

Special Event



Meeting Youth Where They Are: Engaging Boys and Young Men in Digital Spaces to Prevent Gender-Based Violence

September 29, 2026 | 1:00-2:30 p.m. ET



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

Canada

Western



Centre for Research & Education on
Violence Against Women & Children

LEARNING NETWORK

Funded by: Ontario





Engaging Men and Boys to End All
Forms of Gender Based-Violence and
Discrimination.

David Garzon

(He/Him)

Director of Marketing and Communications of
White Ribbon



About White Ribbon

In 1989, a misogynistic act of violence at Montréal's École Polytechnique took 14 women's lives. White Ribbon emerged as a call to men everywhere to take action.

Our Vision: a future free from all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination.

Our Mission: We promote healthy masculinities, advance gender equity and build allyship.

Our Impact:

- 30+ years of programs and campaigns driving cultural change.
- Partnerships with over 200 Canadian organizations.
- Millions of people reached worldwide.
- In the last 4 years: 162 programs, 530 workshops/trainings, 56,509 participants, and 145,164 pledges to end gender-based violence.



Boys Are At Risk: Confronting the Rise of Online Misogyny and Harmful Ideologies.

White Ribbon's original 'Boys are at Risk' research revealed:

- **Educators: 95%** report that boys and young men are exposed to misogynistic ideologies online.
- **Parents: 71%** worry about their sons being exposed to hateful content online.
- **Youth Professionals (education, mental health, child and youth care): 84%** encountered radicalized ideologies among boys.

White Ribbon's original **Boys Need Early Intervention** research (soon to be publicly released) showed:

- **97% of educators agree:** early prevention with boys is key to ending gender-based violence.
- **67% of educators say:** learning about respect, consent and boundaries is crucial for healthy masculinity.
- **Only 27% of educators:** frequently or often see boys expressing positive and healthy masculinity in school.



A Closer Look to Men and Masculinities

Ideas about masculinity are shaped by culture, media, peers, families, institutions, and online environments.

Many boys grow up receiving messages that masculinity should mean:

- Dominance
- Emotional suppression
- Aggression
- Control
- Independence at all costs
- Avoiding vulnerability
- Rejecting anything perceived as feminine

These expectations can narrow emotional expression, isolate boys and men, and contribute to harmful behaviours and relationship dynamics.



My Friend, Max Hate / Mon Ami, Max Haine

White Ribbon's **My Friend, Max Hate/Mon Ami, Max Haine** campaign sheds light on how boys and young men are groomed into misogynistic and extremist beliefs.

The Challenge

- Harmful online content is increasingly shaping how boys and young men understand masculinity, relationships, and gender.
- Algorithms can quickly expose youth to misogynistic, hateful, and extremist content.

The Campaign

- Follows "Max," a fictional friend whose online experiences gradually influence his attitudes and beliefs.
- Uses storytelling to help audiences recognize the warning signs of online radicalization.
- Encourages parents, educators, and communities to have meaningful conversations with boys and young men.



The Max Hate Experience

- A fictional podcast hosted by "Max Hate," a puppet character who delivers exaggerated manosphere-style talking points and harmful online narratives.
- Uses humour, satire, and absurdity to expose the contradictions and flaws in misogynistic and radicalizing messages.
- Inspired by the concept of inoculation—helping young people recognize and resist harmful messaging before they encounter it in real life.



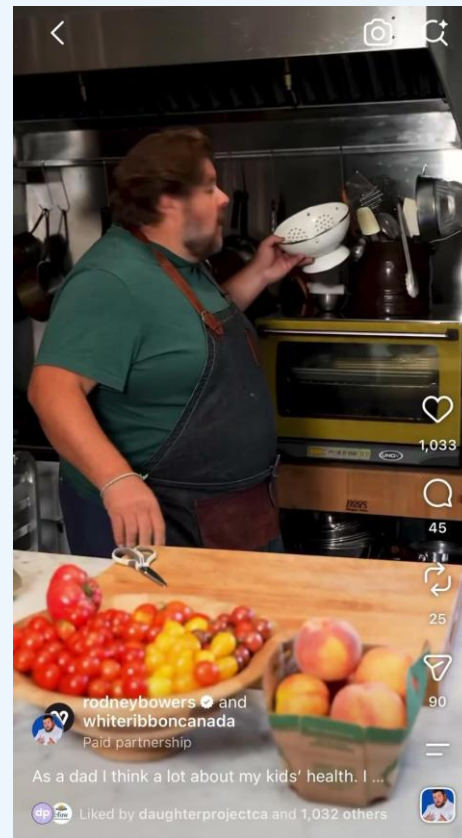
Algorithm Sickness

- Explores how social media algorithms can amplify misogyny and narrow ideas about masculinity in boys' and young men's feeds.
- Gives young people practical ways to question what they see, notice patterns in their feed, and engage with intention.
- Encourages families, educators, communities, platforms, and governments to share responsibility for lasting change.



