

# Peak House Handbook



**INFORMATION FOR YOUTH**

**Pacific Youth & Family Services Society**  
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## PEAK HOUSE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM

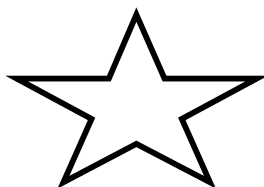
### INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared for you. If you are taking the time to read this, you are really considering making some important changes in your life.

Considering leaving your home, your friends, and your community for 70 days is not an easy decision to make. We know change requires courage, determination and commitment. We greatly respect the courage and strength of young people who decide to take their lives back from drugs or alcohol.

### APPLICATION INFORMATION

If you and your alcohol and drug counsellor have decided that Peak House is the right program for you, the first step is to fill out the application package. There are four parts to the application - one part is to be completed by you, one part is to be completed by your counsellor, one part by your parent/caregiver, and the last part is to be completed by your family doctor. Your alcohol and drug counsellor will forward the referral to Peak House when all parts have been completed.



When we receive your completed application, our intake & assessment counsellor, Roisin, will review it. After the referral has been reviewed, Roisin, will contact your alcohol and drug counsellor; firstly, to obtain any additional information required and secondly, to give an approximate intake date. Roisin will then contact you and stay in regular contact until your intake date. If you live close to Vancouver, she will arrange for you to visit Peak House and can answer any questions you may have about our program.

The waiting period can be anywhere from one month to six months. During the period you are waiting to enter the Peak House program, we expect that you will be seeing your alcohol and drug counsellor on a regular basis; if you are not, we will not be able to consider you ready for treatment. We will keep in regular contact with you and your alcohol and drug counsellor regarding the status of your application.

Sometimes a bed becomes available much earlier than expected. If a bed becomes available earlier, we will call and ask if you are prepared to come into the program early.

## WHAT PEAK HOUSE IS:

Peak House is a large house located in Vancouver in a residential neighborhood. Young people who come to Peak House are from all over British Columbia and stay in the Peak House home for the time that they are in the program. The house has 7 bedrooms- 6 of them are single rooms and one is a double room. Our program has space for up to 8 youth.

### Peak House is a two-part residential program:

#### **The first part is a 2-week assessment phase...**

The first two weeks here look a little different than the 56 days of "treatment". During this time you will work with the assessment counsellor, your Peak House therapist and the youth counsellors to get settled in, to decide if Peak House is the right program for you and to prepare for the treatment phase of the program. Your mornings will be spent working with our assessment counsellor to get ready for group work and to figure out if Peak House is a good fit for you at this time of your life. Your afternoons and evenings will be spent with the full Peak House crew.

While you are first getting here, you'll work on an '*orientation*', working with staff to answer a series of questions that will introduce you to your co-residents in ways that fit with what you now prefer for your life. At Peak House, we pay attention to what has gone on in the past but we are more interested in supporting you to focus on the changes you are making now and helping you move in the direction you want to go. The orientation will help you identify all that you want to

bring into your life at this point and help you get focussed on what you want to work on here. At the end of the assessment phase you will present your *orientation*, and a collage you'll have made that represents you, to the group.

Peak House is a very safe and respectful environment with staff who will provide lots of encouragement and support as you work toward making the changes that are important to you.

#### **School**

Peak House has a Vancouver School Board teacher who works with young people in our program. Every morning there is classroom time with Janet who works with each young person to help them achieve their school goals. If you are enrolled in school and need to keep up with your coursework, there will be room to do this in the assessment phase. If you want to return to school then we can help you arrange this. If you have no intention of returning to school then we will help you work out an educational plan for your time in the program.

## 2 WEEKS OF ORIENTATION/ASSESSMENT:

During the first two weeks, you will work with Roisin, our intake and assessment counsellor on a series of group topics (the assessment modules). Some of these you can choose (depending on what most fits with you) and some of them we'll require you to do. Some of the things you may learn about are:



## WHAT ELSE?

Three afternoons a week you will join the rest of the group for fitness (going to the gym, going for walks, playing soccer, shooting hoops). The other two afternoons will be flexible and will be figured out with you and our team. Your evenings will be spent with the whole group (activities and schedule are listed below in the 'treatment' description).

