

01

Sexual Exploitation, Online Outreach  
& Service Provision

Program Planning

Identify and document client needs, establish goals, and allocate resources to program development.

02

03

Program Development

Review or develop online policies and procedures.

Program Implementation

Engage online with clients through social media sites.

04

05

Evaluation & Sustainability

Plan for your evaluation procedures early; don't wait until after program implementation.

# Online Outreach TOOLKIT



# Online Outreach Toolkit

## Table of Contents

<b>01. Sexual Exploitation, Online Outreach &amp; Service Provision .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Why provide online outreach?	3
Advantages & Challenges of Online Outreach	6
Who should use this Online Outreach Toolkit?	9
Terms	9
<b>02. Program Planning .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Establish client needs	11
2. Set online outreach goals	11
3. Training	12
4. Resource allocation	12
5. Legal considerations	13
<b>03. Program Development.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Policy review and revisions	15
Procedures	16
1. Establish authority for use and management	16
2. Establish procedures for use of social media	17
3. Establish client feedback process	17
4. Manage risk	17
5. Documentation	18
6. Create social media profiles	19
<b>04. Program Implementation.....</b>	<b>21</b>
1. Gain consent from clients	21
2. Manage social media profiles	22
<b>05. Evaluation &amp; Sustainability.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Evaluation	23
Sustainability	24
<b>Appendix I : Bibliography.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix II : Resources for Program Development.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix III : Checklists, Templates &amp; Samples .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix IV : Best Practices Policy Example .....</b>	<b>50</b>



## Introduction

This document provides background, ideas and resources for service providers and policy makers who serve at-risk youth and who plan to engage with those clients through social media and online channels.

Just like fax machines challenged many practices and policies around confidentiality in the 1990's, social media channels today pose many previously unconsidered challenges. Online Outreach is an innovative, cutting-edge idea.

## Why provide online outreach?

"Canadian Youth are more connected than ever:

- 45% of students access the Internet using a cell/smart phone
- 60% of boys access the Internet through a gaming console
- 82% of girls and 62% of boys agree that they could be hurt online by strangers." <sup>1</sup>

Biologically, adolescent development has not changed in the last 30 years. Teens are hard wired to experiment with identity, communication, sexuality, peer group formation and risk-taking behaviours.

What hasn't remained consistent is where they experiment. With the introduction and wide spread use of online communications, teens have claimed new online spaces and platforms as their own. They engage in and create virtual communities where they can feel safe, secure and supported by their peers and where they can express their capabilities, creativity and individuality.<sup>2</sup>

These virtual communities represent the best and the worst of culture and society. The best communities offer spaces to express creativity and connect with people of common interests; the worst expose youth to extreme sexual images, sexual exploitation, online grooming for child pornography and victimization.

Youth who are willing to talk about sex, experimenting with drugs and/or illegal activities also have tendencies to take risks both on-and-offline and are more at risk of online exploitation.

Those who feel disenfranchised, isolated or have unmet emotional needs will seek out validation, support and encouragement from online sources. There, online exploiters take the time to groom these youth, develop their victims' trust and confidence with the aim of sexually exploiting them. Unfortunately, increasing numbers of Canadian youth are being sexually exploited or otherwise harmed online.

Cybertip keeps track of online exploitation and is Canada's National reporting hotline for any concerns about children or youth being sexually exploited, including child pornography, child sex tourism and child trafficking.

*"The number of online child sexual exploitation reports received by Cybertip.ca has increased substantially from 179 reports in 2002/2003 to 7,913 reports in 2009/2010."*<sup>3</sup>

British Columbia youth have been significantly affected.

*"The commercial sexual exploitation of children is an extensive problem in BC and Canada, where 10% to 12% of individuals involved in prostitution are younger than 18 years of age."*<sup>4</sup>

Some groups are more at risk of online exploitation than others. Those groups of youth experiencing particular at risk online include: newcomer youth, aboriginal youth, and those youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans and questioning their sexuality (LGBTQ Youth).

Specific risks for LGBTQ youth are a lack (or perceived lack) of acceptance in rural or isolated communities for differently gendered youth.<sup>5</sup>

In areas where there are no services or supports for LGBTQ youth, online communities can be both a positive and a negative setting. There are many supportive positive and informative websites and online groups that can offer LGBTQ youth a compassionate community. Some youth however, are identified, groomed and then lured from their communities by predators; and in the extreme cases, homelessness and sexual exploitation occur.