Algorithm Sickness

- Partnered with creators who can reach boys and young men in the digital spaces they already use.
- Invited them to model how to question harmful messages about masculinity and choose what to engage with online.
- Used their voices to make the campaign more relatable and open conversations that can continue beyond a single post.
- Watch more: @whiteribboncanada



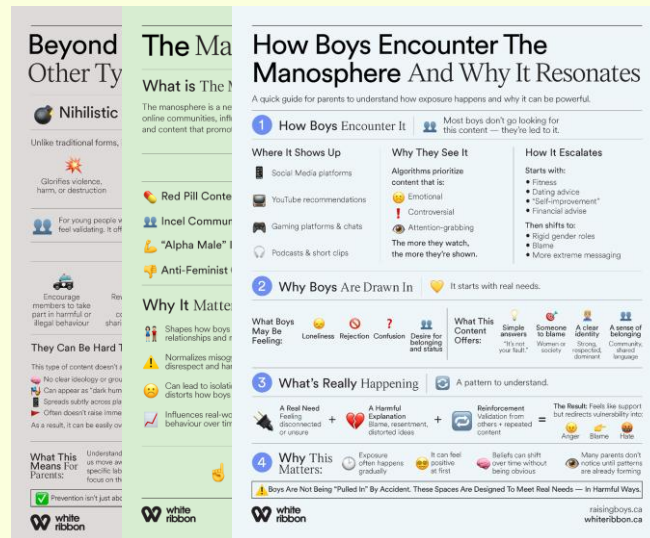
Equipping educators, parents and caregivers with tools to prevent harm before it starts.

For Educators

- Development of free lesson plans, activities, discussion guides, and professional learning resources.
- Supports conversations about healthy masculinities, gender equality, online influences, consent, and respectful relationships.
- Designed to help educators recognize and respond to emerging risks, including online misogyny and radicalization.

For Parents and Caregivers

- Creation of raisingboys.ca / soutenirlesgarcons.ca, a free online resource hub for families.
- Practical tools, guides, and conversation starters on topics such as:
 - Healthy masculinity and emotional well-being
 - The manosphere and online radicalization
 - Healthy relationships and respect
 - Online safety and digital influences



A Quick Look

- **4 infographics** breaking down online radicalization targeting boys
- **3 tools to help parents:**
 - ◆ Start meaningful conversations
 - ◆ Build resilience through **inoculation**
 - ◆ Use *My Friend, Max Hate* to unpack online influence
- **1 tip sheet** to keep youth engaged and reduce defensiveness
- **Original White Ribbon video campaigns** addressing online radicalization
- **A curated collection of articles, lived experiences, and media** to help parents better understand these issues

All resources are downloadable and easy to share

The Manosphere

What Parents Should Know: A quick guide to understanding harmful online influences on boys.

What is The Manosphere?

The manosphere is a network of online communities, influencers, and content that promote:

- 🔥 Masculinity = dominance
- 👤 Men as victims
- 👤 Blame women
- 🛡️ Vulnerability = weakness

What You Might See

- 🔴 Red Pill Content — "Men are oppressed by feminism."
- 👤 Incel Communities — Blame women for rejection or personal struggles.
- 👤 "Alpha Male" Influencers — Promote dominance, control, and emotional suppression.
- 👤 Anti-Feminist Content — Normalize resentment and hostility toward gender equality.

Why It Matters For Parents

- 👤 Shapes how boys see relationships and masculinity.
- ⚠️ Normalizes misogyny, disrespect and harmful beliefs.
- 😞 Can lead to isolation, anger, and distorts how boys see the world.
- 📈 Influences real-world behaviour over time.

95%



of Canadian educators say boys are exposed to misogynistic content online.

👉 Most Boys Don't Go Looking For This Content: **They're Led To It.**

A Quick Look

- **4 infographics** breaking down online radicalization targeting boys
- **3 tools to help parents:**
 - ◆ Start meaningful conversations
 - ◆ Build resilience through **inoculation**
 - ◆ Use *My Friend, Max Hate* to unpack online influence
- **1 tip sheet** to keep youth engaged and reduce defensiveness
- **Original White Ribbon video campaigns** addressing online radicalization
- **A curated collection of articles, lived experiences, and media** to help parents better understand these issues

All resources are downloadable and easy to share

5 Minutes That Matter

A simple way to start conversations about masculinity, online content, and relationships.



