

What you need to know

Rising Together

DEPRESSION & ANXIETY
PEER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

Youth Rising Above

WELCOME TO RISING TOGETHER

It takes courage to reach out.

We're grateful you've chosen us as one way to care for your mental health and to connect with others who can relate to what you're feeling.

This document will help you to understand:

What to expect when joining a peer support session, and

How we can all contribute to the creation of a safe and positive peer support experience for ourselves and for others





LEARN MORE ABOUT...

<u>What is peer support ?.....</u>	4
<u>Who can register and join peer support ?.....</u>	5
<u>Camera on requirement.....</u>	8
<u>Arriving on time</u>	9
<u>What to expect & group participation</u>	10
<u>Comfort Agreement</u>	13
<u>Terms of Participation</u>	14
<u>Privacy and Confidentiality.....</u>	15
<u>Accessibility needs</u>	16
<u>Gift cards</u>	17

WHAT IS PEER SUPPORT?

- Peer support is a supportive, empowering relationship between people with shared experiences of mental health, focused on holistic well-being, recovery, and hope.
- Rising Together is a peer community for supportive, empathetic conversations about the things that impact our mental health.
- Groups are formed by a community of peers who actively participate in providing one another with non-judgemental and active listening, emotional support, and empowerment in exploring individual paths to wellness

WHO CAN REGISTER FOR PEER SUPPORT?

- Youth ages 16-24 years old, currently living in Canada
- Registration is limited to one session per week for each participant
- Peer support groups are open to everyone, no referrals are required, but participants are asked to register in advance
- Participants do not need to have a mental health diagnosis and those with any mental health experience are welcome to attend

WHO CAN JOIN A PEER SUPPORT SESSION?

- For the safety of all group members and to support facilitators in creating a positive and engaging group experience, groups are limited in size (approximately 10 peers) and only registered participants will be able to join the session
- To ensure a safe and secure virtual environment, group Zoom links are reserved for registered participants only
- The group will be led by two trained peer support facilitators

WHO CAN JOIN A PEER SUPPORT SESSION?

During peer support, it's important that we all contribute to creating a safe and comfortable environment for support and sharing.

As part of that, we require all group members to use their camera during the group.

We also require all group members to participate in a group check-in. At the beginning of the group, the facilitators will walk you through this activity.

To learn more, visit our website: youthrisingabove.org/rising-together

RISING TOGETHER IS CAMERA ON PROGRAM

Having cameras on supports the safety of both facilitators, and group participants. With our cameras turned on, we're able to see and know who we're sharing with. This added layer of human connection can contribute to feelings of safety, trust, and healing.

Because of this, we require that all participants are able to have their camera on during the entirety of the peer support session.

If you do not have access to a camera, participants are welcome to join the peer support session using telephone. A dial-in option will be provided before the group.

If having your camera on during the group does not support your ability to participate due to disability-related needs, please indicate this during group registration or reach out to Ivana (ivanar@youthrisingabove.org).

For more information on accommodations, see page 16.

ARRIVING ON TIME

Within a virtual group, creating a safe and comfortable space and building community is one of our top priorities.

To respect group safety and time, and to ensure that everyone has the chance to become familiar with the group and introduce themselves, group members will only be able to join the group during the first 10 minutes after the start of each session

(Saturday group - 1-1:10 pm / Tuesday group - 6:30-6:40 pm)

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

The group will include two trained facilitators with lived experience of mental health, and approximately 10 youth participants.

Each group will follow this structure:

1. Introducing peer support, the group, and group facilitators
2. Review the Comfort Agreement (see page 12)
3. Group check-in (all participants are required to check-in with the group)
4. Open the discussion to the group; at half, we will take a 10-minute break
5. Group check-out (we ask that everyone in the group checks out)

GROUP PARTICIPATION

Peer support groups are engaging spaces for sharing and gaining insight into your emotions and experiences, learning coping strategies and skills, and creating connections with others as they share feelings surrounding their mental health. To do this requires group engagement.

Other than during the check-in/out, no one is required to share in peer support, but participating in group discussion is a powerful way to enhance your experience and benefit from the group. Your participation allows you to actively guide and influence your experience and what you want to get from the group.

Our team has put together resources & tips to help you feel more comfortable during this experience ([click here to explore](#)).

GROUP PARTICIPATION: ONLINE

Even if you don't want to share, there are so many ways we can support others and contribute to the group experience! In a virtual setting, it's that much easier! Below are some suggested ways to participate:

- Use Zoom emoji reactions to show how you're feeling!    
- Using the chat box to share messages of support! Some examples..
 - "that sounds really hard"
 - "thank you for sharing that with us"
 - "I love that!" or "that's awesome" or "that's really resilient of you"
 - You can also follow the facilitators lead on how to support others!
- Using body language, facial expressions, or facing the camera/speaker are all ways to show you're actively listening and engaged with the group



GROUP COMFORT AGREEMENT

The comfort agreement is a group document which outlines individual & group responsibilities to create and maintain a safe space for everyone to feel comfortable sharing.

The comfort agreement guides us in how to engage and chat with one another in a way that helps us to be vulnerable, authentic, and supportive.

Together, at the beginning of each session, the group will create their own comfort agreement. At this time, everyone is invited to contribute items that may help them feel safe and comfortable during the session.





TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

During registration, all group members are asked to review and agree to a list of what we call the '*terms of participation*'.

These terms highlights what peer support is / is not, and it also includes the risks/conditions we want all participants to understand in order to register for the group.

All participants have a right to make an informed decision on their involvement in this program, and this document helps you to make that decision.

[At any time, you can review the Terms of Participation \(click here\).](#)





PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

It's everyone's responsibility to contribute to confidentiality and privacy while in an online setting.

As part of this responsibility:

- We ask that you make an effort to be in private space during the group
 - If that's not possible, we suggest using headphones, or turning the screen away from others for group privacy
- We do not allow any portion of the session to be recorded.

If you have any questions about privacy, please reach out to Ivana at
ivanar@youthrisingabove.org



ACCESSIBILITY

It's important to us that everyone feels comfortable and experiences ease accessing our groups.

During all groups, closed captions will be enabled to provide this option to all participants

When you registered, you may have shared with us any accessibility accommodations which support your engagement and participation. We thank you for trusting us with this and we are dedicated to working with you to meet your access needs.

If you have any additional learning or accessibility-related needs which you did not share when registering, we ask that you discuss these with our team before joining a peer support session.

You can email our program assistant, Ivana (ivanar@youthrisingabove.org).

Note: group facilitators may not be able to make accessibility-related changes once the group has begun.

GIFT CARDS

Participants who attend and actively participate in the full 2-hour peer support sessions are eligible to receive a \$15 President's Choice gift card as an honorarium for your time and presence.

Eligibility includes:

- Checked-in with their peers (or the facilitators) at the beginning of the session,
- Demonstrate their active participation by having their camera on during the group
- Participants who only attend the first half of group receive a reduced gift card (\$10)
- Participants who attend less than 1 hour are ineligible for a gift card honorarium

Gift card alternatives are not available for Rising Together participants, outside of a small number of extenuating, unavoidable circumstances (we are not able to provide alternatives to everyone based on preference)