

Red flags:

- Testimonies are saying they use regular TTI practice: isolation from the outside world except for 15min phone conversation with parents under supervision, students are not allowed to keep in touch.
- Plenty of testimonies of psychological, verbal and potentially physical abuse as well as racism and homophobia (see key testimonies below). Testimonies of authority figures forcing their christian views on students.
- In this article, they pathologize normal teen behaviours, then offer their services as a cure. Behaviours like “not recognising parents’ efforts” is pretty normal for a kid given that they do not know the reality of being a parent and cannot properly assess the efforts they make.
(<https://www.ventureacademy.ca/troubled-teen-blog/5-signs-your-teen-does-not-respect-you/>)
- I did their child behaviour test and answered the questions with the way I was behaving when I was in the worst of my teen years and was smoking a little weed. They emailed me two days later to tell me my kid is exhibiting concerning behaviours.

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Location:

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Key employees

- Joshua Montgomery: New CEO, seems like he is trying to clean the image of the center by asking parents to leave good Google review
- Nancy Dyer: Program director, is currently doing her master in counselling (which means she currently has no counselling credentials). There is a testimony saying she refused to provide a former patient with their file. It also mentioned on the website that she misses doing mission trip, which makes me believe she is an evangelical christian.
- Louise Beard: Program director, a lot of testimonies saying she is abusive. She has no valid counselling or social worker credentials as far as I know.
- Gordon Hay: founder and previous CEO. He is now a christian minister.

Relevant politician

Ontario:

- Federal MP: Doug Shipley
- Provincial MLA: Doug Downey
- Minister of Education (Ontario): Stephen Lecce

Alberta

- Federal MP: Blaine Calkins

- Provincial MLA: Devin Dreeshen
- Minister of Education (Alberta) Demetrios Nicolaides

Registration on Ontario Business Registry (Cannot confirm which on really are)

- 2421187 ONTARIO INC.
- VENTURE ACADEMY ONTARIO INC. (2207589)
- VENTURE ACADEMY (240811620)
- Potentially could be 1047726 ONTARIO INC. Previously known as:
 - OPTIMUM REHABILITATION SERVICES INC.
 - OPTIMUM VENTURES INC.

Testimonies:

Long term ptsd and paranoia

Survivor Testimony

I arrived at venture Academy Barrie ontario during march of 2022 during covid. As soon as i arrived to the campus (not being told where i was going to in the car for a 3 hour drive) i was told i was staying in Barrie for as long as i had to. when i was told that i decided to jump out of a moving car and run from the campus trying to get to the city. I walked 14km around 6 hours of walking in slush and ice just to be followed the whole time. when i gave up and sat in the van that smelt of sweat body odour and mould due to it being the "crossfit van" i was sent to a host parent. i was then made clear that i was not to have any contact to the outside world as my phone and other belongings were stripped off me and i was told i would get it back when i was done the program (which was not the case as they threw out everything) unless i am supervised to see/hear it. i was mentally forced into signing away my rights to them as my parents already left Barrie and i was stuck. the first days were hell as i was detoxing off of drugs and was made to be at campus at 8 am. during the whole time i was there talking to other youths what was prohibited and you would get severely punished ie. solitary confinement. i decided to go my way through the program and left after 7 months of hell. Food was used as a weapon and used to bribe us to basically be robots. Therapy was not confidential, group therapy was run by someone who wasn't qualified and we were forced to do crossfit in a gym without safety precautions like a proper spotter during bench presses and other heavy weights . kids that came in were 12-18 years old and were charged over 10k a month to be neglected and abused by so called host parents. I have moved out at 17 due to the fact that no one in my family believes the abuse that happened and the concern of being sent back. Venture academy has ruined my life before it has even started


• 1y ago

I am a past student of Venture Academy, both the Kelowna and the Ontario campuses in 2015-2016. I will say that the kelowna campus was flawed and in some ways abusive for sure, overall just a mess, but the Ontario location is a prison. It is so much more focused on isolation and punishment and weaponized peer hatred. It is physically, psychologically and emotionally the most damaging thing I have ever been through. I would absolutely love to have this whole program shut down and expose the abuse. Message me if you need more testimonials - my story is a little crazy but I think could be of value.


