

Oct 20, 2021

Our Power in Adversity

Notre
POUVOIR
dans
L'ADVERSITÉ

« CE QUE JE SUIS »

SOCIAL

BIEN-ÊTRE

PHYSIQUE

ÉMOTIONNEL

MENTAL

« CE QUE J'AI »

« CE QUE JE PEUX FAIRE »

COPA Le bien-être, c'est une affaire communautaire.

Devant l'adversité, nous pouvons toutes et tous apprendre, grandir, développer nos capacités et nos forces et renforcer notre résilience. Nous avons aussi le droit de bénéficier de ressources qui nous soutiendront tout au long de notre vie.

Our Power in Adversity is a new program from COPA that is designed to increase collective and individual resilience post-Covid-19. In this program we address the impact of the pandemic, cyberbullying, and wellness of self, family, and peers. It is targeted to elementary school students in grades 4-6 and secondary school students in grades 9-12.

This program aims to strengthen the individual and collective resilience of students and their community by encouraging self-empowerment. Through awareness, exchanges with each other, and the acquiring of concrete tools, students will become better able to recognize the people and resources around them that can support their well-being and resilience. In designing **Our Power in Adversity**, COPA considered the changes that the pandemic has brought to the lives of youth such as isolation, increased use of social media and online platforms, and the restrictions of some necessary public health obligations. These conditions that were so suddenly imposed have led to an increase in mental health issues in youth. Indeed, according to Statistics Canada's [Impact on Youth](#) report, "Since COVID, those aged 15 to 24 reported the greatest declines in mental health – 20 percentage point reductions from 60% (2019, pre-COVID) to 40% (July 2020) of those reporting excellent or very good mental health."

For those already marginalized, these issues were only exacerbated by the pandemic. For example, Statistics Canada notes in its [Impacts on Mental Health](#) report that "since the pandemic, among respondents to a crowdsourcing survey, gender diverse individuals were... more likely to report fair/poor mental health (70%), compared with female (25.5%) and male participants (21.2%)".

In the virtual spaces where impunity reigns through anonymity, visible minorities and other marginalized groups were particularly affected by inequity and social exclusion. **Our Power in Adversity** is a program that equips students to identify and mitigate risks inherent in using social media. The focus is on developing strong and realistic self-esteem so that they can use these virtual platforms and remain *safe, strong and free*.

In the workshop we emphasize that resilience is a lifelong skill and that starting early to educate youth about this will facilitate their use of appropriate strategies and their capacity to access external support. Competencies that students will work toward in this workshop are active listening, respecting their instincts, pivoting toward positive vs. toxic stress, self-empowerment through wellness, building a strong sense of self, and strengthening their ability to seek help.

Our Power in Adversity is delivered to students in three x 75-minute in-person sessions. To ensure a comprehensive support network for youth, the program also includes a 3-hour virtual workshop for school personnel and a 2-hour virtual workshop specifically designed for parents and guardians. Thanks to funding from the [Ministry of Education in Ontario](#), this program is currently being offered free of charge in French throughout Ontario. It will eventually be available in English and French across Canada.

If you are interested in more information about scheduling **Our Power in Adversity** in your school, or in any other program offered by COPA, please e-mail Lynn@infocopa.com or call us at 416-466-7490.