



New Horizons

Youth Peer Mentoring Program



**Program
Guide and Re-
sources**

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DEVELOPED BY: KEYS JOB CENTRE/KINGSTON EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH SERVICES



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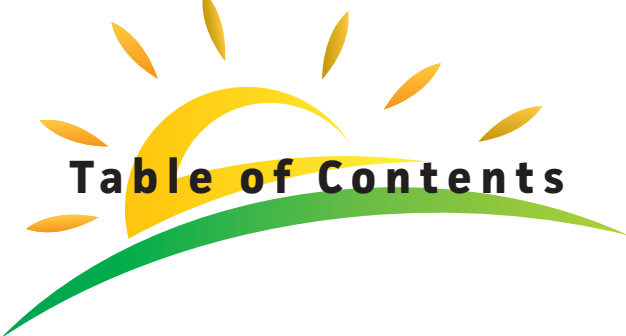


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“
Getting to meet other people, helping
to introduce us to other people, that is a big
opportunity.”

– New Horizons Youth



New Horizons Youth Peer Mentoring Toolkit





OVERVIEW

This manual is designed to provide you with an overview and resources...

“*There is a real emotional curve for these young people arriving alone. They’re so excited, but then comes disappointment because their expectations of Canada are so high. The reality is that they are facing significant barriers to success and well-being, due to multiple forms of oppression such as racism, islamophobia, homophobia and ageism, to name just a few. Their emotional wellbeing can suffer, but when there are friends to talk to who have gone through the same things, it really helps and gives them the motivation to keep trying.*”

– Mike Hipson,
Program Coordinator

The New Horizons Youth Peer Mentoring program was designed to fill a gap in service for young refugees who arrived in Canada unaccompanied. Until the development of this program, these youth were served under the same umbrella as other youth receiving mentorship through InSight Youth Mentoring at KEYS Job Centre in Kingston.

In late 2017, Kingston began to receive young adult Government Assisted Refugees (GARS) participating in the Resettlement Assistance Program and it became quickly apparent to the program facilitators that this particular group would benefit from mentoring programming specific to their individual needs. This was initially brought to light by two youth who felt that while the mentoring program was helpful, there was still a gap for them in terms of belonging, and they longed to connect with other youth who had faced a similar path on their journey to Canada. Until then, the majority of programs focused on youth who had arrived with families and it was assumed

that youth would have a supportive home environment and school community offering stability. After some time, the youth helped leadership to identify gaps in service for their demographic, and the idea for New Horizons Youth Peer Mentoring program was born.

This program has several components, you will find them broken down throughout this guide. Each section will provide you with an overview of the element, best practices, and all of the resources that we have developed in order to successfully operate the program.

This manual is designed to provide you with an overview and resources to get started in your community, and each segment will be accompanied by a live training webinar which will cover how these are operationalized at KEYS Job Centre.

We are thrilled that you and your organization are considering launching New Horizons in your community and look forward to working together to help develop this program for youth across Canada.



OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

There is a page dedicated to note-taking at the beginning or end of each module for your convenience.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide has been developed to walk you through the different parts of our program. Each section contains elements such as; Overview, Roles and Responsibilities, Goals, and Best Practices. Each module contains plenty of resources to help get you started.

The training that accompanies this guidebook is designed to work with each section individually, so that folks can learn about each element of the program separately. Training will culminate with a panel discussion where you can hear from past and current participants, and ask questions directly to those with lived program experience.

We recommend taking some notes about how you and your organization could support each element of the program to facilitate any funding applications you may prepare in preparation to launch your own New Horizons program.

TRAINING

Our training program is built to give you the foundations we wished we'd had when we started New Horizons. We hope that sharing our wins and losses and all of the tools we are using will help simplify the process for you and your organization.

This guide is meant as a compliment to our online training, each section is accompanied by an online session with our team. We will provide a .zip file of digital resources to you as well as copies of our presentation slide decks as a compliment to this guidebook.

“*My biggest impact at this time is New Horizons. I really appreciated to be with this group and it makes my days better. It also helps to make my English better.*”

– New Horizons Youth

SLACK

In order to facilitate communication, we have decided to use Slack for the duration of the program so that we can easily share links and files, updates and ideas.

If you've never used Slack, it is a platform that allows us to chat easily online in a closed group. We'll send you everything you need to know to join our group and can help if you get stuck.

We hope that through our Slack group, we can build community amongst ourselves and keep in touch as a group moving forward. It's an unmonitored channel (meaning we all participate, but there is no specific moderator) where we can ask questions, team up to create plans, and share resources throughout the training program. If successful, the channel could be kept open as organizations launch their own programs in order to create a space to share learnings and best practices etc.

“*This group has been really helpful for my mental health. Meeting every Thursday has made me excited, we're working on something every week. We helped as advocates at a meeting, I was happy to be a part of that. Like I'm doing something for change, bringing up matters that can make a change.*”

– New Horizons Youth Leader





STORY – PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: Kamryn Marsh

“**N**ew Horizons is filling a gap in connection through games, learning events, and relationship and skill building. The program is an intercultural experience. It is a complex, nuanced, youth-led social program made possible through trust building.”

– Kamryn Marsh,
Program Coordinator

In the early days, InSight worked with immigrant youth, but not refugees. Typically the youth were fluent in English and connected with us through the ISKA (Immigrant Services of Kingston and Area) Youth Group. In time, following the increase to the GAR (Government Assisted Refugees) population in Kingston, the Advisory Working Group was established and was complimentary to the early success of New Horizons.

“We found that GAR’s, especially single arrivals who were learning English, with no family, no support, and so lonely, were seeking friends, or to connect with people going through a similar experience,” they said.

Marsh was initially sceptical of the idea for New Horizons despite seeing the need for additional support. As someone focused on

structure, organization and detail, they were concerned that it might be a reach for their team to support this population. Graciously, due to the personality traits of their teammate (who Marsh describes as ‘more fun than me,’) and their ability to see the bigger picture and create a framework, they found ways through the barriers and started New Horizons. The combination of complementary skill sets within the coordinator team created a strong foundation for the new program.

“When Mike came on, he brought a fun energy to the program. I’m more focused on structure, matches, and hosting events. We try to strike a balance between fun and professional and personal development,” said Marsh.

An activist and trainer by trade, Kamryn wanted to drive attention to the importance of training, both your own, and for the youth.

“Training is the most important. I came in as a trainer, knowing a lot about trauma and systemic racism, LGBTQ+ activism, intersectionality – these kinds of things. There was still a massive learning curve for me, people need to feel ok with not knowing everything, and seeing strategies that usually work falling flat,” they said.

RAP (Resettlement Assistance Program) services are encouraged as supporting the diverse needs of this group can lead to burnout without proper planning and sharing of support from across the community.

“The youth need RAP services. They need a caseworker for support, to help them through struggles with discrimination, mental health, gender transition, physical health, so many things come up that Mike and I can’t address alone. RAP services have prevented us from burning out, they’re needed for sustainability of the program,” they said.

When asked about how they saw the program progression over time, Kamryn said that although it can be difficult to quantify what worked and what didn’t, it was possible to witness real changes in the youth over time, and to see them achieve their goals.

“It can be hard to say what works. Some of the progress is hard to convey outside of the individual context of a person’s journey. We put a lot of effort towards strengths based reinforcement, and we aim to be consistent. The youth are so often insecure about language, intelligence, their lack of education

etc. In reality, they are so smart, intuitive, compassionate, understanding, so kind, so filled with strengths. Strengths based reinforcement is key to their development. Oh, and having FUN,” they said.

There are so many elements to the youth that can benefit from a safe space and a warm community. One young person came out to Marsh, but was fearful, concerned that others in the group might discover their sexuality and they might be ostracized from the group. Members of the group had sensed this about their friend, but were unsure how to address this, or to support a person who had not asked for help. Eventually, they also came out to their mentor, who supported them, and in July 2020, New Horizons held an LGBTQ+ Awareness workshop.

At the workshop, facilitated from an ally perspective, educated on what LGBTQ+ is, and its context in Canada. Near the end of the event, the young person who had initially approached Marsh about their sexuality, came out to the group.

Although there was overwhelming support for this youth, there were some group members who could not accept either their sexuality, or the openness with which New Horizons addressed the situation,

and subsequently left the group. Those that remain continued to act as allies and support their friend, even throwing them a coming out party to celebrate.

One youth told us; “I’ve learned to accept people as they are. Learning gay people existed, and that they are the same as me. I’m so glad I learned about gay people, because I didn’t know.”

– New Horizons Youth

Although the journey described above belongs to only one person, it was clear that the experience within the group had an impact.

