A qualitative study comparing youth and young adults with and without disabilities

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?
- Youth and young adults with disabilities are at particular risk of the psychological implications of the pandemic
- Youth who use coping strategies during stressful times often have lower levels of depression and anxiety
- Objective: To understand facilitators for helping youth and young adults with and without disabilities to cope and maintain mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic

WHAT DID WE DO?
- Qualitative study design involved semi-structured interviews done remotely
- It was guided by interpretive descriptive methodology and with a purposive sample

WHAT DID WE FIND?
- 4 key themes emerged: social support, financial support, keeping busy & work-life balance

SOCIAL SUPPORT
- Youth with disabilities more commonly mentioned family as a support
- Youth without disabilities described more sources of support including friends, work colleagues and extended network

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
- Youth with disabilities were more likely to receive government support Canadian Emergency Response benefit (CERB) and Canadian Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)
- Youth without disabilities had several sources of financial supports (e.g., employment, family, CERB/CESB)

KEEPING BUSY
- Most youth explained how keeping busy prevented boredom, which was important for their mental health

WORK-LIFE BALANCE
- Most youth described how they had more time to focus on their well being

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS
- Understanding youths’ coping strategies is important because the impact of the pandemic could have longer-term negative health effects
- The successful management of stress could lead to personal growth, which can reinforce sense of competence and become a protective factor for coping with future stressors

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For more information contact: Sally Lindsay, PhD
Senior Scientist, Bloorview Research Institute
Phone: 416 425 6220 x3654
Email: slindsay@hollandbloorview.ca

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Facilitators for Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic
A qualitative study comparing youth and young adults with and without disabilities

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?
- 29 interviews via Zoom
- 5 interviews via phone
- 34 Youth and young adults aged 16-29 years were recruited (Mean: 23.2)
- 17 youth with disabilities (Mean: 24.7)
- 17 youth without disabilities (Mean: 21.7)