1 min

Start with Curiosity

Start the conversation without pressure.

"I've been seeing a lot of content about being a guy. Have you seen anything like that?"
"What kind of stuff shows up on your feed?"
"What did you think about that video?"

Keep it relaxed. You're not testing them.



1 min

Listen Without Interrupting

Let them talk, even if you don't agree.

Focus on:

 Listening fully  Not correcting right away  Staying calm

Try: *"That's interesting..."* — *"Tell me more."*

Feeling heard makes kids more open.



1 min

Understand What Stands Out

Find out what they like or relate to.

"What do you think they got right?"
"What stood out to you?"

You're trying to understand, not fix.



1 min

Gently Challenge

Ask questions that help them think.

"Do you think that's true for most people?"
"Who benefits from that message?"
"What might be missing?"

Help them think, don't tell them what to think.



1 min

Keep the Door Open

End with connection.

"I'm glad we talked about this."
"We can always talk about this again."

What matters is that they feel safe coming back.



You don't need to be an expert to talk to your child.



You don't have to get it perfect.



The goal is to open the door and keep the conversation going.



Use this anytime — after something you've seen, when something feels off, or in everyday moments.



Remember — This isn't one conversation; it's many.



website

whiteribbon.ca

facebook

[/whiteribboncampaign](https://www.facebook.com/whiteribboncampaign)

instagram/tiktok

[@whiteribboncanada](https://www.instagram.com/whiteribboncanada)

x/linkedin

[@whiteribbon](https://www.linkedin.com/company/whiteribbon)

donate

whiteribbon.ca/donate



CYBER

HEROES

Estelle Cazalais
September 2026

 **LES 3
SEX***

The "Cyberheroes" Project

... aims to curb young men's engagement with the ecosystem of the manosphere in order to reduce cyberviolence against women and LGBTQ+ people, through a promising practice focused on online intervention (educational workshops, video capsules and educational guides).

To achieve this objective and ensure the sustainability of the promising practice, the project includes three components:

- Promising practice development: literature review and research report creation;
- Promising practice implementation: development of educational video capsules, online educational workshops and educational guides;
- Promising practice dissemination and evaluation: dissemination and evaluation, as well as representation and implementation of the promising practice with institutions and partners.

Project Resources & Impacts

Key Findings

1. Deconstructing gender norms is essential
2. Normalizing challenges related to mental health
3. Normalizing rejection experiences
4. Working on social competencies and pro-social behaviours is important
5. Developing empathy
6. Developing critical thinking and digital literacy
7. Providing online support

Research report



The podcast



mano
b
mano



Live on Twitch



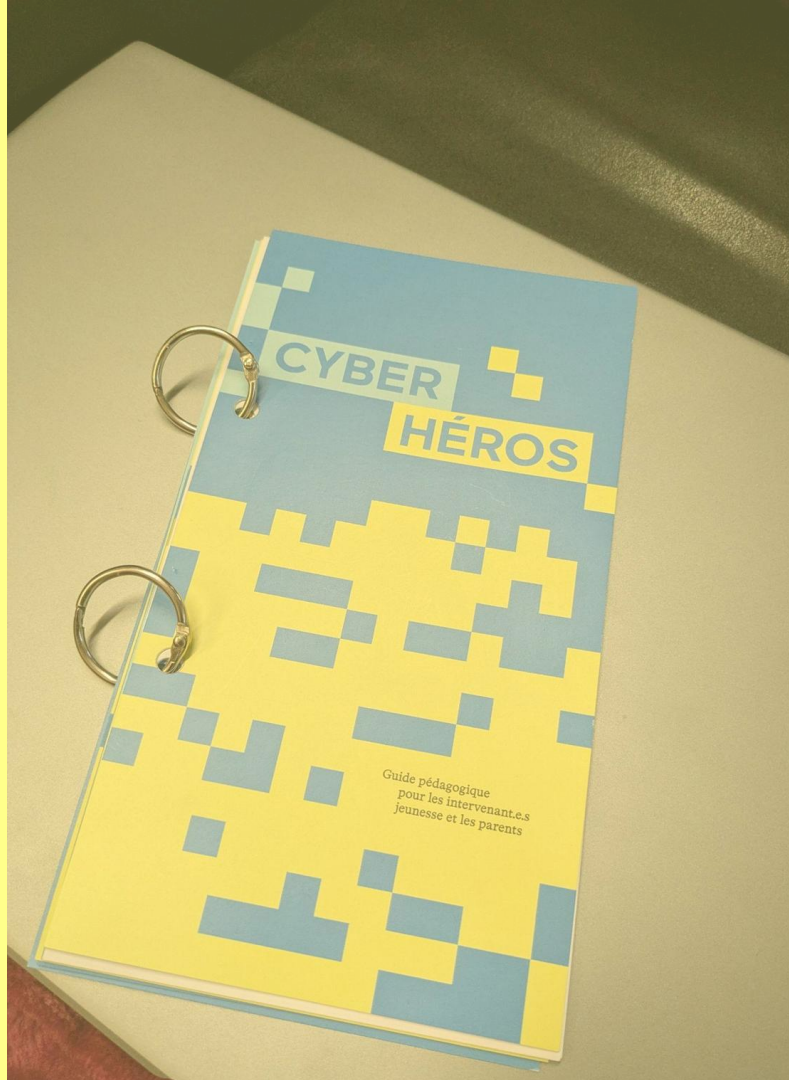
The workshops took place in Fall 2025 with various *streamers*