“There is so much challenge to living out as a gay man due to so many factors. I saw in this person huge growth from being terrified to being proud. He’s experimenting with crossdressing, drag, and learning more about gender identity and where he feels he fits, it’s been beautiful to watch. He did all that work, but I think that the consistency of the group, and our addressing homophobia had an impact. We did lose some people. Some people were not able to accept this and left our group as a result.

By creating this space, and letting people know that hate is not tolerated, and learning about our differences, I think this is where we can really make a difference,” said Marsh.



STORY (CONTINUED) PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: Kamryn Marsh

“*New Horizons is filling a gap in connection through games, learning events, and relationship and skill building. The program is an intercultural experience. It is a complex, nuanced, youth-led social program made possible through trust building.*”

– Kamryn Marsh,
Program Coordinator





What is
New Horizons?



PROGRAM HISTORY

The New Horizons Youth Peer Mentoring program is an enhancement of the InSight Youth Mentoring program developed at KEYS Job Centre in Kingston in 2016, funded by what was then known as MCYS (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, Ontario) led by Gillian Watters, Program Director at KEYS.

“We had a rare opportunity to design an intentional program from start to finish as part of a provincial poverty reduction strategy. The program is based on existing models and our many years of experience working with youth at KEYS Job Centre in Kingston.”

– Gillian Watters Program Director, KEYS Job Centre

As part of the provincial anti-poverty reduction strategy, funding was released to create programming for youth mentoring, for youth who were experiencing some level of deprivation, who didn't have a positive ally in their lives to help support their personal growth and development.

Programming was intentionally designed to serve a variety of purposes;

- To connect youth to an adult who could help them make positive decisions around concepts like recreation, food, body image, homework challenges, choosing courses for high school in order to have the desired outcome for post-secondary applications.

- To educate the community around the effects of poverty on youth and their long term growth and development and how it all connects to long-term, meaningful, sustainable employment.

- To educate and prepare mentor volunteers on how to set boundaries, what types of issues they may encounter with their match, such as; how to deal with disclosure, addictions, learning disabilities and day to day challenges that may arise throughout their time together.

The program was designed based on existing models and strategies, as well as extensive in-house experience and knowledge. The result was a robust mentoring program template that could be adjusted and tweaked to serve a variety of participants.

The existing team of two, including current program coordinator Kamryn Marsh, set out to develop core programming for InSight. Over the first few months, Marsh established the foundation for the program and in September 2016, Mike Hipson joined InSight as the second coordinator.

Programming and training was designed, guidelines for matchmaking established, and outreach strategies to recruit both mentors and program participants began.

In the earliest days of InSight, outreach was done through local

high schools, youth programs, social services, and mental health organizations. While this was an effective strategy to recruit youth in general, it was clear that a more targeted approach was needed and the team began working closely with ISKA (Immigrant Services of Kingston and Area), social services, and Pathways to Education Kingston to locate and connect with potential participants.

Through those relationships, an advisory working group was also formed. It was made up of community partners, businesses, mentors, community agencies that supported youth or were operating their own mentoring programs. The impact of this group on the successful growth and development of the InSight program locally cannot be overstated. It is highly recommended that those interested in leading this program in their community explore and implement this strategy if they do not already have one in place.

Beginning in late 2017, Kingston began to receive unaccompanied youth as a part of the Government Assisted Refugee program, and several of these young people were directed to the InSight Mentoring program at KEYS through community referrals.

In time, it became clear that there was an opportunity to create a separate cohort and individualized programming in order to meet the unique needs of this demographic.

Youth expressed both interest in and necessity for a safe space where they felt in company of others who had a lived understanding of their life experience and journey to Canada, as well as the challenges faced by those who are both refugees and newcomers to this country.

As programming progressed, a few participants shared some of their thoughts on the program as it existed. There happened to be refugee youth who arrived in Canada without family, and there were elements of a healthy lifestyle and mindset that they were struggling with, yet could not find the people or program to fill the gap of being in Canada without family.

“I am new in Canada and don't have any friends. New Horizons is good for helping (people) to communicate with others. When I ask for help, someone will help me. They will tell me, I can help you, and they will help me.”

– Youth Participant, New Horizons

Their voices were heard, and a funding application was submitted to develop a peer mentoring version of InSight, which would include regular gatherings and outings, chats about life, and naturally forming mentorship from within the peer group. This guide and accompanying training will walk you through what we've learned, our best practices and recommendations, and how to start a New Horizons group in your own community.

PROGRAM HISTORY (CONTINUED)

Peer mentoring is a method whereby those with lived experience in the areas where the mentee is seeking growth effectively become mentors through activities and trust-building. At New Horizons, these relationships are facilitated through regular ongoing programming, as well as a high frequency of feedback provision and follow up.

We have seen the impact of this program first hand on our youth. Not only have we seen improvements in overall wellbeing, we have seen massive improvements in participants English language skills, an increase in high school graduation rates, and perhaps most excitingly, personal growth and development of those we have worked alongside since the program start.

New Horizons is committed to equity and its role in challenging oppression and discrimination in all forms, especially those forms of oppression that are expected to be experienced by the youth that we aim to support. These forms of oppression include but are not limited to; Racism in all forms including Anti-Black racism, sexism, gender-based violence, homophobia, transphobia, and ageism. In order to better understand challenges faced by our members, we strive to diversify our leader groups by ensuring we include those from as many of the above groups as possible.



“When I was a leader in the program – thank you so much for giving me that opportunity – I learned a lot of things. For example, I learned how it doesn't matter who the people are (specifically the LGBTQ), I must accept them as they are.”

– Former New Horizons Youth Leader



Program goals are fluid in New Horizons. While there are core goals, as you see below, we have also found that adding to or updating these across time through youth feedback has helped us to improve programming. Participation in goal development has also been seen to increase engagement from those who participated.

Our Original Goals for the New Horizons Program:

- Peer-to-peer and cross-cultural mentoring
- Creation of a culturally-specific safe space, building peer support and social interaction
- Opportunities and information about how to build relationships with local Kingstonians
- Information and skill-sharing about systems navigation
- Enhancing basic skills (social skills, cooking, budgeting, preparing for work)

- Advancing their professional skills through training and leadership opportunities
- Facilitated peer-mentoring relationships and support for those in early settlement stages

Some impacts that the youth identified as a result of the project:

- Therapeutic effect of sharing their stories and receiving moral support
- Having a safe space and community to come back to when the frustrations of racism, systemic barriers, and intercultural challenges become overwhelming

- Reduced feelings of social isolation; increased social inclusion, confidence, and empowerment
- Offer alternatives to unhealthy coping skills such as addictions and self-harm
- The creation of sustainable, healthy friendships as well as professional relationships
- Providing a springboard from which they are better equipped to process the trauma of the refugee experience
- Easier circulation of useful information

“*The program is an intercultural experience. It is a complex, nuanced, youth-led social program made possible through trust-building.*”

– Kamryn Marsh, Program Coordinator

HOW DO YOU FUND NEW HORIZONS?

The short answer to this question is through a variety of funding opportunities. Generous funding from RBC has created the resources we need to operate programming and provide stipends to the youth.

There are some complexities to paying our youth and we will discuss this further in our online session.

To give you an idea of program costs in Kingston, \$2000/month allows us to cover the costs of: honoraria to youth leaders, activity fees, snacks for each event and meeting, and transportation subsidies for youth to and from events. We don't pay space rental fees or staff wages. We apply for grants about four times per year and have achieved funding from two to three different funding pots per year to cover the costs of the program.

PROGRAM VALUES

- Anti-oppression Framework
- Accountability (get comfortable with being uncomfortable)
- Youth-led (prioritizing the leadership, voices, visions and opinions of the youth)
- Creativity and Play
- Self-Advocacy
- Inclusivity
- Safe Spaces
- Psychological Safety

In the days before a formal New Horizons Program, there was a lot of opportunity for us to learn about the unique needs of the youth and what was and wasn't available in our community to help support them as they moved through our InSight mentoring program. Youth shared with us a desire and need to pursue further education, and not being sure where to start. Most services for refugees that would be most suitable for young adults have centered around families, and due to the age of these youth, they were considered independent adults.

It can be difficult to navigate our support systems even as a native English speaker. For those with certain disabilities, lower levels of English, or cultural differences when it comes to asking for help, these systems can become impossible to navigate.

Many refugee youth participating in InSight expressed a desire for support when it came to education, and pursuing goals. Just trying to figure out where to start had prevented some from moving forward. In Ontario, a high school won't accept you if you're over 18, so the next option was adult learning centres using the PLAR Program – which are more geared to older adults returning to school.

