problem among kids today

* People with ADHD can pay attention, if it is an activity they enjoy
* Not all kids with ADHD are hyper active, some are inattentive
* Kids with ADHD can not just “behave” if they want to – you may need to adjust their environment, activity or your expectations
* Some kids will outgrow their ADHD as their brains mature and
* Medication sometimes is the best treatment – ADHD medication is generally overprescribed but for many kids it may be the only thing that works (and it is not your decision).

## Strategies for Supporting Kids

Here are some things you can do to help your mentee with their ADHD:

* Vary activities
* Keep them busy but insert moments of down time for practice, so they can learn to self monitor
* Do not them use ADHD as an excuse for bad behaviour
* Keep expectations high but realistic – a one hour meal
* Try not discourage fidgeting, gum chewing, doodling – they can help kids focus
* Delay gratification to encourage self reliance
* Recognize their positive attributes

## Peer Project Training Available & Help

The Peer Project runs training programs on learning disabilities and ADHD, so contact your case coordinator for more information.

As well, if you need immediate support dealing with an evolving but immediate problem, your caseworker is available from 9 am to 5 pm. And 24/7 support is available using the Peer Project’s Emergency Protocol contact list.

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# What are the different types of mental illnesses?

Making sure kids have a positive mental health is growing as an important developmental goal for kids. Mentoring can help kids avoid or overcome mental illnesses.

Mental illness is cased by a complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors.

## What are the types of mental illnesses?

Below is a high-level review of common mental illnesses (symptoms and not all symptoms are not described below):

**Depression** – feeling down, unhappy, worried, fearful and hopeless (and the feeling doesn’t go away)

**Bipolar Disorder** – maniac feelings of extreme optimism and then depression in varying levels of intensity.

**Anxiety Disorder** (phobias, panic disorder, social anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, general anxiety disorder) – Some anxiety can be helpful but when it pervades thoughts, acts and feelings, it is time to pay attention.

**Eating Disorders** (anorexia, bulimia, binge eating) – Refusing to keep weight in the a normal range for their body by restricting food or exercising excessively

**Conduct Disorders –** behaving aggressively, risky, destructively, or deceitfully and breaking rules and subverting authority resulting in school failure, rebellion, and negative social and familial experiences.

**Schizophrenia –** delusions, hallucinations, social withdrawal, disorganized speech and disturbed thinking (Schizophrenia affects 1% of the population and begins in teen and early adult years)

**Self Injury** – unexplained injuries (cuts and burns) and scars, wearing long pants and shirts in the summer (to cover up), low self-esteem, and problems handling emotions and relationships.

## Peer Project Training Available & Help

The Peer Project runs training programs on mental illness, so contact your case coordinator for more information.

As well, if you need immediate support dealing with an evolving but immediate problem, your caseworker is available from 9 am to 5 pm. And 24/7 support is available using the Peer Project’s Emergency Protocol contact list.

/////////////////

# How to deal with racism and discrimination

Racism and discrimination is not always confined to overt acts, it can also be institutionalized and systemic.

Racial awareness – noting that people look different – occurs between the ages two and two and half. How your mentee views other races will depend on their parent’s attitude, their peers, the media, school, youth groups and you.

Racial attitudes are learned not so much by contact with other groups, rather by contact with the prevailing attitude towards other groups.

## Steps to dealing with discrimination and racism

By doing activities and responding to racism, you can help your mentee fight racism.

* Initiate activities that develop positive attitudes to your mentee’s cultural identity and those of other groups.
* Listen carefully to your mentee’s question and comments and make sure you understand what the child is trying to communicate.
* Provide truthful explanations relative to the mentee’s age and ability to understand.
* Help them understand stereotypes and that racism is not a permanent condition.
* If you encounter racist jokes, be sure not to laugh and tell the joker this type of humour is not funny.
* Be aware of your own biases and be sure to check them. Be a positive example.

///////////////

# How to deal with Abuse

Mentors usually develop trusting relationships with their mentees and survivors of abuse usually try to disclose their situation with people they trust.

## Signs of abuse

Youth mentors may also see physical or behavioural signs of abuse, either physical, sexual, emotional or neglect, such as:

**Physical** – several injuries, cannot recall how injuries occurred, wary of adults, flinch at being touched, vacant stares, extreme aggressiveness or withdrawl, or extreme affection seeking behavior.

**Sexual** – age inappropriate sexuality, sexual drawings, bizarre sexual knowledge, promiscuity, genital itching, STDs, torn underwear, or pregnancy.

**Emotional** – severe depression, bedwetting, extreme aggression or withdrawal, frequent head and stomach aches, overly compliant, extreme attention seeking or extreme inhibition.

**Neglect** – Appears lethargic, weight loss, displays little movement, thin skin, appears emaciate, unresponsive to strangers.

## What to do if you suspect abuse?

Rarely is one indicator conclusive proof of abuse, but a cluster of behavioural and physical indicators can point to a problem.

If you suspect your mentee is being subjected to abuse, you have a duty under the Child and Family Services Act to report the allegation to your [local Children’s Aid Society.](http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/locate.htm)

If you are unsure, contact your case coordinator to discuss your concerns. Your caseworker is available from 9 am to 5 pm. And 24/7 support is available using the Peer Project’s Emergency Protocol contact list.

### Sponsor’s Page

Content Page to come, depending on governance model

### Become a Mentor

This content would be migrated to automated emails once, potential volunteers submit their email.

### Get a Mentor

<http://yay.org/request.html> with fillable forms.