Educational guide

The four main objectives:

- Deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices related to masculinity
- Strengthen emotional competencies
- Strengthen social skills
- Apply the principles of digital literacy

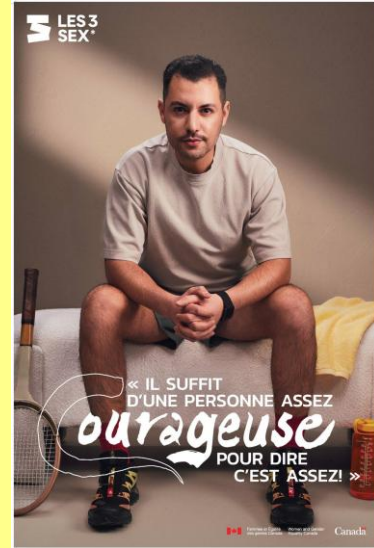
The guide was released in December 2025.



Awareness campaign

This component includes a series of six video clips, along with a collection of photographic portraits accompanied by quotations. These materials aim to highlight the diversity of masculinities, normalize positive male role models, and provide caring, inspiring representations that move beyond stereotypes.

The campaign will be launched at the end of March 2026.



Working with boys using promising practices

Promising practices

- ★ Meeting boys exactly where they are!
- ★ Confidentiality & anonymity
- ★ Addressing online hate at its source
- ★ Addressing online hate by implementing multiple (far-reaching) strategies



Project Barriers & Facilitators

Barriers

- ★ One of the hardest groups to reach
- ★ Gaining access to men's spaces is not straightforward (even for practitioners who identify with masculinity/as men)
- ★ The feeling of not being concerned/"at risk"

Facilitators

- ★ Integrate into activities young men are already engaged in
- ★ Maintain confidentiality and anonymity
- ★ Foster agency and help break digital isolation among change agents
- ★ Young boys listen to men they trust



CYBER

HEROES

 **LES3
SEX***

THANK YOU!

CREATING COMMUNITY ONLINE

An Evidence Base for Next Gen Men's Discord Server for Boys



This project has been supported by
Women and Gender Equality Canada.

NGM
SCHOOLS



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

Canada

BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH

INTERNALIZED PRESSURES OF MASCULINITY

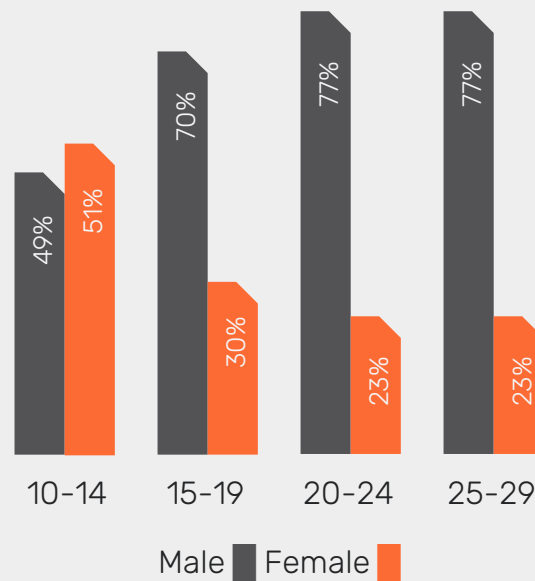


One third of boys think society expects them to suck it up when they feel sad or scared.