As this was discussed in passing and during gatherings, an idea came from a youth who said that “the

best mentor for a newcomer is a newcomer,” and suggested forming a homework club. The idea would be to get together, support one another, exchange ideas, share thoughts on where they had felt safest receiving service, and which places to avoid, and of course, to work together on their classwork.

We applied and were accepted for an RBC Future Launch grant opportunity, and the homework club was born. We recruited some additional leaders as a compliment to those already in the group, all from different countries and backgrounds. We got together, held brainstorming sessions, recruited volunteers as homework helpers and held homework sessions as a group. We began to explore other ways we could work together and named ourselves New Horizons.

One day, out of nowhere, we received a call from a teacher who was looking to volunteer with us. David joined us and has become a cornerstone of New Horizons working with more than half of the youth who have been part of our community so far. Due to capacity issues, David and the youth worked from the library to achieve their goals, many participants were supported to achieve their Ontario high school diploma through his support and guidance.

“*He's especially good at higher levels of high school and the first few years of college programs – he knows all the material. He's great*

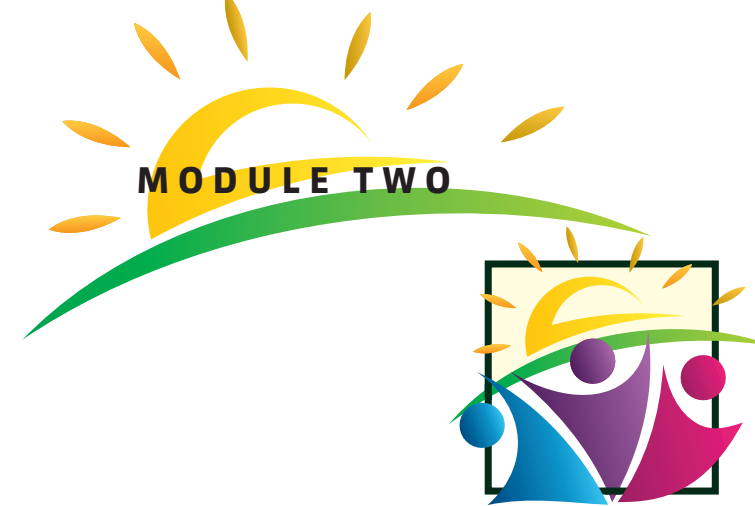
at working with newcomers, never in a rush, super patient, he explains, re-explains, his experience teaching overseas was valuable. David was ideal for New Horizons, there were no limits to who he would work with. All through the first year, up until March 2020, he worked in person with youth. He was here everyday.”

– Mike Hipson, Project Coordinator

We are grateful for the support of our volunteers, but especially for those like David who see all of the potential in the youth he tutors.

New Horizons was born of the idea of Homework Help, and has grown following the processes the youth are engaged with. In a way, we've gone through stages with them, from the Canadian honeymoon phase, to learning about our own biases as white Canadians, and now we find there is a focus on advocacy. The youth, specifically the youth leaders, are at the forefront of this, advocating in very public forums for the needs of refugee youth in Canada.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our volunteers, especially those like David who have given tirelessly of themselves in support of the youth who have travelled so far and gone through so much on their journey in search of a better future.



Coordinating New Horizons





The first one is you, and your enthusiasm for supporting young people. Awesome!

When compiling this guide, we realized that some of the resources we would like to share are quite large for our print guide, so in the interest of the environment, we will share some additional resources with you in the form of a .zip file during the training program. We recommend starting a list of resources and ideas as you go through each module so that your thoughts are all down on paper when you are ready.

“I’m a social person, so not having friends to laugh with in my new home was terrifying. Many young refugees come with their families, so at least they have that, but arriving alone and not speaking English is very tough.”

NEW HORIZONS YOUTH PEER MENTORING 16



YOUTH PARTICIPANTS OVERVIEW

Youth participants are at the heart of New Horizons, they're our reason for being and ideally they are positively impacted enough by programming that they develop interest in participating more deeply as youth leaders. Our program is open to newcomer youth who express an interest in joining and being part of a larger community.

YOUTH LEADERS OVERVIEW

Our Youth Leaders first joined New Horizons as participants, and over time, found their own reasons and path towards leadership in the program. We are fiercely proud of these young people and everything they have already overcome in order to join us as leaders.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

New Horizons Youth

To participate in group sessions with openness and a willingness to be stretched and grow. To treat others with respect and kindness. To bring one's full self to the group and engage with empathy and curiosity.

New Horizons Youth Leaders

To commit to coming together once per week to build and plan programming for New Horizons. To endeavour to build their own confidence, self-esteem and leadership through action, and trial and error. To set the example for the group and encourage others to participate and grow.

STIPENDS/GIFT CERTIFICATES

We use various means to compensate youth who participate in New Horizons. There are stipends available to our youth leaders, and we provide gift cards to our program participants as budgeting allows. We will discuss this in detail during our calls.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To Facilitate peer-to-peer and cross-cultural mentoring
- The creation of a culturally-specific safe space, building peer support and social interaction
- To present opportunities and information about how to build relationships with local Kingstonians
- Information and skill-sharing about systems navigation
- Enhancing basic skills (social skills, cooking, budgeting, preparing for work)
- Advancing professional skills through training and leadership opportunities
- Facilitated peer-mentoring relationships and support for those in early settlement stages





PROGRAM SCHEDULE

When you're planning for the program, you'll want to consider both the Youth Leader meetings and the New Horizons group activities in addition to your own tasks and employment duties. In early stages, as with everything, there will be a larger workload. Once you are up and running and you have youth onboard, (especially once you have committed Youth Leaders in place) the nature of the program will reduce planning and preparation on your part and focus will shift over to supporting the youth leaders and operationalizing programming.

In Kingston, we currently hold Youth Leader meetings every Tuesday afternoon, and group activities on Thursday afternoons. As you know, it's tricky to schedule events so that everyone can be available, but we find that this schedule works well for us, and are open to changing it moving forward if it would better serve the group.

We recommend that participants join us for a minimum of five months to get started, and are happy to let you know that we have some young people who have been with us now for a number of years having moved through the program and into positions of leadership. This summer, one of our long-term leaders who is studying social services at college was hired as a program lead for our summer youth employment programs. It has been extraordinary to observe the progression of our participants, and we are very proud to watch them leave our little nest and take their places as leaders in our community.

NEW HORIZONS YOUTH MEETINGS

Youth meetings are held every week and were always in person before the start of the pandemic. Once the pandemic started, we pivoted to online and although it was never really the same, we were able to stay connected and keep loneliness at bay while we persevered through the process.

Program resources will cover operating online and in person and we will share our learnings with you throughout this guide and within the Resources file.

YOUTH LEADER MEETINGS

Meetings are held weekly in a relaxed format. We talk about things like what has been going well, where we can improve, and brainstorm ideas for future sessions with our group. Typically, meetings are held at the same time and day of the week, although we do make adjustments to our calendar based on the needs of the group.

For example, in our most recent group, we have a leader who has gained employment and now regularly works during our scheduled meeting. As a result, we came together as a group and found an alternative date and time which works for everyone. It's great to be consistent, but when consistency impacts a leader's ability to remain involved, we will try to make adjustments so that there is space for everyone.

“*When someone my age comes to me with a problem, I now know how this person feels in my heart. I know how to give some counselling and support for their grief. I think that I will become a social worker to help the youth. I was thinking about working in a lab as a technician, but people say I am good at helping the youth. So maybe it is social worker that I will do.*”

– **Former New Horizons Youth Leader**



ACTIVITY AND EVENT IDEAS

At New Horizons, we are in the business of fostering the confidence to be curious and the self-esteem to speak up for one's own self-interests.

One way we can do this is through the brainstorming and organization of events and outings.

Program coordinators and youth leaders make decisions about upcoming events by analyzing feedback from the entire group, brainstorming their own based on their experience with the group, and coordinating these with budget and timing constraints.

We know you're filled with great ideas for your community, and we've added a few ideas below so you can see what's worked well for us.

POT LUCK MEALS AT THE PARK

New Horizons will always cover food costs when we hold events, so there will always be enough for everyone. We pay close attention to ensuring that there are foods available for everyone, and that our food choices are as inclusive as possible. It's not always possible for everyone to bring something to a group meal. Food prices are high and some of us have never learned to cook, or don't know how to make a dish to serve. Letting everyone know that they can bring a dish if they want, but that there will be lots of options available regardless can help take the pressure off and keep everyone engaged with the real activity, being together with a familiar and welcoming group of people who care.