 2
 
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sloanelle fawcett

1 review



a day ago

NEW

please dont send your kids here. i will never be the same i was before i went. im traumatized now. i jump when i hear loud noises now.

i had girls in my house try to take their lives and threaten mine and other girls lives. these memories haunt me to this day and i will never come back from that.



2



T

9 reviews



2 months ago

Sending your kids to correctional facilities, disguised as educational institutions, for displaying normal kid behavior, or having a learning disability that gets exasperated by trauma is morally heinous and a form of child neglect/abuse. It's 2024. There's a reason conversion therapy is illegal now.



11



Riley Nydokus

4 reviews



4 months ago

Found my mom dead when I was young. This place traumatized me more than that. it will definitely destroy your child emotionally (verbal as well as emotional abuse is HUGE). If you hate your kid send them here.



6



Kayla Martin

3 reviews



a year ago

The abuse that I endured at this school should be illegal. They prey on vulnerable families and use isolation and social deprivation as means to ensure the "students" continue living at the facility while the families pay top dollar. We were forced to live in unstable houses with strangers who did not have our best interest, family conversations were kept to maximum 15 mins once a week, no music, no books, no alone time. I have never felt more suicidal than I did when I was there. I went to this school over 10 years ago and they stole my childhood from me. It breaks my heart that this facility continues to gaslight children into thinking they're troubled. Save yourself the heartache and DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILDREN HERE



15



Harry Y

8 reviews



★★★★★ a year ago

I was severely traumatized in this scam of a program when i was a teenager. Please dont send your kids here, i was neglected, abused, starved and put into random unsafe houses with unstable families they called "host parents". Manipulated and brainwashed, they also try to keep your kid for as long as possible even if that means lying to the patients parents in order to gain more money from the parents. Seriously if you send your child to any one of these venture locations, i promise they will come back traumatized. There are countless testimonies. I am not the only survivor.



The Anamex

Local Guide · 217 reviews · 150 photos



★★★★★ a year ago

Abusive and exploitative youth camp that violates human rights. This place should have been closed decades ago and the owners should be behind bars.

Note for Parents: They exploit you more than anyone else. They'll make you believe your child is troubled just so that you keep paying. Just Terrible.

Edit: Don't try to act innocent with these replies. You know what you've done.



Madison Stepp

3 reviews



★★★★★ a year ago

I went here when I was 14, I'm now 21 & I suffer with PTSD from this place. The 'counsellor' was extremely verbally abusive to all of the children in care as long with the rest of the staff. I was told by every single staff member when I was crying for my mom that she didn't love me, why else would I be there. We were only aloud to shower twice a week because we weren't the families actual children. They never had enough food for us either so often times we went to bed hungry. I got to call my mom once a week after the first month (I didn't get to talk to her at all during the first month). None of the 'teachers' knew anything & I failed all of my classes because of this. They were all barely legal themselves. One of the girls in staying in the house I was staying in tried to kill herself & I watched them carry her out. I am now a social work student and want to get this place shut down for good!



