Founded in 2013, Pop Culture Hero Coalition is the first 501c3 organization to teach resilience, healthy identity, empathy, and other mental health skills by using stories from TV, film & comics.

---CBS NEWS

Welcome to Superhero Training. My name is Dr. __________.

What are your names?

We’d love to hear from you! For comments, copies or info, please email SuperKids@PopCultureHero.org.

We need your support! All donations are tax-deductible. To be part of this crucial work, please donate at www.PopCultureHero.org/support-us and add a note that says "SuperKids". Your donation will go directly to provide more of these books to kids who need them.
Every superhero has an origin story. Most superheroes go through something painful or even traumatic. Then they choose to use their story to help others. Let's talk about your origin stories.

**My name is**
I have leukemia.
I'm scared to go to school because other kids make fun of me because I lost my hair.

**My name is**
I was in a car accident.
I'm always in pain. Sometimes it's too much.

**My name is**
I have cerebral palsy.
I have trouble with moving and I have a lot of pain too.

**My name is**
I have seizures and I get very bad stomach pains.

Name the superhero kids.
I found out that I had cancer two years ago. I went through chemotherapy but it came back.

A girl I knew from my first time in the hospital died from cancer a year ago. I'm scared every day.

I have nightmares about dying, and every time something hurts, I worry that it's a new type of cancer.

I can relate to that too. Some days my stomach hurts so bad that I can't move.

I never know when I'm going to have another seizure.

There are so many things I'm not able to do that my friends do.

I can't go on rides, or play laser tag. I can't swim or sleep over my friend's house.

I know what you mean. I worry too. People don't understand how much pain I am in.

I've missed so many birthday parties because of pain. Some of my friends tell me that it's no big deal.

But on some days the pain is so bad that I don't know if I will live through it.

I can't do a lot of that too. The hardest part for me is being ignored. People seem to look right past me.

They say hi to my mom or a nurse I am with but they don't seem to notice me. I just want people to know that I am human and I want to be seen.

What is your origin story?

I ________________________________________________________

Help these superhero kids design their superhero costumes.
We all need sidekicks to help us through a difficult time. Sidekicks can be anyone—your friends, family, pets or others. Who are some of your sidekicks?

Now that we have identified your superpowers, we need to identify our sidekicks. No superhero can do everything by themselves.

What is your superpower? Circle all that apply to you and add any other superpowers you have below.

Drawing, laughing, reading, writing, music, electronics, good with animals, helping others, games, math, making food, know a lot about movies or TV shows, dancing, singing, acting, crafts

Other: __________________________
Every superhero faces a monster at some point. These monsters may not go away for a while and may need special skills to cope with them.

Who are your monsters?

In order to cope with them, we need to first identify them.

Who are your monsters?

Every superhero faces a monster at some point. These monsters may not go away for a while and may need special skills to cope with them.

My cat, Hope, is my sidekick. She knows when I’m scared. She sits on my lap and purrs whenever I’m anxious and it makes me feel better.

This is my dog, Thor. He is my service dog. He lets me know when I might have another seizure.

My sister is my sidekick. We do everything together.

I think it’s a super idea!

I also think that we can be each other’s sidekicks, too.
My monsters are the cancer I've been fighting, and also the anxiety about it coming back again, as well as anxiety about being bullied.

I also struggle with depression.

My monsters are sadness, loneliness, and pain.

My monsters are pain, anxiety, and depression.

My monsters are loneliness, pain, and anxiety.

Who are some of your monsters?
Great job activating your mindfulness power-up! Now let’s practice a few other power-ups.

Another important power-up is called self-kindness. Self-kindness means being nice to ourselves. It could mean doing something we like to help us when we are feeling depressed, lonely, or anxious.

What might be some examples of the self-kindness power-ups?

Put your hands on your heart to activate this superpower—then take 10 slow breaths.

Mindfulness is noticing how we feel right now. Sometimes when we worry about what will happen in the future, we start to feel anxious and our pain levels can increase.

When we slow down and focus on our breathing, we tap into our mindfulness superpower, which can help reduce anxiety and pain over time. Let’s practice it now.

Place your hands on your heart in the center. Take a few slow breaths. How many breaths were you able to take?

What might be some of your self-kindness power-ups?

Playing with my dog or coloring.
As difficult as our experiences sometimes may be, we sometimes forget all the wonderful memories for which we may be grateful. What are some of your special moments?

Another power-up is drawing or writing about a special moment in your life.

Last year my mom took me and my dog, Thor, to the beach. We just sat there and looked at the waves. I barely had any pain that day. It was nice.

My birthday was a few months ago. A few of my friends came to the hospital. We played video games. That day I didn’t have too much pain.

Last year my mom took me to Comic Con. I got to dress up like a superhero. Everyone was taking pictures with me. It was one of the few times in my life I didn’t feel invisible. I felt like a part of the group.

It’s going to sound silly but one of my favorite moments is right now. For the first time in a long time I don’t feel alone. I feel like I can relate to each one of you.

What are your favorite moments?

__________________________
__________________________
If your favorite superhero knew everything you’ve been through and could talk to you for a few minutes, what would they say to you?

She would say that I am seen, that I am important and loved.

He would say that I am stronger because of what I’ve been through.

She said that my story can help other kids.

He would say that I make a difference and that I can help others.

What would your superhero tell you?
One way that we can become superheroes in real life is to look out for other kids who are struggling or are being bullied.

If you are being bullied, stay calm, don't yell at the bully, walk away when possible and always make sure to tell someone else.

You're bald!

Yes, I am bald. I am recovering from cancer. If you have any questions about cancer I'm happy to answer them later but I have to go now.

By being honest with the bully, we can take away their power.

If you see someone being bullied, ask them if they are okay, support them, and tell an adult.

We should tell the teacher to make sure they don't bully you or anyone else anymore.

You're bald!

I'm sorry they were mean to you. I've been bullied too. No one deserves that.

I'm sorry they were mean to you. I've been bullied too. No one deserves that.

Each one of you is a superhero and has the ability to change this world for the better. You matter and your story matters.

What are some ways you'd like to engage in superhero actions today?

What is a superhero action you would like to work on today?

I want to cut some of my hair to donate it to cancer survivors.

I want to organize game nights for kids who are in the hospital now. We can all play together and support one another.

I would want to start a superhero network, where we can share our stories to help other kids.

I want to draw a comic book if you'd be willing to write it. It could be about kids going through cancer or other illnesses who have superpowers, like us.

Oooh! I would love that!
Together we are going to change the world. It will not be easy, but it will be worth it. And it’s important to remember that our story can help others who are going through it too. So today, we choose to be superheroes.

in honor of LEN WEIN, creator of wolverine, swamp thing and much more, who first read comics when he was hospitalized at the age of 7, and became a hero to so many.

made possible by his fans with special thanks to
CHRISTINE VALADA • JOE SATTO • WILLIAM SHATNER • KEVIN YAMANAKA • TRAVIS ADAMS • PAUL LEVITZ • PHIL PLAIT • JENNA BUSCH • JEREMIAH CARAFANO
IN A SERIES OF MENTAL HEALTH COMIC BOOKS!

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Pop Culture Hero Coalition has programs in schools, comic-cons and children’s hospitals.