SPORTS AND OTHER GAMES

Sports and games can encourage participation and camaraderie as well as being naturally good for our health and wellness. We often bring along a soccer ball or basketball and have a little game in the park when we meet for a meal. Skating has been very popular as many of our participants grew up in countries where winter sports did not exist. Last year we held a skate drive so that all of our members could have a pair of their own. Due to the pandemic, we pivoted all of our programming online and found that we could still connect as a group by playing fun games. It is worth noting that sports can create an atmosphere of toxic masculinity. While playing sports, we have had situations where women and LGBTQ+ were (or at least felt) excluded, and physical contact and loud voices made activities less comfortable. We were so focused on making our activities (newcomer friendly) that neglected to consider sexism and homophobia which can exist in these spaces. These experiences led us to create our “group agreements” and initiated more conversations about intersectionality.

WORKSHOPS

We've had experts join us and speak about topics such as; personal finances, sexism, racism, anti-Black racism, friendship, LGBTQ+

Awareness, healthy communication – healthy relationships, how to have safe and fun sex (between all genders), mental health (What is it? Where can you get help locally?), creative writing, making friends, and dealing with difficult feelings.

We have found that asking youth what they would like to learn about and then sourcing a presenter to share with our group has been valuable for us. Many of our participants come from families where feelings are not talked about, and sexism and homophobia are normalized. By having these conversations, we helped build on concepts and language to both help our participants be more aware of each other's unique experiences and needs, and also advocate for themselves.

TRIPS AND OUTINGS

Early in 2020, some of our youth expressed an interest in doing a road trip. Our Youth Leaders took a look at the budget, and with a bit of a massage found that there was money available to support a day trip to a nearby city. Most of our youth arrived at an international airport and came directly to Kingston, and were wanting to see another part of the country. Toronto was on the table, but we settled on a trip to Ottawa during Winterlude to see the capital, skate on the Rideau Canal (remember our skate drive?)



ACTIVITY AND EVENT IDEAS (CONTINUED)

and maybe indulge in a Beaver Tail or two. Sadly due to the pandemic, this trip was postponed indefinitely, but it still comes up all the time, and we'll get to it once it's again safe to do so. Our youth have expressed lots of interest in learning about the place they live in, and we encourage their input and ideas for local tourism activities as well.

BBQ AND MAKING MEALS TOGETHER

While we eat together frequently, it can be a bit tricky to cook and then enjoy a meal together. If it's possible, we do recommend finding ways to prepare meals as a group. Recently we discovered that one of our local parks boasts barbeque and picnic areas that can be booked through the city. We just held our first group barbeque. It was wonderful to prepare a meal as a group, and enjoy feasting on our efforts together.

HIKES AND GENTLE NATURE WALKS

We are so lucky to live in a country that affords us many opportunities to safely enjoy nature and to benefit from its healing properties. Hiking and nature walks have been a popular and inexpensive way to get together. We encourage you to take advantage of local spots to introduce your group to the abundance of nature we are so lucky to have here in Canada.

CELEBRATING OUR CULTURES AND MILESTONES

New Horizons youth come from various parts of the world, and finding ways to share our cultures with the group has been educational and unifying. It's important to celebrate together, so we recommend checking in with the youth about celebrations that are important to them, and looking for ways to incorporate these into the program. This year we held Eid and Iftar celebrations with our group. For so many, gathering to celebrate in 2020 was impossible, and for our youth, even more so. We worked with the youth to create celebration plans and did our best to create online parties. Although we were not able to break bread together, we did enjoy games, and each other's company. Youth were all given gift certificates to the grocery store so

that they could enjoy something special. In our world, there can be a lot to feel sad about, taking time to deliberately celebrate goes a long way in building relationships and feeling part of a community.

“This Eid, I had a lot of fun. I wanted it to be in person, but we couldn't because of the pandemic. We made the best of the pandemic at Eid, because there was no other way to have fun. We were happy and feeling grateful to be there.”

– New Horizons Youth Leader



● **Know about available support, accept the program is one piece of a larger puzzle.** When you're a helper, people around you will learn this and rely on you. This can bring us difficulty, and even contribute towards burnout. New Horizons needs to be a component of wraparound support for these young people, and it's important to accept that although we can't solve everything, we can help them build the support system they need to thrive through relationships we have with our community partners.

● **Be brave enough for emotional conversations.** Many of the Youth Leaders will be battling racism, sexism, Islamophobia, accent discrimination, PTSD, and so much more. These things will come up at meetings. Your organization might even be responsible for perpetuating some of these challenges. It's important to be able to be supportive of the Youth when they speak about very personal experiences. It's also important to hold the space and refrain from giving solutions or trying to fix the problems. Systemic oppression is not going to resolve overnight or through individual help.

● **Use Play, Creativity and Fun to navigate out of the darkness and to build connection.** Laughter and relaxation are crucial components of this program! We play a game at almost every meeting. Especially when conversations get really tough, we might end with a game to lighten the mood and bring people back into their bodies and senses.

● **Be accountable.** As Program Coordinators, we are in a position of power over these youth (even if we strive towards a non-hierarchical structure). Youth Leaders should feel comfortable being honest if something that we've done has made them feel uncomfortable. It's also our responsibility to explore different, more accountable choices.

● **Be creative and consistent.** We only took a week off of meetings and events when the pandemic first began. We took the obstacle as an opportunity and we brought everything online and then outside. We just got really creative with new and engaging events each week that were still safe but allowed us to keep delivering programming.

BEST PRACTICES



STORY – PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: Mike Hipson

I grew up in Canada and studied Cultural Anthropology at school. I was always interested in people and culture, and moved to Mexico when I was 20-21. I spent my adult life there, worked and started a family, and returned to Canada with my wife and children a few years ago.

When I moved to Kingston, I started learning about various programs for youth in Kingston, which led me to InSight at KEYS. I joined Kamryn as the second Program Coordinator for InSight and we worked together to help build out the structure for New Horizons and support the youth leaders as they planned programming and ran outreach.

The youth and I kind of clicked, I'm naturally drawn to newcomers - I think watching my family go through that process here has helped me. It has still been an incredible learning process for me, working with New Horizons youth, learning about my privilege, and trying to improve myself all the time.

As a white man, I feel confident that when I go to the emergency room, I will be taken seriously. It turns out, that's not always the way – refugee youth face racism, queerphobia, ageism, xenophobia, disability and language barriers - they are getting a different experience than me when they participate in normal daily activities.

My bubble gets burst daily – I hear lots of stories from someone who had an experience that was discriminatory.

Youth must participate in systems navigation. Maybe someone will call me to tell me they need clothes. Even as a service provider I'm not always sure about what services are available. Now youth can tell someone from New Horizons, someone who has already explored the service, and can learn what to do next from a person who has lived experience navigating that system. They help each other with hunger, apartment seeking, which person they should try to speak with, who would be most able to help, who would take them seriously.

We try to create an intentional community to fill the need for family. People who are going to accept you as you are, listen to you, support you, morally, but also with the kinds of things that families do.

Some of the youth have come from 5+ years in a refugee camp, they don't have an education like we do. Even going to a restaurant and ordering a burger can be a harrowing experience. If you throw discrimination in on top of that, it makes it so hard for people to feel they are welcome here. New Horizons can't eradicate discrimination, but the youth can help each other navigate some of these experiences and take away

some of the loneliness. They help to give each other hope.

I've been told that I've done things that are discriminatory or hurtful. It was hard for me to believe, it burst my bubble. These are painful experiences that the youth carry, and it's easy to trigger these. I'm grateful to get feedback which I can use to be better. Well intentioned people may unintentionally or unknowingly hurt others because they are not aware of these differences. The system is stacked against them though, and they're often being unfairly treated, stereotyped, marginalized, forced to deal with microaggressions.

The youth didn't want to talk about this at first, but now many more are talking specifically about racism and Islamophobia. They are attending and speaking out at events to address inequalities that they see, participating in research projects, giving input on funding distribution and even on ways to improve things in general with health and mental health services.

We are in a privileged space to run New Horizons the way we want to, and over time the leadership qualities of the youth we work with have come so far. I will know we have really made a difference when one day this program is run by someone that doesn't look like me.

**Adapted from interviews with Mike Hipson*

MODULE THREE



Mentoring





OVERVIEW

Within the New Horizons program, mentoring happens more organically than in our traditional InSight program. This section includes a bit of both, and we've included resources and templates that you can use.

While it is not required for our Youth Leaders to complete the InSight Mentorship Training, we do encourage youth to participate and some have done in the past. New Horizons is more about creating opportunities for youth to learn about themselves.

Within New Horizons, we are focused on creating a space where all people can thrive in a psychologically safe environment. We encourage honesty and candour and seek to solve problems as soon as they are made apparent.