Newcomer youth and those representing different ethnic and religious backgrounds have alarmingly been affected by online hate. Particularly Newcomer

female youth were recently identified as having been targeted, at exceptionally high rates, by hate online, much of it sexually violent.

*“Woman and girls are targeted with extreme amounts of hateful and misogynistic messaging online... Fifty-seven per cent of reports involved targeting ethnic or religious groups, 21 per cent targeted gays and lesbian, 16 per cent targeted women, 15 per cent targeted Aboriginal people, and 14 per cent targeted immigrants.”* <sup>6</sup>

Another group that experiences additional risk of exploitation online are aboriginal youth. Some existing risk factors for this population, including the residual effects of residential schools and colonization.

In the early 2000s’ many rural and isolated First Nations communities were hooked up to broadband access. Aboriginal youth, like all youth, were quick to learn, adopt and engage in online spaces. Many positives services, communities and communications became possible with internet access. Community and cultural enhancement that came along with that access included projects to enhance cultural and language preservation, tele-health and enhanced access to world-wide communities.

Online access also unfortunately opened up a channel for predators.

*“Aboriginal girls are increasingly at risk of exploitation due to having wide-spread access to the internet, without education about how to stay safe from online predators.”* <sup>7</sup>

Without education for rural Aboriginal youth about online dangers, predator have been able to remotely groom many victims at a time.

*“Traffickers are increasingly using the internet as a means to entice young Aboriginal girls, especially in rural communities (Thrasher, 2005), with the charm of a big city or false promises of a good job.”* <sup>8</sup>

While most youth have consistently stayed current with the technology, service providers, particularly in social service realms, have not done so. Some have little confidence, concerns about undefined professional standards, and are unsure about the potentially compromising consequences of social networks. Frontline workers and managers who DO recognize the need for online services have been unable to modify their practices without revisiting their organizational policies.

Training needs as well as the research, resources and retraining required seem overwhelming and problem-laden with many organizations leaning toward avoidance rather than tackling this process.

Recently however, online communications and social networks are being recognized as unique opportunities to join youth in their own environment, understand the risks and challenges they face there and engage with them according to their own self-identified needs.<sup>9</sup>

## Advantages & Challenges of Online Outreach

Outreach services today need to be aware of youth's online experiences and concerns, be able to assist them resolve safety issues, be able to direct them toward reputable sources of information, and be fluent in online culture, dynamics and channels. Online Outreach can offer service providers new ways to meet the needs of the youth they serve. Doing so will require a good understanding of the advantages and challenges that online interactions will provide.

### Advantages for youth of online outreach programs include:

- Accessibility - youth unavailable for face to face meetings can be contacted online.
- Convenience - online environments often offer round-the-clock access to services for youth. Accurate mental, physical and sexual health resources are available all the time.
- Affordability - most youth have devices or are able to access them for free through public venues such as libraries, coffee shops or public wifi networks.
- Social stigma and Anonymity - online interactions offers a disinhibited environment where youth may be more inclined to self-disclosure.
- Variant ways to communicate - youth may be using varied online channels such as social media, chatrooms (video or texted based) email or text. Many youth are using both FaceBook and Twitter and both are considered relatively mainstream social media.<sup>10</sup>

### Challenges for service providers of online outreach programs include:

- Identity verification - The nature of online communications is that ultimately service provider can not ever absolutely verify the identity of another person



while communicating online. Even Skype conversations can be manipulated with 'loops' to appear as though a different person was online.

*"One trick is for the capper to present a video loop of a fit young guy typing away at the computer as himself, thereby piquing the girl's interest. As one capper writes, "I've been capping for a bit now, and I would say wins are a matter of three steps: 1. Practice 2. Patience and 3. Loops." There are extensive archives of loops that cappers can use to convince girls that they are Prince Charming (or at least Prince Hottie)." <sup>11</sup>*

- Confidentiality - Guaranteeing that information is confidential online is unrealistic. Electronic communications go through many points on their path and at each juncture either human or technical error may occur. Disclaimers for online profiles and sites are in Appendix III and should be used to inform clients of this challenge.
- Absence of verbal and nonverbal cues - Interpersonal communication, especially therapeutic communications have traditionally relied heavily on visual cues that are sometimes not captured by online channels.
- Security - All client files must be kept secure as per provincial legislation. In British Columbia these include:
  - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
  - British Columbia's Personal Information Protection Act
  - E-Health (Personal Health Information Access and Protection of Privacy) Act
- Terms of Use - Each site or platform has a Terms of Use that stipulates the conditions and uses of information posted to that site. These change often and it is up to the service provider to know whether privacy defaults have changed.
- Technical difficulties - Differences in access to equipment, the need to update operating systems, keep current with trends in specific social media and comfort with technology, all present challenges. <sup>12</sup>