Three quarters of parents of boys think boys feel uncomfortable sharing when they feel weak.

SUICIDE RATES BY SEX 2000-2020



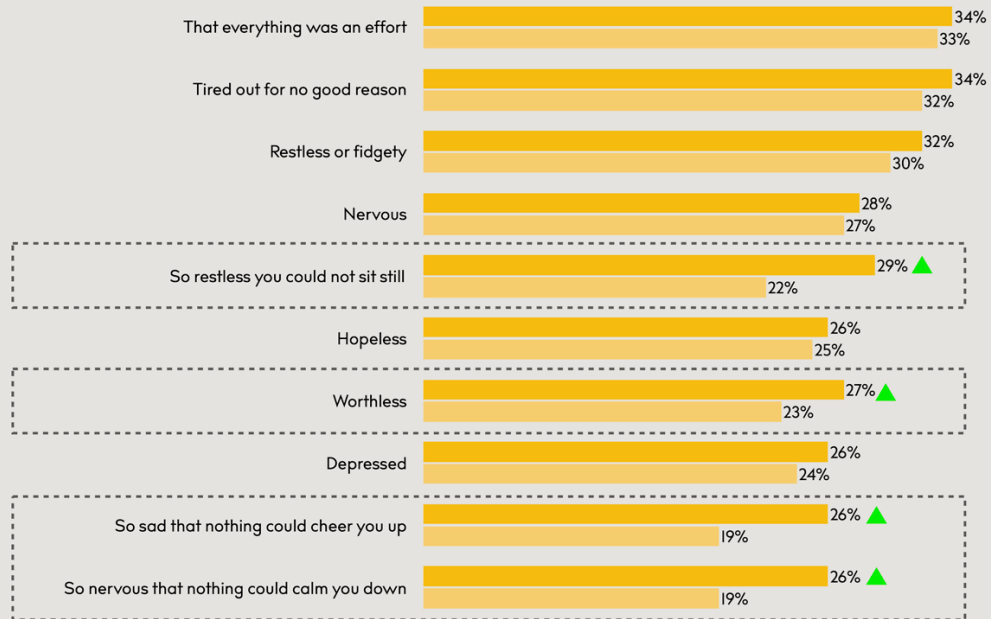
% who have in the past 30 days felt [X] all or most of the time



Watch 1+ Manosphere influencers



Watch no Manosphere influencers





NGM ALLIANCE 2024 SNAPSHOT



Engaged more than **140 youth** across Canada and the United States.



And collectively spent **3,200+ hours** in live virtual events with each other.

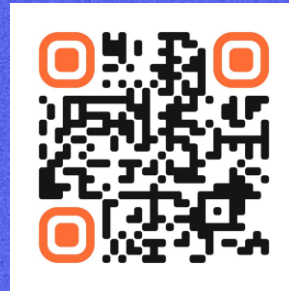


Who sent **215,000+ messages** across various channels on the server.



With **10 Youth Advisory Council members** co-leading the project.

Since 2020, Next Gen Men has been running NGM Alliance, an online community for **boys and nonbinary youth** in middle school and high school.



nextgenmen.ca/alliance

**YOUNG
FUTURES**
jack.org
young leaders revolutionizing mental health



Women and Gender
Equality Canada



betterhelp

“They’ve built a culture that stands apart from the toxic or hypercompetitive spaces that dominate teenage boys’ online lives—and **they built it on Discord.**”



OUR APPROACH



Effective Entry Points

We use gaming as a gateway for connection—interest-based channels and youth-friendly language = more engagement



Co-leadership With Youth

We create accessible and actionable methods for youth suggestions and feedback; the Youth Advisory Council shaped language, structure, evaluation and outreach