Diverse Mentoring Options for Diverse Demographics

InSight youth are connected to opportunities that work best for them at this time of their lives. As of now, we offer four majors types of mentoring for the youth that we work with.

1. One-on-one mentoring matches (focused on academic/career development, personal goals, and building healthy relationships)
2. Career exploration through informational interviews and job shadowing opportunities
3. Group mentoring events and peer mentoring workshops
4. New Horizons Peer Mentoring Group specifically for refugee youth who migrated to Canada alone

ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

When we were getting started with InSight, we knew that it would benefit us to connect with other service providers to grow outreach and learn more about community offerings that may benefit our youth.

Our community partners, recognizing the need for the program we were building, got on board with our mission, and met regularly for several months to strategize on topics such as outreach, referrals, programming and collaboration. This was an invaluable part of developing New Horizons at KEYS, and we strongly recommend considering this strategy in your community.

“When someone my age comes to me with a problem, I now know how this person feels in my heart. I know how to give some counselling and support for their grief. I think that I will become a social worker to help the youth. I was thinking about working in a lab as a technician, but people say I am good at helping the youth. So maybe it is social worker that I will do.”

– Former New Horizons Youth Leader



MENTORS

When one person mentors, two lives are changed!

FINDING MENTORS

You may already be running a mentoring program in your organization, and have several methods of outreach in place to find great people who want to be a mentor to a young person. If not, no worries! Here are some of the ways we do outreach to find great mentors in Kingston.

In our experience, the most effective outreach strategies have been;

- Networking (just talking constantly about the program to everyone and getting people interested)
- Our own networks within KEYS, and outside of KEYS, including our personal networks
- Our mentor training as a free, high-quality professional development opportunity
- Word of mouth through people who have had a positive experience through our program
- Cold-calling. Often we'll just seek out people that are well-known in the community for their specific gifts. We start with this ask: would you be interested in giving an hour of your time to meet with a youth for an informational interview about your career? If there is a spark, we ask the person if they would like to mentor the youth for 4 hours / month for 5 months

It's worth mentioning that a small percentage of interested volunteers

will actually end up in a one-on-one match, so seeking mentors is a task that is on-going.

As with traditional mentoring relationships, with peer-mentoring like we have in New Horizons, we find that as leaders and other participants gain experience and knowledge, program information is shared naturally in group activities. Just by fostering new friendships, information spreads between peers.

Some other ways we find and connect with volunteer mentors that require existing relationships; staff referrals, KEYS Employment Counsellors, Community Partners, Social Media.

TRAINING/ ORIENTATION

InSight Mentors agree to successfully complete our 8 hour live online training program, a comprehensive and hands-on series which endeavours to do the following;

- Provide background on mentorship and various techniques
- Offer insight into the challenges and barriers that may impact the mentoring relationship
- To learn about one's role as a mentor, what mentorship is and what it is not
- Learn about the policies and guidelines that govern the program and the mentor/mentee relationship

- Develop skills and techniques through group activities

Training is offered in four weekly sessions lasting two hours each and is accompanied by a program guide and handouts.

MENTOR COMMITMENTS

- Complete InSight online Mentor Training Program
- Make a commitment to meet regularly with their mentee for a minimum of 5 months
- Meet regularly with their mentee at a minimum of 4 hours per month
- Adhere to all InSight Policies and Procedures covered in training, or as updated
- Empower Mentee to make their own decisions about their goals and development
- To give of their time, attention and optimism through active listening and open-mindedness

“Today I can say about my sexuality and I don't need to be hidden. That is makes me proud. The best part was my coming out party. So beautiful.”

– New Horizons Youth Leader





BEST PRACTICES

- **Conduct appropriate screening of potential mentors.**
- **Participants from various backgrounds are invited to be part of the Youth Mentoring Partnership.**
Both mentors and mentees are required to fill out application forms and submit them to the Youth Mentoring Partnership. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. Potential mentors should be interviewed and must undergo a vulnerable sector police check. Both mentees and mentors will be invited to an orientation session.
- **Make matches based on interests that both the mentor and the mentee share.**
- **Youth should be interviewed to determine their level of commitment, goals and interests.** This interview will determine if they are ready for the program, and if so, for which level of mentorship they are most suited. Mentees will be matched with mentors on an ongoing basis. Youth Mentoring Partnership strives to match individuals based on shared career aspirations, common interests, and other criteria that may lead to a stronger, more lasting Mentoring Partnership connection.
- **Providing more than six hours of training for mentors.**
- **Each mentor and mentee will participate in a mandatory orientation session.** In this session, each participant will receive important information regarding program structure and support; an orientation booklet, as well as access to staff, who will be available to assist throughout the Mentoring Partnership process.
- **Create structure and clear expectations for the partnership.**



BEST PRACTICES

- **Each partnership will develop an agreement** – a set of goals and activities, which will form the Mentoring Partnership agreement, which will act as an overview and guide during the course of the program. It will outline interests and ambitions, as a way to help the partnership focus on goals.
- **Offer post-match training and on-going support to the mentee/mentor partners.**
- **Post-match training should be delivered once per month and cover various topics.**
- **One should run for mentors and one for mentees, giving each group the opportunity to meet other InSight participants.** Each follow-up training meeting should focus on one topic and can be led by participants. We encourage participants to suggest topics to program staff they would like discussed.
- **Assess and debrief to change course when needed.**
- **Throughout the Mentoring Partnership program, if either the mentor or mentee has a question or concern, they are always welcome to share this with the Youth Mentoring Partnership staff.** The final meeting will answer the question, where do I go from here? In the debriefing session we will attempt to answer any final questions. This session will allow the mentor and mentee to provide feedback about the program. Although success will be measured on an individual basis, the ultimate indicator will be the level of satisfaction each person had throughout the Mentoring Partnership experience.
- **Work with mentors to ensure that there is acceptance that goals and interests change dynamically and that young people need to have fun while learning.**





STORY – ANOTHER VIEW FROM THE COMMUNITY: Ale/ISKA

When we were preparing to create this toolkit, we put out a call to New Horizons youth, and also to those in the community who had worked with our team, and had seen the impact of this programming outside of our bubble.

One of the people who reached out to us was Ale Zamora, now the Refugee Child and Youth Integration Advisor at KEYS. Ale spent a number of years prior to joining us as a receptionist and site worker for a youth group at ISKA (Immigrant Services of Kingston and Area) and wanted to share her first hand observations on the impact of this program on the youth that participate with us. Ale also lends us her unique perspective on the newcomer experience as a mentor with InSight.

“I had been working with refugee youth at ISKA for almost three years, when New Horizons came to life, I saw great changes in both parts of my work, changes I had not seen in the years leading up to this program.”

– Ale Zamora, Refugee Child and Youth Integration Advisor at KEYS

When people immigrate to Canada and arrive in Kingston, they are connected to ISKA for settlement support. As a receptionist for the organization, Ale was often the first contact that people had when they reached out for support or guidance. She noted that often when people first reach out, they are unsure or unclear about what problem they are trying to solve and it becomes up to the person behind the desk to unravel the request and support the most effective referral.

“As a receptionist at ISKA, I was usually the first person they wanted to talk to. I’m a woman of colour, English is my second language. I think these qualities make it easier for newcomers to approach me as they know I won’t judge them in the same way that others might,” said Zamora.

As the program at KEYS progressed, Ale noticed changes in the way that New Horizons youth interacted with her and the broader organization at ISKA. Where at first, someone may have been hesitant when reaching out for support, over time they began to make clear and specific requests for service. A certain confidence and understanding about what was and should be available to help them resettle appeared, and was noticeable in their interactions.

“I noticed when they started going to these groups, that they were

more confident and actively looking for support. Wow! Now they were able to pick up the phone and say; I want an appointment with this person at this time for this reason.

Before that, the same people would say; hey, I have a question, I don’t know who can help – sometimes going around and around without clearly being able to advocate for their needs. It was me who interpreted what the call was for, and what help was needed.

At the (ISKA) youth group, there was a difference between New Horizons youth and those who were not. Their behaviour was more, I don’t know how to say it, more relaxed? Usually the youth we work with, with the same background with conflict, come here to resettle which is trauma in itself,” she said.

“I noticed that they were more outgoing, even in a class. Where we might have some youth pushing each other around, attracting attention, those who were coming from New Horizons had more peaceful interactions, they were supportive of the programming. If we were cooking, they were helping, if we ran a workshop, they participated. The attitude from the youth was noticeably different.”

Zamora has another perspective into the program as a Mentor participant in our InSight program. A newcomer herself, she had decided to stay

home when she first arrived in Canada in order to care for the health of her family through the transition.