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE FIRST TWO WEEKS?

Moving from Assessment into Treatment...

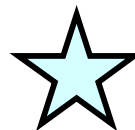
If, after the first 2 weeks, you and the staff decide that you are ready to enter the treatment portion of the program, you will move into the second part. That would mean you would be here for a total of ten weeks.

If you and the staff decide that Peak House is not the right program for you, at this time, your accomplishments in the assessment phase would be recognized and would become part of an aftercare plan for you to take home.

## 8 WEEKS OF TREATMENT

### SCHEDULE

Your weekday will start at 7:45 a.m. (weekends are different). After everyone is dressed, had breakfast and finished their chore it should be about 8:30 a.m. and time for the first break of the day - if you smoke, this will be your first opportunity of the day. At approximately 8:40 a.m., the daily program starts (see the attached program schedule).



### WEEKDAY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### ◆ **Community Group**

Every morning and evening seven days a week. This group is a check-in and a discussion of any group business.

#### ◆ **School**

Five days a week. Each resident works out an individualized plan of schoolwork with our teacher. School is only one hour and fifteen minutes, so there is not enough time for a full school schedule, but those in school or returning to school can stay up-to-date in the most important areas. You will have some free time during the day to do extra schoolwork, if you want. If you are in school, we will send a questionnaire to your school and then the Peak House teacher will work with your

school to determine the best academic plan for you while you are here. If you are not in school, our teacher will help you with your educational plans.

◆ **Re-Authoring Group**

This is our name for group therapy. This group will offer you the chance to 'rewrite your story', bringing forward your wisdom and hopefully coming to new understandings about yourself and your life (no, we don't actually write a book in this group...). What we mean by this is that you will get to decide what your future will be like and what you want to bring in to your life. In this group you can get support with changes that you are making and with remembering qualities about yourself that may have been covered up or disappeared by drugs and alcohol.

We believe that you hold the answers and some real expertise about how to overcome problems- we'll help you remember this and hang on to your wisdom about reclaiming your life from substance use. This group happens four days a week with therapists and a youth counsellor.

◆ **Gender Group**

One day a week. The young men and the young women in the program meet separately with therapists to have conversations that they might not feel comfortable having in the larger group. This group pays attention to the ways that that alcohol and drugs are connected to your particular life experiences.

◆ **Discovery Group**

Five days a week with Youth Counsellors. Each Discovery Group has a theme related to lifeskills, relapse prevention or aftercare planning. Residents work together with staff to strategize about tools to hold on to the changes they are making here at Peak House.

◆ **Creative Expression**

One afternoon each week we get creative! Activities have included photography, pottery, bead jewellery, painting, candlemaking and collage work. There are also lots of craft supplies around the house that you are welcome to use in your spare time.

◆ **Physical Fitness**

At least three afternoons a week, we get out and get physical. Activities will include swimming, light hikes, basketball, walleyball, working out in the gym - activities may differ, depending on time of year. We go to yoga twice a month for a class taught just for Peak House youth.

*"It's great that they keep you busy at Peak House because you don't get bored. The activities, especially on the weekend, were good times- I remembered how to have fun again..." – Peak House resident*

◆ **Community Support Groups**

Two evenings per week - youth attend (outside of Peak House) either a NA or AA meeting in order to get familiar with an available community support system.

◆ **Community Education**

Two afternoons per month. During this time, you may go to the Art Gallery, a wildlife refuge, a performance, the Museum of Anthropology or other events in the community.

◆ **Community Resource Evening**

Wednesday evenings, resource people from the community come to Peak House. It could be a storyteller, a poet, public health nurse, Planned Parenthood, GAB, or a former resident.

◆ **Acupuncture/ De-stress Group**

Acupuncture happens each Tuesday afternoon. Our registered acupuncturist will explain to you how this works. There will be various options for participation in this group- you are welcome to get acupuncture or just learn about relaxation ideas.

◆ **Meetings with Your Therapist**

Once a week, you will also meet individually with your therapist. At your lead, family meetings with your therapist are also possible and encouraged.

