

Re-inventing CHOICES



The Challenge

CHOICES is a program for youth at risk of substance abuse, criminal activity, human trafficking, anti-social behaviour, and truancy. The program is based on the use of volunteers to build relationships in congregate settings, which was no longer viable during the pandemic. Youth were identified to be increasingly vulnerable, disconnected from their social systems and facing precarious mental health. Keeping youth safe, engaged and supported inspired the CHOICES redesign.



The Solution

- Timely connection with youth was critical to maintain engagement and support.
- Consultation with youth informed decisions to re-invent and modify the program.
- Curriculum content was adapted to a virtual platform to be highly interactive, engaging, and not cause emotional triggers in an isolated environment.
- Technology gave the ability to have open and private chat functions, break out rooms, polls, videos, and whiteboards which are essential tools to the success of CHOICES.
- Program volunteers were retrained on the use of the virtual application and revised content to ensure their involvement as adult role models in youths' lives.
- The redesign is sustainable and continues to help youth feel more confident and learn healthy coping strategies.

The Process



Immediate connection with youth

Rapid decision to redesign the program

Facilitators revamp program based on youth input

Volunteers trained in revised program

Implementation of re-invented program

Capacity to replicate model across the province

For more information on *Re-inventing CHOICES*, please contact: Nancy Chamberlain, Nancy.Chamberlain@tbaycounselling.com

To share your innovation, email mhanorth@hsnsudbury.ca