“I enrolled myself in volunteering in many places, so I enrolled in InSight mentoring. The training was an eye-opener, that even in my position I had something to give to the community. (When you arrive as a newcomer to Canada) you feel indebted to the community, or country. You want to give something back. This program let me give back – they make it clear in the training what we can do, and how to be a caring adult around the youth.”

A partnership was made with a young woman from a similar background who had arrived through a different immigration process and was in crisis. Eventually, Zamora’s match returned to her home country as she could not source the opportunities she needed to remain in Canada.

When we asked about her experience as a mentor in the InSight program she told us this;

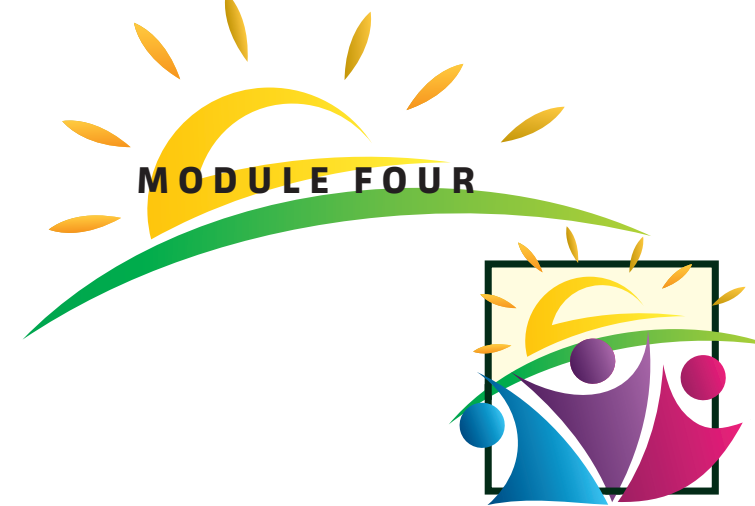
“I’m a Mexican teacher, and wanted to learn to teach in another way. The experience told me I could do something and I don’t have to use the regular path. The opportunity for newcomers to be a mentor is amazing. I would recommend it again and again.”

As a mentor, I won, so I can only imagine how much the youth can win on the other side,” she said.



STORY (CONTINUED) ANOTHER VIEW FROM THE COMMUNITY: Ale/ISKA





New Horizons
Youth Participants





OVERVIEW

At this stage, you've learned about our overall program and background. We're excited to now introduce you to our reason for being, our youth.

New Horizons is diverse. With youth ages ranging from 16-30 from many countries around the world. Our youth have come from countries such as; Syria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. They speak many languages in addition to English and French including; Farsi/Persian/Dari, Somali, Swahili, Arabic and Kinyarwanda. Many of our participants identify as women or men, and several of our members identify as LGBTQ+. In order to best understand the needs of our members, we strive to attain representation from as many of these regions, languages, and identities as possible.

As a result of the global refugee crisis, Kingston began receiving Government Assisted Refugees in 2016 – primarily families from Syria and African nations. Over the past two years KEYS has increasingly received young adults who arrive alone. In addition to the typical, layered barriers faced by refugees, this demographic presents specific needs and interests. The academic and career-oriented goals of single arrival refugee youth include quickly learning English, obtaining a high school diploma, and getting accepted at the local college. As they work towards their desired career, they also struggle to cover basic necessities such as maintaining affordable and dignified housing with the small amount of social assistance they receive. They come facing immediate pressure to put food on the table, get a survival job, to process and heal from the immense trauma and mental health issues specific to refugees, cope with physical ailments and of course, to find a sense of belonging and build healthy relationships in their new community.

FINDING PARTICIPANTS

In the early days of InSight, before we had branched out and launched New Horizons, we worked with schools, youth programs, churches, and word of mouth to find young people who would benefit from mentorship. When we made the decision to launch the New Horizons program, it became clear that our approach needed some refinement in order to locate and invite these young people who were in Canada without family and community.

We mentioned our InSight Advisory Working Group earlier in this guide, and have found that this group and their relationships in the community facilitated some of our earliest referrals to our program. At KEYS, we have a variety of programming including LINC English classes, and this has been another great way for us to find young people in need of community from within our own walls.

We would recommend continuing with all forms of outreach – schools, churches, youth groups, etc. but the most exciting way we have found new members for our group has been through word of mouth from our current participants, and any other opportunity to meet face to face. Before Covid, we would visit KEYS LINC classes to chat with the students when they were on break, and recruited many that way. Settlement workers at KEYS also help deliver furniture and things like that, and we have helped out in order to meet new youth. Internally, we believe that the majority of referrals came from settlement workers, within KEYS.

Although our youth are here alone, some of them have found other outlets in sport groups, or other youth programming. While this happens rather naturally, we have heard feedback that it is difficult to feel as though one fits into Canadian culture as it exists, and this can serve to increase feelings of solitude or loneliness.

We support all means by which a person can find their way in a new society, and have found our youth inviting other newcomers that they meet to join us at New Horizons have been a wonderful and most organic means of bringing new members into our community.



GROUP AGREEMENTS

Our program is collaborative in nature, it's part of the secret sauce that makes New Horizons work. As such, we believe that creating a set of agreements for the group is an effective way to come together and decide what New Horizons is and what it is not.

These are the agreements that the Youth Leaders came up with for the group. We recommend working together with youth and youth leaders to set your agreements, and reviewing them once or twice a year to ensure they are still serving the needs of the group.

OPEN MIND, OPEN HEARTS

- We have each other's back.
- We are friends and family.
- Welcome new people with excitement and good behaviour.
- Treat each other well to make us all feel at home.

HONESTY

- If you have a problem with something someone did, talk to them about it.
- Don't afraid to speak and share ideas.
- We must lead ourselves before we lead each other.

CONSENT – ASK BEFORE YOU DO

- Ask what people what they are comfortable with and not comfortable with.
- Be aware how someone's culture, religion, and gender may affect their comfort with certain behaviours.
- Communicate when something makes you uncomfortable; share what a good behaviour would be.

RESPECT PRIVACY

- Maybe people are not comfortable talking about their personal life – respect this.

LEADERSHIP & SELF-AWARENESS

- Be aware of how your words and actions affect yourself and the group.
- We must lead ourselves before we lead each other.

ON-LINE MEETINGS

- Be aware of background noise. Mute your microphone if necessary.
- Take turns when speaking. Let the speaker finish before interrupting.

“

I joined New Horizons and I made friends, then I met some other people and thought, they could join us and it might help them also, so I invited them.

Some of them are still part of our group.”

”

– New Horizons Youth Leader





BEST PRACTICES

Over the years we have made some great progress with our program, but this naturally came with some mistakes. We have found it best to learn quickly from these mistakes, and then to modify what we have been doing in order to accommodate our new learnings.

In our group, if we run into a problem, we work to deal with it head on. It can sometimes mean taking a step back and thinking about why something happened, or what we as Facilitators can do to address and improve the situation.

- **Do everything in your power to create a welcome and inclusive space.** You will make mistakes, and learn that you have blind spots. It's best to accept these experiences and take immediate action to both educate yourself, and find ways when appropriate to engage the youth in a discussion where everyone can learn from each other.

- **Stop talking. Stop talking. Stop talking. Listen.** It can be challenging as a Facilitator to listen when you are accustomed to leading. One of our biggest learnings has been to just stop talking and listen. It sounds so simple, but is difficult to do. Some of our biggest learnings have come from the times where we just stopped talking and listened instead.

- **Always supply food and drinks.** Again this seems like a no-brainer, but food is a critical part of fostering the culture of the group. Offering something to eat at every gathering ensures that everyone present has had a chance to nourish themselves physically so there is more energy available for them to accept physical and emotional nourishment. Meals are a wonderful way to bring people together. Creating an environment where there is enough for everyone can reduce avoiding behaviours from those who may not have their own food to contribute.

- **Offer transportation support.** Our guidelines and policies prohibit Facilitators from picking youth up in their own vehicles, so how can we get youth to and from events and make sure everyone can get there? We always offer taxi chits to our youth, for any event if they need transportation they can get where they need to go without the shame of not being able to afford the fare, or avoidance because transportation to an event is outside of their budget.

- **Use WhatsApp!** The whole world outside of Canada uses WhatsApp, and we have found it to be the most effective communication tool. If youth are still using a number from another country, they can still use it. They can use it on wifi while at English classes if they don't have calling on their phones. You can also use it on your PC making it accessible to everyone, everywhere with a computer or mobile phone. You can create groups for everything, and it is a platform that they all seem to use already. WhatsApp also helps with language barriers, because you can send images, videos, recordings of your own voice, or text (which they can copy/paste and translate, or you can). Pay attention to the ways your client prefers to use WhatsApp.



