

# Support is Only a Click Away: Introducing.... Gutsy Peer Support



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Today's presentation is brought to you by...

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&  
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# Today's Objectives

## To Learn:

- What is Gutsy Peer Support and how does it work.
- How can this program can assist you and individuals in your local community.
- What does it take to become an effective mentor.

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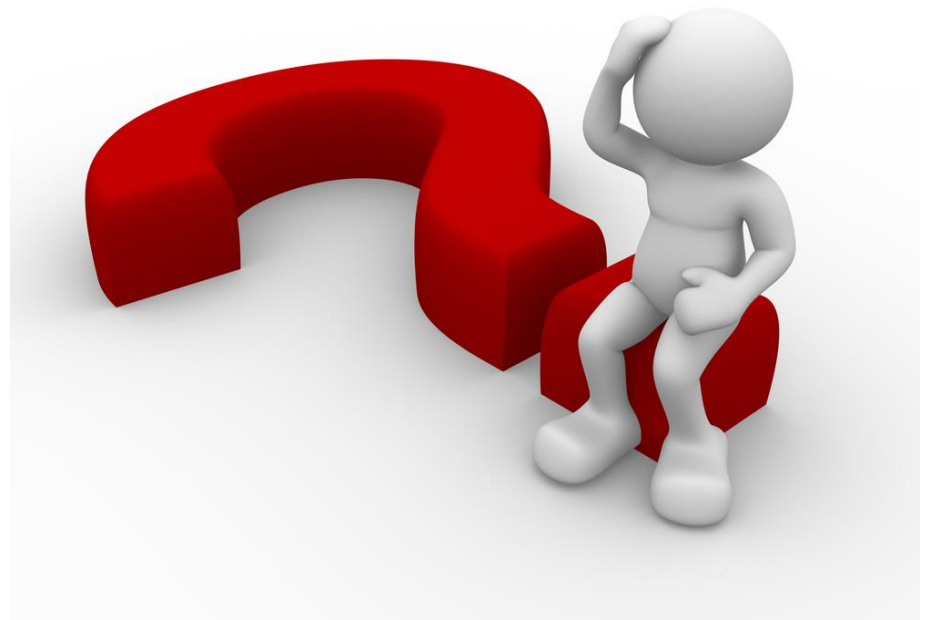
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# Question?

- What do you hope to learn today?



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# What is peer support?

- In your opinion...
  - What is peer support?
  - What is it not?



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*“Peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common...Connecting with another person who has lived with similar problems, or is perhaps still doing so, can be a vital link for someone struggling with their own situation. Peer support can be an effective prevention strategy, can moderate the effects of life-challenging events and provide a sense of empowerment.”*

*Taken from “Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support” by the Mental Health Commission of Canada*

Peer support **does not** replace professional therapy and it is not a referral service for a specific doctor or hospital, procedure, medication, diet or lifestyle.

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# What is Gutsy Peer Support?

Launched in March 2015, Gutsy Peer Support is a one-on-one, confidential, on-line support program for people living with Crohn's and colitis.

Experienced individuals who have been living with Crohn's and colitis (mentors) can share their knowledge with and provide support to newly diagnosed individuals or individuals who are going through a change in their diagnosis or life situation (mentees).

Gutsy Peer Support mentors provide advice on how to deal with aspects of everyday living with Crohn's and colitis (work, school, relationships, stress/anxiety, travel & leisure, etc.)

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# What are the benefits?

Involvement in peer support has a number of positive benefits for both the mentee and the mentor. For mentees, peer support can enable the exploration of emotions, problem solving, goal setting, information gathering, and increased self-efficacy (Funnell, 2010; Sarkar, Fisher, & Schillinger, 2006). Moreover, peer support can be a source of hope and encouragement as it provides a model of someone who is coping successfully with a similar condition.

*“Honestly, just having the opportunity to write those things down, acknowledge my worries and share them with someone makes me feel so much better.” – Gutsy Peer Support mentee*

For mentors, engagement in peer support can enhance their confidence in their ability to manage their condition and can provide a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction in helping other individuals (Riessman, 1965). Moreover, peer support can provide a sense of community for both mentees and mentors where ideas and concerns can be expressed in a nonjudgmental setting and individuals understand the unique challenges of dealing with chronic medical and mental health conditions.

