

# 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?

- 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



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)

## 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

Lindsay, S., Ahmed, H., & Apostolopoulos, D. (2021). Facilitators for coping with the COVID-19 pandemic: Online qualitative interviews comparing youth with and without disabilities. Disability and Health Journal, 101113. DOI: [10.1016/j.dhjo.2021.101113](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2021.101113)

Funded by: Kimel Family Opportunities Fund through the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation

**For more information contact:**

Sally Lindsay, PhD  
Senior Scientist,

Bloorview Research Institute  
Phone: 416 425 6220 x3654

Email: [slindsay@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:slindsay@hollandbloorview.ca)



Healthy And Productive Paid work for Youth with disabilities

