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CANADA

New nCourage Hub with Peel CAS brings trauma-informed supports for trafficking survivors

As of January 2026, Peel CAS has been providing operational and administrative leadership of nCourage, with a dedicated space within The Circle: Peel Centre of Child, Youth and Family Well-Being located at 25 Capston Dr. in Mississauga.

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By Riley Murphy, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter Caledon Citizen

As of January 2026, Peel CAS has been providing operational and administrative leadership of nCourage, with a dedicated space within The Circle: Peel Centre of Child, Youth and Family Well-Being located at 25 Capston Dr. in Mississauga.

This new dedicated space for nCourage brings a partnership with other resources available at The Circle to have services together under one roof.

Arathi Packiyathan, a Supervisor, Advice and Assessment with Peel CAS, Co-Chair, Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, shares that this month marks the formal opening of the new hub, but they've been open to the public for over a month.

Packiyathan says with the prevalence of sex trafficking in Peel, the average age of recruitment being 13 years of age and 70% of victims identified by police being under 25 years old, they knew that there needed to be more of a seamless, centralized collaborative hub that allows them to service individuals between the ages of 12 and 24.

“Instead of having our siloed services, and having victims or survivors have to retell their story or have disconnected services trying to work together, which

can feel disruptive,” she adds.

Bringing this collaboration to The Circle, she explains, allows those seeking multiple resources to be accessed in a timely manner.

The rate of trafficking in persons in Peel increased 60% from 1.39 in 2023 to 2.23 per 100,000 population in 2024, higher than the Ontario rate of 1.99 and the Toronto rate of 1.80.

More than 166 cases were reported to Peel Children’s Aid Society last year.

nCourage delivers trauma-informed, client-centred care by bringing together partners across health, justice, housing, community services, and child welfare.

The nCourage hub is a collaboration between Peel CAS, Our Place Peel and EFry Hope and Help for Women.

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Packiyathan says that not only will this hub take a more trauma-informed approach, but it also helps in situations where there may be a time crunch.

“[If] things are a bit time sensitive, because they can’t be away from their trafficker or other realities for too long, then we have multiple services that they can access in one spot in a timely manner as well, and we also have a trauma informed counsellor on site,” she says.

“We can’t do this work alone,” says Packiyathan. “Human sex trafficking intersects with so many different spaces, and part of this integrated service pathway is to link child welfare with housing, with health, with justice, with community supports for survivors, and to coordinate that care so that we can really wrap around the victim and survivor to empower them.”

For Packiyathan, she says she is grateful that they can bring this hub to fruition.

“The bitter part is we would ideally live in a world where this wasn’t even necessary,” she says. “But I think given the reality of how things are in Peel Region today, it is definitely us heading in the right direction.”

Before nCourage was created, a victim would have had to independently seek out every service they needed, which comes with its own hurdles.

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“The process can be overwhelming,” says Packiyathan. “Experiencing human sex trafficking, we can’t even put it into words what the trauma is like, the emotional impact, what that does to your energy, to your physical being. But then to have to work through multiple different siloed systems on top of that could be discouraging.”

With this centralized hub, she explains, they can now work alongside victims and advocate for them and their needs.

“We have ironed out pathways and processes to be able to circumvent these challenges and to allow a very streamlined process, which then saves time and allows survivors and victims to work more on their healing, and have us walk alongside them in this journey in a way that supports them and allows them to rebuild their lives in all of those practical ways.”

She says their goal is to give victims and survivors their power back, and it comes down to the community as well.

Packiyathan explains that protecting children and youth requires a united community response, with prevention, protection, and partnership being key.

If you are concerned about the safety or well-being of a child or youth, contact your local Children’s Aid Society.

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If you are being trafficked or suspect someone you know is involved in human trafficking in Peel Region, contact nCourage at 905-866-2831.

“Anytime that there is a neighbour, a friend, whomever it may be doesn’t matter, you can leave us a tip, even anonymously, and we can reach out to the family if we have the information to do so and start to wrap around and see how we can support,” says Packiyathan.

If you are a victim or survivor of human sex trafficking or forced labour, or you know someone who is, contact the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline at www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca or call 1-833-900-1010.
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