venture academy Minesing/Barrie Ontario

Survivor Testimony

I was forced in the program early february 2022 to november 2022. I was a "troubled teen" who went through some pretty intense and stressful experiences. The campus is in the buttfuck middle of nowhere so running isn't an option. I made the mistake of jumping out of a moving vehicle to get away from the campus and walk 14km in sleet and ice just to be followed into a forest and forced into a van. "Host parents" were technically your new legal guardians as the program has foster care forms stating that the youths in this program are now technically foster kids (evidence of this was a legal document hung up in the office). Myself and probably many other youths were told to sign documents before being told what they are, basically making you sign away your rights to them. The rights you are given are in a pamphlet were loosely to not followed at all stating for example "music is allowed if appropriate" which was not the case as i had to verbally fight with the director of the program for it to drown out psychosis (voices and audio hallucinations). i was only granted a battery powered radio with no clock as clocks were prohibited. i was then told i did not have psychosis by the director of the program solely based on the fact that i acted "normal" and was accused of abusing the program. before even coming to the program i was in the hospital on an IV for CHS for 5 days then transported to barrie within the same week as the hospitalization. within a month of being at venture i had to have my arm in a splint because of the extreme workouts the program forced youth to do. Youth were driven in a minivan that smelt of mold, sweat, and body odours by staff to a gym 45 minutes away in a completely silent ride. Youth were not to speak to one another unless completely supervised and one at a time. Youth were not to speak to staff until spoken too. Therapy was not confidential as told your first session. schooling was mainly done by paperwork from either your school or youre given ILC homeschooling to do. Staff were under qualified to teach and did very little to help youth that struggled with their work. staff would belittle the youth by putting them down either it be comments or straight up ignoring you when it came to actual questions. contact to the outside world came from a monitored phone call to your parents for 15 minutes once a week or letters that you receive friday. The staff would also read your letters before giving them to you as well as monitor your letters going out to you family. food was used as a weapon and was made clear that if youre still hungry after a cup portion of food to fill the rest of your stomach up with water so you feel full. Boys and girls were separated and staff members will shit talk the other gender to the youth. Transgender youths were forced to stay in the same classrooms as the assigned gender they we're given at birth as a safty precaution. staff would try to push mostly christian beliefs onto the youth no matter the religion they choose. group therapy was a joke only one person was qualified to teach group yet other staff would teach in their place. Host parents are racist and choose favourites as well as try to persuade youths to change host parents. if needed i can discuss more later as i spent 10 months in hell.



OP • 1y ago

Hi!! I'd absolutely love to share! So in my personal experience from Venture, your time there really depended on which houseparent you got! My house parent was extremely verbally abusive, towards me especially, and would literally get in my face and and fully scream at me for things that never happened! She would tell all the other peers in the house all my personal information, as well as telling me all of theirs. Within the program itself, we we're completely isolated from each other. We couldn't speak to each other directly, or even indirectly. Some of the staff showed extreme abuse of power at times, and once I had a really intense mental breakdown in the washroom where I was just told "just come to lunch when you're ready" and left there when I could have been a danger to myself. There were also some staff members that forced their religion on the youth, and also promoted an MLM in literally every conversation they had? We weren't allowed to have any access to the outside world other than a weekly 15 minute phone call with our parents which was closely monitored, as well as weekly letters which I believe were monitored as well. I wasn't allowed to start any academics until 2 months in, which is illegal in Canada. Also when it comes to academics, most of us did not have the resources we needed to be able to complete our academics in a timely manner, and would often spend days waiting for a computer to be available in the classroom, or for work to come back (the staff had to pre-approve every assignment before it was turned in) to finally be able to submit it, and even the submissions process took way too long for no reason. They would also hold your past (and trauma) against you, and bring it up anytime something didn't go their way (oh, is this a response to your _____ trauma?). They're also going bankrupt, which means that they hold kids there for SO much longer than they need to be held there for. The director (Louise) told me I was ready to go home, and then held me there for another 6 MONTHS, where I basically did absolutely nothing new. Another thing is that they would force us to work out at the gym 3 times a week, even with injury/conditions that would make it hard to do so. There is also massive neglect; i once sprained both my ankles (trying to run away) and was refused a doctor because "i was doing it for attention".

These are just a few things that I remember, but there are plenty more!!



• 5mo ago

I attended venture for 2.5 months over last winter. I was tricked into going and my god it was awful. The 'campus', which was a converted frat house, then apartment building, then treatment centre in the middle of nowhere Delburne Alberta. It was always dark and freezing cold. We would go from Monday-Friday 9am-4pm often later as the house staff would forget to come get us and the campus staff didn't want to drive us. We had one 15 minute very closely monitored phone call with parents per week. Staff usually prevented us from knowing the time, and we weren't allowed to view news, listen to music, the radio was rarely an option or anything like that. Being this socially isolated caused some problems. Also, no one knew when they would get to go home until the day of, or a max of 2 days before. Our social exchanges with peers was also limited and controlled by most of the staff. Living like this was torture, especially since I didn't even know where I was going until I was there and the intake staff told me. After discharge, we were not allowed to keep contact with anyone from the program, staff and peers. Most of the girls found ways around it, but if you were caught exchanging contact information, there was a punishment. I was threatened by the girls there, almost jumped, verbally abused, neglected by staff, and told lies by them too. Mainly about my family not wanting me. I have so much more I could say, but I will keep it short for now. DO NOT SEND YOUR KIDS HERE!!! Many of the clients including myself, were diagnosed with PTSD after attending. Once my parents found out the extent of issues here, I was transferred to a program in the states. It was called Pacific Teen Treatment and I was helped is so much.