Non-programmatic Approach

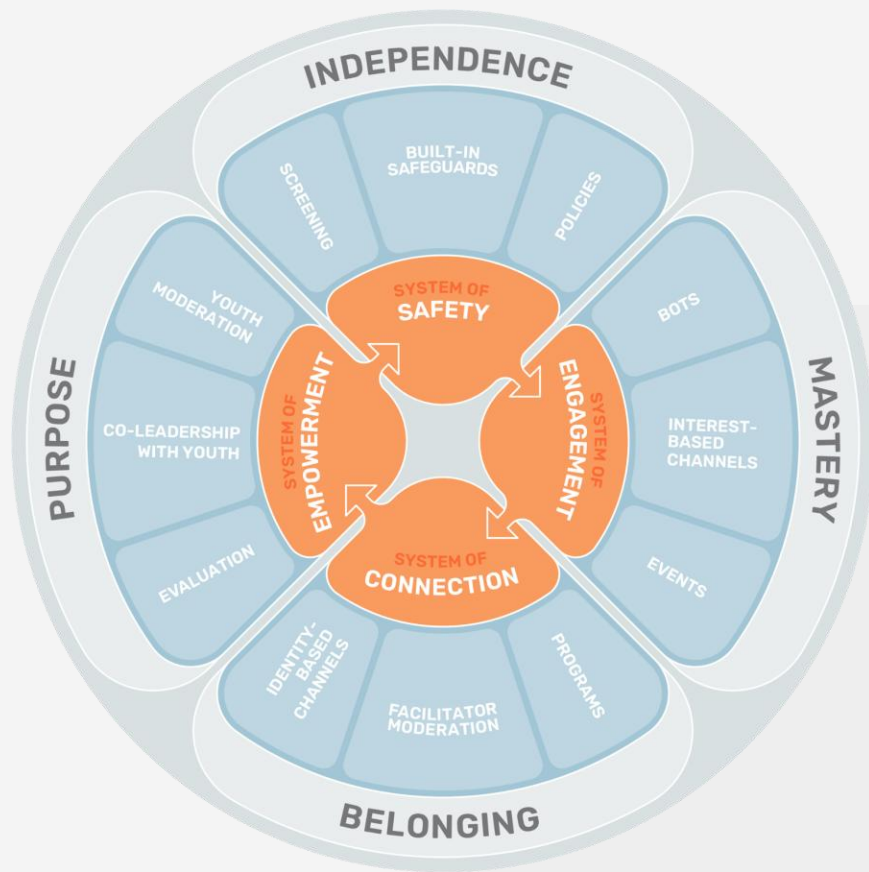
Rather than a predetermined curriculum, NGMA creates conditions for connection and positive development to emerge organically



Strengths-based and Relational

We recognize and build on positive qualities and capacities youth already possess, and focus on authentic connection and trust-building over top-down instruction

SYSTEMS OF CARE MODEL



OUR FINDINGS



Personal Growth & Well-being

- More comfortable discussing mental health
- **Reduced stigma and increased empathy** for others
- Improved coping skills and emotional awareness
- Greater confidence and self-esteem



Belonging & Relationships

- 100% of participants felt a **sense of belonging**
- Meaningful friendships formed online, many extending offline
- Gaming & shared interests as entry points



Attitudes & Behaviours

- Increased willingness to listen to others
- Shifts in attitudes toward 2SLGBTQ+ people
- Strong support for **gender equality**
- Improved conflict management skills
- Greater confidence intervening on sexist or harmful behaviour

“It was a tough time for me, but I’m actually so glad that it came through, because **I wouldn’t be where I am today without the server.**” — Zane, 15

WHAT YOU CAN DO



nextgenmen.ca/reports



learn.nextgenmen.ca/collections



nextgenmen.ca/alliance/poster



WHAT'S NEXT?



JOIN NEXT GEN ESPORTS VALORANT

VALORANT TEAM BUILT AROUND CONNECTION,
COACHING & SAFER ONLINE COMMUNITIES.

V26
PREMIER
CHAMPIONS

10,200+
MINUTES ON VC
AS A TEAM

OPEN TO
BOYS IN THE USA
GRADES 9-12



COMP TEAM TRYOUTS
HAPPENING SOON.

REC LEAGUE APPLICATIONS
ALWAYS OPEN.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO JOIN



NEXT GEN STREAMER ACADEMY

SUPPORTING NEW & RISING YOUNG MALE STREAMERS
TO BECOME SOMEONE WORTH FOLLOWING.

**6-MONTH**
Training
Program

**PAID STIPEND**
\$1,800 CAD
per month
16 hrs/week

**CANADA/USA**
Young men
ages roughly
19-25

**SUPPORTED**
Join a cohort
who has
your back!

01
**SHARPER
PLAYER**
Enhance your game.

02
**TRUER
PRESENCE**
Find your voice.

03
**SAFER
COMMUNITY**
Build spaces people
want to be a part of.

04
**REAL
MISSION**
Help shift the narrative
around masculinity.



SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR MORE INFO.
Or visit nextgenmen.ca/academy | youth@nextgenmen.ca



Get in touch

youth@nextgenmen.ca

@nextgenmen

NGM SCHOOLS