

Topic

Improving youth mental wellbeing through a mindfulness-based program

Key question

Can a 12-week mindfulness program moderate the negative effects of excessive screen time, while increasing youth's emotional wellbeing?

Project aims

Most young people in Canada today engage in texting, online gaming, social media, and watching television daily. This is concerning, as too much screen time has been linked with low self-esteem and lower life satisfaction. This study investigates whether mindfulness can increase youth's social-emotional competence, when accounting for increased screen time.

The study introduces a 12-week online Mindfulness Ambassador Program (MAP) for youth in rural areas of Ontario. MAP was developed to help youth strengthen communication skills, foster peer-to-peer connections, build empathy and compassion, and develop resilience. Our hope is that evidence from this study will promote future youth online mindfulness programs offered in Ontario to continue to build resiliency and support the mental wellbeing of youth across the province.

Activities

- Administering an online mindfulness program to a group of youth in North Simcoe, Guelph-Wellington, and Haliburton.
- Surveying youth to measure changes in social-emotional competence following the mindfulness program.
- Sharing findings with service providers and educators, including the Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario.

Helpful terms

- **Mindfulness:** The practice of paying attention to the present moment, with a nonjudgmental and accepting attitude.
- **Social-emotional competence:** Skills that foster a healthy sense of self and relationships.

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