↑ 1 ↓ Reply ↑ Share ...



3 months ago

I was sent there in Ontario for anxiety disorder. I ended up staying there for 6 months with only two phone calls and one was from the cell of my "HOST" family. My first phone call the director interrupted my phone call to my mother when I wanted to tell her how I was doing and how I was treated. Later I had a feeling about it, but it did turn out that all my letters handwritten were typed on the computer two thirds removed for the 6 months. I am still extremely angry about it. A lot of passive aggressive comments were made at me and I had some medical issues and other people did as well and were humiliated for it.

Show less



Reply



2 yr. ago

NO. I attended Venture Academy as a teen struggling with depression and suicidal tendencies & it was the most traumatic & abusive experience of my life (I have experience with several private & public treatment facilities and this one is by far the most worrisome, especially as a teacher) I am currently in the beginning stages of pressing charges & have spent over a year trying to get my file/documentation where the program director Nancy Dyer neglected to pursue my requests like promised (& legally entitled to as I am 21+) and called my mother immediately to convince me to "let it go" (which also goes against privacy policies & law). From personal experience, it is a total money grab which preys on vulnerable teens and families seeking support. They utilize psychological conditioning & fear tactics to threaten children from expressing themselves- one from my experience being "If you think you've made progress & want to return home that just proves you haven't learnt your lesson because you should be grateful for the opportunity we've given you to be free from distractions such as friends & your old life rather than wanting to return home." They are well educated in manipulation & gaslighting where children's words and behaviours are twisted in attempt to keep children in the facility as long as possible without mercy or regard for how that impacts the child. The psychiatrist contracted by the program manipulated me into refraining from reporting a sexual assault I experienced a few days prior to my arrival at Venture & stated that I would a "bad person" if I did because it would ruin my abusers life & nobody would want to be my friend anymore. Since Venture, I have studied child development with over 3 years of experience in both teaching & youth ministry where I have found truth in what actually is legal/illegal along with scientific reasonings/studies proving Venture's negligence & corruption in providing effective & helpful care for children. There are many many red flags within this organization that I could spend days discussing but all in all- I would not recommend this place to anyone. Save your money & your mental health- this place is poisoned with fear.



3 Reply Share ...



· 2 yr. ago

i went to the alberta one in 2019, around late september to early march of 2020, and let me tell you, it was complete hell. i was funded for my stay through the government, and keep in mind i am indigenous.. they tried really hard to get me into christianity and as a indigenous woman with religious trauma because of residential schools, it was sickening. i've been threatened by DIFFERENT host parents multiple times, they went as far as almost reporting me to the police for stolen property which i did not do or took part in. i was catcalled by one of the host parents husband, and her children would constantly smack my behind. and this would occur in front of the mother, (the host parent) and she wouldn't do anything. her son went on to smack another teen who stayed at the host parents home, and the mother blamed it on me for not doing anything about it. which was overall terrible once this girl informed me on what the mother said. this one host parent who was covering for our full time host parent bought us razors to shave, which we weren't allowed to have. and she hid it, and blamed it on us. i believe she informed them, so therefore it'd look like we were attempting to self harm. the "licensed" therapist that was there, made me open up about my sexual abuse trauma. which i didn't want to talk about that session, but she forcefully made me talk about it. and once i did she told me to move on from it. not to mind you, there was a 12 year old in a relationship with a 16 year old.. and they just gave the older kid a slap on the wrist, which was really alarming that they didn't take anything seriously. i've seen children threatened to get hit in the face by their host parents. however, with that being said i don't recommend you sending your troubled teen(s) to venture. it is very mentally and physiologically draining. please do them a favour, and possibly suggest therapy for them to begin with.