- **Outreach and promotion should be face-to-face, and relationship-based.** Face-to-face just works! Many cultures outside of North America prioritize relationships over "business". If you get to the point too fast (ie: sign up for our program), it is not likely to appeal, but if you show interest in them as a person, youth are much more likely to participate because YOU will be there.

- **Compliment peer-mentoring with special guests.** Another way we practice mentoring in New Horizons, is by bringing in guests who can share useful knowledge, or teach skills, or even just share their stories and create the opportunity to talk about overcoming immense obstacles to success in this new home.

- **Go the extra mile.** Although your job may not necessarily entail lending out sports equipment, you can open up a world of possibilities with things you have lying around your garage that would otherwise be impossible. Skating and swimming are so common in Canada, but often extremely foreign to refugee youth. Also, skates and life jackets are expensive. If you are able to round up sports equipment, you can help your youth access activities that they may not otherwise access. Use Kijiji and Facebook marketplace to buy used stuff, and ask locals to donate. Canadians love to help newcomers by donating their gently used sports equipment!

- **Consider creating a "Women's-only" sub-group.** Sexism is prevalent everywhere, and we have found that women in New Horizons appreciate and benefit from opportunities to get together, support each other and try new things without men present.

- **Constantly seek feedback in multiple ways.** Youth will likely not fill in a feedback form, and may be hesitant to give constructive feedback to staff.

- **Get feedback by asking regularly, and encouraging direct, constructive feedback.** Once the youth are convinced that you can handle it, they will give you some very insightful food for thought. Other youth may simply vote with their feet and stop showing up. If you can get their feedback and find out why, your programming will benefit.

- **Get comfortable being uncomfortable.** Oppression means that you as program staff likely hold a lot of privilege and power over the youth. This may be because of class, gender, race, education, or many other factors. Do your best to constantly learn about your privilege and address the power dynamic between yourself and your client. Be on the lookout for the unintentional ways that you may harm youth. A simple example might be smiling or laughter. In some Asian countries, it is considered rude to smile or laugh, unless a joke has been made, whereas North America is one of the more smiley regions. Youth will likely be aware of that difference, but may also be put off by smiles that don't make sense to them. If you are lucky enough to receive feedback about something like this, embrace the awkward conversation, apologize and commit to remedying it.



BEST PRACTICES

In Their Own Words

When we interviewed New Horizons youth for this toolkit, we asked them what they would say to those who would launch a chapter in their community. This is what they told us.

- 1.** Be respectful of all youth and their cultures. No comments on religion or faith.
- 2.** Understand that what is ok in one culture is not in another. You will see this play out over time and conflict may happen. Use this as a way to learn about each other and build new versions of what is respect.

3. I think when choosing youth leaders, we should be as open as we can. We tried to bring someone LGBTQ+ into our group, but we couldn't, because they didn't feel safe and secure. It's necessary for newcomer communities to have LGBTQ+, everyone should have a chance to belong.
4. New Horizons is so important to me. More places should have it because so many people have come here alone. They have no other connection, all their life is on their phone. If they want to make a real life connection, they have to come to a place like this.
5. I have a busy schedule. I think that leaders should be flexible with times so that more people can join. Have more than one option.
6. It could be your job to do New Horizons. Try not to make it like you are just doing a job when you meet the group. It's ok to do all of your tasks, but you should make sure you are [centering] the group and not yourself.
7. I think that the people are interested in different activities. One that's important is small tourist, visit places. In my opinion, it's good to do some tourist for the summer, with the nice weather.
8. If I give you advice, [on choosing youth leaders] choose the people who listen to other people, even if they don't speak English well. If they are trying to help, that is the great thing.

NOTES

MODULE FIVE



New Horizons Youth Leaders





OVERVIEW

When The New Horizons Leaders Group was established by the InSight Youth Mentoring Program at KEYS Job Centre to lay the organizational foundations of the New Horizons Newcomer Youth Peer Mentoring Association. The Leaders Group brings an incredible amount of knowledge and experience to the New Horizons project, stemming from our professional, volunteer, and

lived experiences as well as our rich cultural backgrounds. The Leader Group mission is to establish a self-sustaining, peer-support and peer-mentoring association for and led by refugee and newcomer youth aged 18-30 to address common issues such as social isolation and mental health. It does this by defining guidelines, procedures, and roles, as well as planning and executing activities and events for the association. The Leaders Group can also delegate tasks to volunteers. New Horizons Youth Leaders are a critical part of operating a successful program. It is through their insight and experience that the majority of our programming is built.

FINDING YOUTH LEADERS

One of the best parts of recruiting to find new Youth Leaders is that they're already part of New Horizons. We find that after a period of time as a program participant, some youth approach us looking for leadership opportunities and we can include them for consideration when the time comes. Youth Leaders all have lived refugee experience, and have spent a number of months in the program before consideration as a group leader.

Within the Youth Leader group, we gather to discuss options for potential new leaders, and talk through the skills and abilities of each, ultimately deciding as a group who they feel are the best candidates. The final say on who should be promoted into leadership positions comes from the Program Coordinators as they are responsible for the strategic success of the program. We've found overall that the process of walking the Youth Leaders through the consideration process has led us successfully to the majority of our promotions.

TRAINING

Training for Youth Leaders is more complicated. They learn by doing and seeing, learning from each other. Training for Youth Leaders is something that can be continuously worked out depending on the goals and needs of the individual.

It's important to invest in the beginning, if you don't you will run into problems that you never thought of, and some of these can be traumatizing. Youth will end up in leadership positions for a variety of reasons, they are selected and voted on amongst existing Youth Leaders, who tell us it's important not to simply take the most enthusiastic or logical candidate, but to keep your eyes open for other signs of leadership that may be more muted in order not to miss a great leader.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

See Terms of Reference in Resources .zip file.

“ Before I was shy. I didn't speak to people, my English was so slowly at that moment. I got asked if I was interested in leadership and I said yes. ”
- New Horizons Youth Leader

MEMBERSHIP

The Core Leaders Group will ideally have 4 members, including at least one staff member, and will strive to represent diverse backgrounds, languages and identities.

The Senior Leaders Group should have 2-4 members, and will strive to represent diverse backgrounds, and will be comprised of leaders who have at least one year of experience in the Core Leader group. So, Core Leaders can be promoted to the Seniors Leaders Group after one year of participation.

MEETING ROLES

The following roles should be taken on by Core Leaders. They can also be taken on by Senior Leaders and staff: meeting facilitator, and note-taker (removed budget-keeper and time-keeper). We decide who takes these responsibilities at the beginning of each meeting.

YOUTH LEADER MEETINGS

Youth rotate the role of facilitator. At first, the program coordinators facilitated our meetings but once the youth felt comfortable with the skill, we left it up to them. We always have an agenda. Sometimes we follow the agenda (as led by the Youth Leader as Facilitator) and sometimes we just talk about the issues that the youth are up against and dynamics in the group as well as fun and creative event ideas.

We also start all of our meetings with a go-around check-in to see how everyone is doing. We also often start with a fun game (Ninja, charades, Scattergories, 7up, zip-zap-zop, etc.) to create a relaxed, youth-centered atmosphere.

ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The youth from New Horizons Newcomer Youth Peer Mentoring Group are eager for systemic and cultural change in Kingston. There is overwhelming discrimination that the New Horizons youth experience on a daily basis: racism, Islamophobia, accent discrimination, sexism and misogyny, queerphobia and ableism to name a few. Youth have and continue to share their concerns, advocate for the needs

The Core Leaders Group should focus on relevant activities that fulfil the mission stated above, especially fully developing guidelines and practices to promote sustainability, communications with the New Horizons community, event planning, etc. Core Leaders should use their time to prioritize the following activities:

- 1. Attending meetings (to discuss all agenda items)
2. Planning, preparing, coordinating and attending events
3. Any action items that are decided on (promoting events, buying food, etc.)
4. Training
5. Attending other events that are decided on

The Senior Leaders use their knowledge and experience to provide consulting, mentoring and advocacy to guide New Horizons towards the fulfilment of its mission stated above. Senior Leaders use their time to prioritize the following activities:

- 1. Consulting with KEYS staff (Kamryn, Mike and the staff person who leads the Scaling Up project)
2. Mentoring new leaders
3. Regular meetings
4. Any action items that are decided on
5. Training

of their communities, and give recommendations for change-oriented actions.

While all New Horizons youth are welcomed and encouraged to participate in activities that can help foster change, our Youth Leaders lead the way both advocating, and coaching other members.