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# Gutsy Peer Support Stats!

Since it's launch in March 2015, the Gutsy Peer Support program has:

- Received 150 support requests
- Made 100 matches
- Average of 60 conversations at any given time
- 48 active volunteer mentors
- 100 individuals interested in volunteering as a mentor

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# So, what can you do?

## Help us to spread the word!

Tell others in your community about this program by.....

- Taking flyers to your local GI office or clinic and asking them to display and hand out to patients
- Promoting it on your local social media pages
- Talking about the program to others in your Chapter and encouraging new attendees to participate if they need support
- Host a Newly Diagnosed night or Education event and don't forget to mention the program

If every person in this room committed to telling four people, we could quadruple the number of people we're helping and reach our goal of 500 people supported by June 2016!

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# How are mentors recruited?

All interested mentors must meet the following requirements:

- diagnosed with either Crohn's or colitis for more than one year;
- willing to commit for one year (or more);
- over the age of 17.

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Additionally, mentors must pass the following screening requirements before they can become mentors:

- complete the on-line volunteer application;
- participate in a 30 minute phone interview with the Manager of Patient Services;
- pass a police background check (we arrange this);
- complete the 2 hr on-line training (via GoToWebinar).

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# So, what does it really take to be an effective mentor?

## Effective mentors are:

- Good listeners
- Non-judgemental
- Empathetic
- Positive
- Friendly, open, & warm

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# Communication techniques

## Think OARS:

- Open-ended questions
- Affirmations
- Reflective listening
- Summaries



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# Ok, time to test out your mentoring skills!

## Group activity!

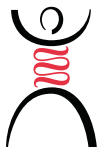
### What did you like about this activity?

### What did you find difficult?



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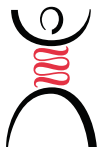
# Future growth

- How would you like to see this program expand?
- Could this program expand to include resources for Chapters?



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# Thank you!

Thank you for attending today's workshop.

Have any questions?

Write to us at [info@gutsypeersupport.ca](mailto:info@gutsypeersupport.ca)

And help us to spread the word!

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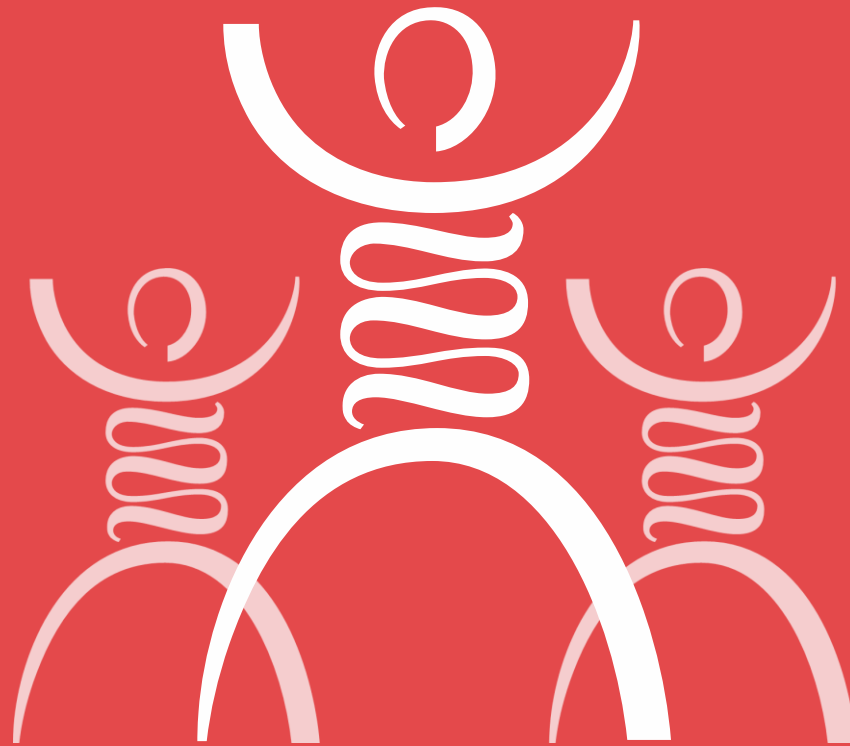


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