↑ 2 ↓  Reply Share ...



· 2 days ago · edited 2 days ago

I attended Venture Academy starting October 26th, 2021. I lived with Toni and Tom. Toni was unstable and would yell at me when I would bring up girls liking girls, or anything LGBTQ. She tried to force her religion onto one of the other girls in our house. She would take us to her sons house where he had what seemed to be a very excitable and unsafe dog. I remember laying in bed at night and listening to Toni and Tom scream at each other, and just wishing it was over. Many nights Tom would storm out of the house after I would hear one of the dogs cry in pain. Toni had no training in dealing with unstable or suicidal youth. When our tempers were lost and we would have meltdowns, she would have her own big meltdown. One of the girls in my house tried to literally kill herself with a mirror. We all heard the crash of her mirror but we assumed that Toni or Tom would go check on her. They did not. They later found her laying on her floor covered in blood. We then had the police and an ambulance come to our house. The girl ended up being ok, but I will never come back from that. Another girl tried to run away, which caused us to have to chase her around town one day. We also were all up in our rooms until about 2am one night listening to that girl scream about how she was 'going to grab every knife' and kill herself and 'everyone in the house.' she also tried to say that Tom raped her. This was untrue, but the other girls in my house and I had to go talk to the police about our statements. This was rather traumatizing for one girl. The other girl that was in our house and I weren't too affected by it. CrossFit was the one thing I really did enjoy. The schools were awful. They never got the work I needed for my school. I was in Grade 8 when I went and they were giving me grade 6 work saying it was 'more my level.' This place was degrading, abusive and scary. Parent calls had to be under 15 minutes. The 'weekly' therapy they give you was rarely given to me. Naomi was a very unqualified therapist and had no idea how to deal with youth and keep their tempers under control. I was not allowed to speak with any other girls there. Thankfully one of the girls in my house reached out to me last night and we found all of this. I left Venture Academy December 19th 2021 and came back more unstable than before. Ali was absolutely insane and degrading. Chris was the only one there who was qualified to teach, and was the only male there I trusted. Bri was an amazing help to me and was by far my favorite, but the problem was; she had attended VA herself. She didn't understand that everyone had a different experience than her and that the program was going down hill and falling apart. I know this is very late, but I hope this post helps somebody.



OP • 2y ago

Just to add some detail.. the abuse I saw was rampant and I would never recommend it to any parents. Counsellors fighting students, sexual abuse, forcing of religion, forced workouts, low pay for chores which is never payed out or properly explained, societal isolation, social skills are destroyed by means of gas lighting by counsellors. These could all be reasons why you shouldn't send you kid but the biggest one is abandonment. Once you let go in this way you will never have them back I can promise you that. It will not save your child. You can save your child.



17



Reply



Share



The program I attended (Venture Academy) is extremely corrupt and unethical. I could go I to detail but I'd end up writing a 7 page essay. I struggle to talk about how abusive it was because it sounds like a "troubled teen" who's angry they were taken from their friends and didn't get to use their phone, so they talk smack about the program. Like I said before, too, because I got some help and connected with some of the staff there I feel like my trauma isn't valid. I feel like I'm taking away from other survivors who didn't get the help they needed and/or ended up worse off after the program.

I *seriously* know in my heart that legal action needs to be taken and that place needs to be shut down. I have witnessed kids who were kept there for 2-3 years and had PTSD leaving, panic attacks because they were institutionalized. I have witnessed children being yelled at, called stupid, until the point they were sobbing. I have some seriously unhealthy learned behaviours, patterns, and ways of thinking from this place, but ultimately did not face the same amount of trauma and abuse as others have. I developed obsessive-compulsive tendencies and dissociation while there. I was refused my inhaler after intense physical exercise. But I was not called stupid over and over and I don't have PTSD. I know comparing trauma is awful, I just feel so ashamed and dumb.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9w9ey6V3Ngo>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@nouseravailable21/photo/7167146354190421254>