Youth delegations from New Horizons have engaged with organizations and institutions such as the City of Kingston, Queen's University, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, United Way Kingston, Community



LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

Foundation of Kingston and Area, and the Canadian Council for Refugees. They have embraced these and other leadership opportunities to advocate for much needed change in Kingston. It has been a genuine pleasure to hear them speak with confidence and passion.

We even have a number of existing members and graduates who are interested in forming their own New Horizons. One graduate, now living in Kanata told us they hoped that they could help to start a chapter there, because youth have to take the bus all the way into Ottawa to access most services.



- **Don't force assimilation.** Although Canada has declared itself to be “multicultural,” the dominant culture is whiteness. Youth come to New Horizons to feel at home, so if the youth have told you that your smiles make them uncomfortable, for example, don't try to convince them that they have to get used to it. (They already know that.) New Horizons should feel like home to the youth, so use their feedback and integrate it into your program. Make agreements that ensure youth will feel comfortable, even if they do not necessarily line up with “Canadian” cultural norms.

**– Kamryn Marsh,
Program Coordinator, New Horizons**

I was suicidal growing up and always.
After a while, I felt there was no

Youth are coming here to join us because they are feeling the same. They all come here to feel part of something, everyone doesn't have the advantages that other Canadians have. Youth who come to New Horizons are happy to be with people like themselves, who have faced the same hard things. When we come together for an hour or two, we feel like home."





New Horizons Brand Standards Guide

“ Before, I didn’t know how to help people and the youth group. Now I can help my brothers and sisters. Also, I get more ideas in my mind, like how to change things. In my future, I would like to become a social worker, and have a youth group. I feel more comfortable and I have experience, and now I know I can do it. ”

– Youth Leader, New Horizons



BRAND STANDARDS

New Horizons



Youth Peer Mentoring Program

Square Format Logo



New Horizons

Youth Peer Mentoring Program

Horizontal Format Logo



Graphic Logo Elements

The logo may not be altered in any way.

The foundation building blocks of the New Horizons Peer Mentoring Program's visual brand are: Logo, Colour, and Typography. Applied consistently in concert, they work to present a cohesive and distinct brand image. The following is an overview of these building blocks, and the rules that govern their application on all of our marketing and promotional material.

A logo is the face and signature of the brand. It connects the brand to all forms of communication. Consistency in its look and use is critical in its ability to be remembered and make an impact. The brand colours and fonts help with recognition when used appropriately on any marketing materials. We strongly suggest to use

them on all materials to keep a strong, consistent branded look.

There are two configurations of the New Horizons Peer Mentoring logo. These unique, identifying pieces of artwork should each be viewed as a single unit that should not be altered in any way. The logo and graphic elements will be supplied as jpg, pdf and eps/ai format for your use.

The design of the logo symbolically represents the concepts of Community, Peers, and Mentoring, as well as reflecting the programs values which include: creativity and play, and inclusivity and safe spaces. It also graphically represent a New Horizon. Since this program originated at KEYS Job Centre, it was important to tie its brand into KEYS' while giving it a unique identity. This was done by incorporating KEYS brand colours but also adding more colourful ones, selecting some similar fonts but making the name in a distinct font, and by making one of the graphics a 'square', to show that it is part of KEYS overall programming (as symbolized by one of the squares in KEYS' logo).

Logo Usage

In the official logo, the square graphic may appear in the middle of the text or to the left of the text.

In the logo, neither the fonts nor the colours may not be substituted.

The logo may appear in full colour or grayscale.

The graphic elements may be used alone, without any text but this does not replace the official logo. The graphics are to be used in addition to the logo to enhance the design of marketing pieces.

- **FONTS:** HanziPen TC Bold
Facit Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234

- **COLOURS: Text** – Pantone Black 3 and Pantone 125
- **Graphics** – Pantone Process Blue, Pantone 525, Pantone 227, Pantone 1225, Pantone 362



Appendices



NO ACT OF
KINDNESS
NO MATTER
HOW SMALL,
IS EVER
WASTED.



APPENDIX A | ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was made possible through generous funding from RBC.

The team for this collaborative work included; New Horizons youth and youth leaders, past and present, New Horizons Program Coordinators Kamryn Marsh and Mike Hipson, and Scale-Up Project Coordinator Carissa Cosgrove.

We would like to thank those who shared their insights to create this document, including;

Gillian Watters – Program Director, KEYS Job Centre

Madeleine Nerenberg – Manager, Newcomer Services, KEYS Job Centre

Ale Zamora – Refugee Child and Youth Integration Advisor, KEYS Job Centre

Christie Scales – Program Manager, Youth Services, KEYS Job Centre

Most importantly, we want to celebrate the courage and resilience of all youth who have come to Canada unaccompanied as a result of struggle, persecution, war and other atrocities. It is through them that this program has flourished, and through their generosity and efforts that we are able to present you with a full picture of the impact of this program on their lives and consequently, the lives of others.

Please contact insight@keys.ca to ask more about the New Horizons Peer Mentoring Program.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX B | EDITORIAL NOTES

Anonymity

Throughout the process of compiling this guide and toolkit, we asked interviewees to consent or not to have their name published, to provide their pronouns, and to provide an alternative name if they wished to remain anonymous.

As some of the narrative was being written, we decided to remove all names in our stories in order to protect the privacy of everyone.

Quotes

All quotes used throughout this document are verbatim. In a few instances, we have clarified a subject/context in brackets for ease of understanding.

Only quotes from New Horizons staff and community members will be attributed. Quotes from New Horizons youth have been anonymized.

Stories

There were many stories to choose from when compiling this toolkit. We opted for those we felt had great impact and offered a compelling glimpse into the real value of New Horizons.

Stories have been taken directly from interviews. Some liberties

have been taken in order to flesh out background or provide useful context that was assumed by the interviewee. No facts were changed in the telling of these stories.

One story is particularly sensitive, and we have taken great care to tell the story in a way that is non-identifying to any group member.

APPENDIX C | BOOKS WE LOVE AND RECOMMEND

We love these books and hope you do too. We encourage you to purchase your copies from a local bookstore when possible.

Digital Body Language – Erica Dahwan

Critical Mentoring: A Practical Guide – Torie Weiston-Serdan

Stand by Me – Jean Rhodes

No Hard Feelings – Liz Fosslien and Molly West Duffy

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma – Bessel van der Kolk

Deep Diversity: Overcoming US vs. Them – Shakil Choudhury

How Does It Feel To Be A Problem – Moustafa Bayoumi

APPENDICES

APPENDIX D | HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Digital Tools you may find useful:

Digital Learning Tools, Immersive Reader – <https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/education/products/learning-tools>

Whose Land – Welcome – <https://www.whose.land/en/>

Home – GEGI – <https://www.gegi.ca/>

The Developmental Assets Framework – <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/>

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – Violence Prevention – <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>

OCASI – Newcomer Youth Bill of Rights – http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/OCASI_SYNC_Youth_Bill_of_Rights_English.pdf

YouthRex Resources – <https://youthrex.com/abr-resources/>

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach – https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

Racial Equity Tools – racialequitytools.org – <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/intersectionality>

Smithsonian – Talking about Race - <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist>

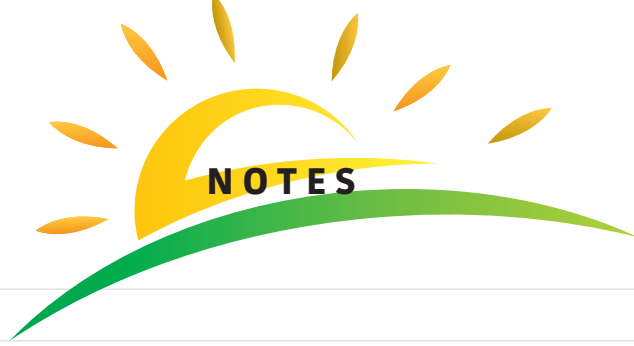
EQUITAS – Human Rights Education Tools for Youth – <https://equitas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SampleMan-SR-EN-2018.pdf>

Cara-Friend – <https://cara-friend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/22307-CaraFriend-Youth-Worker-Booklet-LGBTQ-Final-screen.pdf>

Mental Health Promotion – Kids New to Canada – <https://www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/mental-health/mental-health-promotion>

Determinants of Mental Health for Newcomer Youth – https://accessalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Determinants_of_Mental_Health_for_Newcomer_YouthCdn_Issues.pdf





A series of horizontal lines for writing notes, alternating between white and light gray backgrounds.



New Horizons



Youth Peer Mentoring Program



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