## **WEEKEND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

**W**eekends are all about learning to have fun without drugs or alcohol. Weekends start after dinner on Friday. Friday evening is movie night - it's an evening to hang out, eat popcorn and watch a movie. Saturday evening you might go out to a play, go bowling, play pool or go out to a movie. You can stay up later and sleep in. Weekend daytime activities very much depend on the weather and the time of year. If you are here during the summer, you will spend a lot of time at a beach or other outdoor activities. When the weather is not so great, you might go bowling, play pool, snowshoe or go to a wave pool.

Our cook is not here on weekends, so staff and the young people work together to plan and prepare delicious, gourmet meals. Monday morning leftovers can be quite interesting!

## THE STAFF TEAM

Our staff team includes the intake & assessment counsellor, six full-time youth counsellors, two therapists, a Vancouver School Board teacher, one cook, two night attendants, one program manager, one executive director, one administrative assistant and several relief staff who fill in for fulltime staff as needed. We also have a medical doctor who visits Peak House once a week and a clinical supervisor who is at Peak House once a month.

After you get to Peak House, you will be given a Peak House "Who's Who" which is a list of everyone on the team.

## GETTING READY TO COME TO PEAK HOUSE

In order to fully participate in our program, you will need to have time free from using before you arrive. We recognize how difficult this can be...

Talk to your alcohol and drug counsellor about whether or not you may need to go to a detox facility before coming to our program. We ask that you have 7 days free from using when you come in for your intake meeting.

Keep meeting with your alcohol and drug counsellor. This will help you be more prepared to enter the program.

Consider saying goodbye to 'using friends'. Many young people in our program have told us that this has helped them stay away from using after completing the program.

### What you should bring:

See the attached list, which is a detailed listing of what you will need. We expect that the young men and young women coming to Peak House dress as if they were going to work.

- Please ensure that your clothing is comfortable and appropriate.
- Schoolwork, if you are currently in school.
- If you smoke, please ensure you have enough cigarettes for two months. Staff are not allowed to purchase cigarettes for you.
- If you are from out of town, please bring a long distance calling card so that you can call home.
- If you are taking any medication whether it be over-the-counter, prescribed or vitamins please make sure they are in the original container or packaging. Any medication brought to Peak House must be approved by our Medical Doctor.

- Please bring two bath towels, one swim towel, and your own pillow (we have pillow cases).

-Peak House supplies all linens except towels and pillows.

-Peak House supplies the over-the-counter medication approved by our physician i.e. for headaches, stomach upset, sore throat, coughs.

-Peak House supplies all materials necessary for program i.e. binders, paper, art supplies.

### **What you should NOT bring:**

- Clothing that does not cover midriff or is low-cut
- Muscle shirts
- \*Clothing that promotes alcohol or drug culture, clothing with logos that promote disrespect to any gender, race, or culture, or is sexually explicit.
- \*Posters that promote drugs or alcohol or disrespect to any gender, race, culture.
- Books that are disrespectful of others - racist, sexist, homophobic, violent or promote drugs or alcohol.
- Magazines (we have a library and some magazines).
- \*Music that is disrespectful of others - racist, sexist, homophobic, violent or promotes drugs or alcohol.
- Cell phones or video recording devices
- Bank Cards
- Over-the-counter medication- we can supply ibuprofen, if needed
- Skate Boards or other sports equipment
- Video games

**\*If you are not sure about the appropriateness of an item (whether it's clothing, posters or music) DON'T bring it.**

Items brought to Peak House that are not appropriate will either be sent home with parents/caregivers or held in safekeeping by staff until you leave Peak House.

### **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS....**

Roisin will be calling you in the time leading up to your intake date and will be available to answer any questions you have. Feel free to call her with any question you might have.

## OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT BE WONDERING ABOUT

- a) **Visitors** - two members of your family may visit Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. If you do not have family members available, a support person(s), approved by your therapist, may visit. Your alcohol and drug counsellor may visit you at times that do not disrupt the program schedule.
- b) **Phone Calls, Mail** - at the intake meeting, you, your support person(s) and therapist will make a contact list - you will not be allowed to make or receive calls from any person who is not on the list. For the first month you are at Peak House, you will not be able to include friends on your contact list, nor will you be able to receive mail from a person who is not on the list (you will be able to send letters out). After your first month at Peak, that list will be reviewed with your therapist and you may be able to add new, supportive people.
- c) **Passes** - Passes are determined on an individual basis depending on the therapeutic benefit of a pass. If you are from outside of Vancouver, this may be for a period of three to five days (you and your therapist will decide what's best for you). You will prepare a detailed pass plan, with youth counsellors and your therapist, which will be approved by the Peak House team before you leave on your pass. The purpose of your home pass is to begin reconnecting with your community supports, and also to discover what is working for you, what's not working, and what you need to do in those areas that didn't work.
- d) **Laundry** - Peak House has laundry facilities well supplied with detergent, bleach, and fabric softener so you will be able to do your own laundry. We do not supply non-allergenic laundry products. You will be given two specific days for your laundry.
- e) **Smoking** - There are regularly scheduled smoke breaks throughout the day. You must supply your own cigarettes. All cigarettes are kept in the team office and at each break you will get your cigarette. Lending or borrowing cigarettes is prohibited. There is a designated smoking area outdoors. Smoking is not allowed in the house either by staff or residents. There are approximately eight breaks in a day.
- f) **Meals** - Our cook is there to provide delicious, nutritious lunches and dinners (and lots of treats) Monday to Friday. Weekends provide an opportunity for staff and residents to share and prepare their favorite recipes. Breakfast is very casual - you can fix yourself some cereal, toast, eggs, fruit, or something else. You will not be able to smoke until after you have had breakfast. Any special dietary needs or allergies must be made known to Peak House prior to intake.

g) **Your Room** - Your room will have a single bed, desk and lamp. Each room has a large cork board on the wall which you can use for your pictures. We ask that you do not put anything on any other part of the walls. All of the bedrooms are carpeted. It is your responsibility to make sure that your bed is made and that your room and your bathroom are tidy at all times. **Your room is your private space - neither other residents nor guests are allowed in your room AT ANY TIME.**

h) **Wake-up and Bed-time** - During the week, wake-up time is 7:45 a.m. - bedtime is 10:30 p.m. On weekends, you can sleep in till 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. and bedtime is 11:50 p.m.

i) **If You Decide to Leave...** you may have a good reason for not wanting to continue the Peak House program - you may be very homesick, it may not be the right program for you, or it may not be the right time for you to be here. We would respect your decision to leave and would ask that you respect our obligation to ensure that you leave in a safe manner and arrive home safe and sound. If you depart in a safe way, you will be welcome to re-apply to Peak House if you so chose.

j) **If We Ask You to Leave...** There are very few reasons that a youth would be asked to leave our program, those reasons are:

1. Disregard and/or intolerance for the rights and differences of others, e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia, economic status.
2. Violence - physical or verbal.
3. Possession and/or use of drugs/alcohol inside or outside of the facility.
4. An inability to guarantee one's personal safety.
5. Sexual or romantic relationship with another person in the program.

If you are asked to leave the program for the above reasons, you may be able to return to the program at a later date. If we have serious, ongoing safety concerns based on your time at Peak House, it will be unlikely that you could return to Peak House.

In some cases we require that youth have 6 months away from the program before returning. All re-admission requests need to go through our intake counsellor, Roisin.

## AT A GLANCE TEN WEEKS AT PEAK HOUSE...

### INTAKE DAY

We usually schedule intakes for either Tuesday or Thursdays at 10:45 a.m. If someone is coming from outside of Vancouver, we will be as flexible as we can about the time. We occasionally schedule an intake for Thursday.

Intake day is very busy and it can feel a bit overwhelming. Our staff (and the other residents) understand this and everyone will do their best to make you feel comfortable and welcome. To help you feel more comfortable, here are some things that will happen when you arrive at Peak House for your intake.

- Your therapist and a youth counsellor will meet with you and your parents/guardian or other support people who have come with you, to review important information. A young person from the program will be in the first part of the meeting to talk about the guidelines and what guidelines might have been hard for them and ways to make it easier. They will also talk about what it was like for them their first few days at Peak House and would love to answer any questions you may have.
- You, your parents/guardian or support person, and the therapist will complete your contact list and complete some necessary paperwork.
- The intake meeting will take approximately 1 - 1-1/2 hours, after which time your parents/caregivers will leave and you can start to get settled into the program.
- Your belongings will be checked as they are unpacked, and a list of all your belongings will be made to ensure you leave with everything that you brought.
- Anything you have with you that is not allowed (inappropriate clothing or music, cash, cell phones, bank cards), will be returned to your caregiver immediately or kept in the office for safekeeping.

