



The JoyPop™ app: A resilience intervention for youth experiencing challenge

What's the issue?:

Youth suicide rates in Canada have increased. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in young adults (15-34; Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada, 2016). In 2017-2018 females (10-19) had the highest rate of admission to hospital for self-inflicted injury (Canadian Institute of Health Information Discharge Abstract Database, 2019). Many youth do not seek mental health services, despite experiencing mental health problems. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (2018), 1.2 million Canadian children and youth experience mental health issues, and less than 20% will receive appropriate mental health treatment. In 2015, the Kids Help Phone surveyed 1330 teens across Canada and found that 42% report being stressed. Those who said that they did not have someone to talk to are 200% more likely to be victims of violence at home, have suicidal thoughts, and experience emotional difficulties. Youth must navigate three worlds, their in-person world, their online world, and their adolescent sub-population world. Youth have a narrow window of time to receive pediatric health services and transition successfully to adult services.

What's the innovation?:

The JoyPop™ app addresses the need for an easy-to-access, youth-oriented solution that buffers daily distress. Youth need a welcoming and familiar approach that fits within the visual, interactive gaming world. JoyPop™ is grounded in positive psychology and focuses on building your resilience and enhancing joy through improved emotion regulation and cognitive functioning. The app has been developed with important input from providers such as youth advocates from Youth Victims Services Toronto and Kids Help Phone.

What is the anticipated outcome?:

It is expected that with regular use of the app, positive skills will be learned and become habits to support long-term positive mental health and youth transitions.

Current Research Populations:

- Youth transitioning to university
- Youth receiving a meditation intervention
- Pre-service social work trainees
- Youth transitioning out of child welfare care
- Indigenous youth living on reserve