### **The First Two Weeks: Assessment/Orientation and Welcome**

The first two weeks at Peak House is your orientation/assessment phase - there will be groups to help prepare you for the treatment phase of the program, some written work and you will also make a collage representing your past, present and future. The first two weeks may be the most difficult for you - you may be homesick, you may reconsider your decision to enter treatment. This period is opportunity for both you and the staff to consider your commitment to treatment.

If you and our staff team decide that you will enter the treatment phase of the program you will present your completed orientation to the group. This is the point when we acknowledge your commitment to your work at Peak House with a welcoming ceremony.

### **Welcoming Ceremony**

This ceremony honors your commitment to the work you want to do at Peak House, and the commitment of the team to work with you. It is a chance to hear about what the group has noticed in you - the changes you've made and the qualities that people appreciate about you. You will choose a special welcoming stone and everyone will put their hopes for your successful treatment in the stone. This ceremony is often very meaningful to both young people and staff.

### **Between Orientation and Commencement**

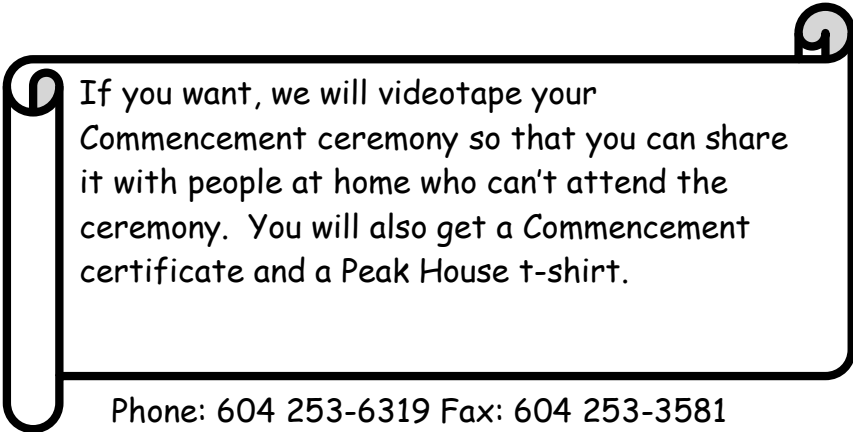
You will be setting daily and weekly goals, tracking your accomplishments, having individual sessions with your therapist, and participating in the group work.

### **Aftercare Planning**

During the last two to three weeks at Peak House, you will work on your aftercare plan - strategies to keep yourself safe and to make sure that your community supports are solid. The aftercare plan will help you to continue on, after Peak House, with all the big changes that you will have been making. We involve your community members in the aftercare plan so that you have a number of people supporting you outside of Peak House.

### **Commencement**

Congratulations! You will have worked very hard to get to this very important day- your last day in the program. We call it commencement because it is the beginning of your life outside of Peak House. Once again, you will be presenting a collage - one that represents who you now are. The stone that was given to you at your welcoming will once more be passed around - this time to receive everyone's hopes and dreams for your future.



If you want, we will videotape your Commencement ceremony so that you can share it with people at home who can't attend the ceremony. You will also get a Commencement certificate and a Peak House t-shirt.

Phone: 604 253-6319 Fax: 604 253-3581

## **INTERESTING PEAK HOUSE FACTS:**

- Our program has been running for 21 years.
- In the summer we have a vegetable garden that, last year, took over half the backyard (mutant squash plants!)
- Young people in our program have told us that they find Peak House to feel “very safe” and “fun”.
- Sometimes we have pets visit us (if no one objects or is allergic).
- Our cook, Yan, makes amazing meals for us during the week- she’s probably the most famous staff member here.
- We have a ping pong table, a karaoke machine, a foosball table and a basketball hoop at the house.
- We believe that young people here are the experts of their lives and we highly respect the wisdom and knowledge that all youth bring to our program.
- One of our staff, Laila (a talented artist) will draw you a portrait of yourself near the end of your stay, if you wish. Copies of these portraits are often included on people’s Commencement collages.
- The living room ceiling is covered with collages made by youth who have finished the program.