### **Are Vancouver area service providers keeping up with at-risk youth online?**

Of surveyed service providers<sup>13</sup>, 70% use a smartphone at work, while 93% use a smartphone at home. This leads to the conclusion that service providers are on social media personally more than professionally. They know how to use the

technology that at-risk youth are using, yet that knowledge is not being utilized into helping at-risk youth professionally. Surveyed service providers cited a lack confidence, equipment and training, concerns about undefined professional standards and potential personal consequences of social networks as barriers to engaging with sexually exploited and at-risk youth online. <sup>14</sup>

**There is an emerging gap between how service providers and their clients use technology that threatens the service providers' ability to provide relevant and comprehensive service.**

The gap between how service providers use and access the internet and how clients do is concerning. If service providers aren't aware of online risks, opportunities, culture, and relevance, how can they comprehensively meet youth where they are at? Online outreach provides a tremendous opportunity to close that gap.

*"In Canada, reshaping existing programs aimed at the inclusion of youth at risk around social media can bring better results and help reach a larger crowd."* <sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that Online outreach is not proposed as a replacement for face-to-face services but is a logical extension of services into the spaces where youth are at risk.

*"Their findings stress that ICT (internet communications technologies) strategies are significantly more effective when paired with regular human interactions."* <sup>16</sup>

Therefore, youth workers need to be online to stay relevant to youth, and to provide services and support in ways that youth will access them.

*"Youth Work can play a key role in supporting young people to navigate the risks and exploit the opportunities of online social networking. Youth work can provide space for young people to reflect upon their online activity, and to develop their 'media literacy'."* <sup>18</sup>

## Who should use this Toolkit?

This Toolkit is designed to help service providers use online outreach as a part of their overall outreach services. Online outreach activities must be guided by codes of conduct, ethics, human resources policies, program procedures and legal compliance. Currently, we are in the unfortunate place where people who reach out to help high-risk populations face more restrictions, suspicion and regulations than anyone who exploits them online. We hope this guide will assist those who are trying to change that.

Problems to be mitigated include difficulties with identity verification and losing control of personal information which can endanger clients and their friends. This is why it is imperative to have policy and guidelines in place for online outreach. Once created, policies must be reviewed, resources must be allocated and everyone—from Board of Directors to clients—must be informed and involved.

## Terms

**Social media:** Wikipedia defines social media as “the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities. Social media differ from traditional and industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence.” The most common social media sites are Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Social media is a dynamic, two-way conversation that does not flourish when moderated or heavily regulated.

**Online Counseling:** Ongoing therapeutic planned sessions with a qualified therapist which never results in face-to-face counseling. These are prearranged and often on secure corporate servers. Closer to tele-health than outreach. <sup>19</sup>

**Online Outreach:** Concepts of online outreach, because they are new and evolving, are described as virtual youth work, online youth work or computer-mediated youth work. These terms refer to the professional interactions between service providers and clients over social media or other online channel for the purpose of fulfilling outreach program goals. <sup>19</sup>

**NetReach** is an online and support component of the HUSTLE program at the Health Initiative for Men(HIM). Hustle provides support for self-identified men in the sex industry, men who have sex with men and experiential youth. Examples of their outreach program are at the end of each section.



Effective program design begins with good planning. The following section will help you assess how well your client needs will be met online, specify goals that are consistent with the overall program objective, plan staff training, allocate resources and consider any legal obligations that may arise.

### Establish client needs

**What client need are we attempting to address?**

Before an organization can create effective an online outreach program, it must define the need it will meet.

**Some needs that online outreach can meet are:**

- establishing face-to-face relationships with street youth
- referring clients to reputable online resources
- reducing clients' isolation
- promoting your services to an identified client group

Surveying clients about their most frequently used online channels (social media, email, texting) is a good place to start. How and where your clients are online will determine the best social network site or online channel to begin online outreach.

### Set online outreach goals

**Using social media isn't a goal unto itself. What specific program goal will be fulfilled while using social media?**

Goals for an online component to any program must be consistent with the overall goals of the program. The more specific the final goal is, the more likely it will be successfully achieved.

**Answer the following questions to help your organization sharpen focus to an achievable end:**

- What do we want to achieve with our online outreach activities?
- How will we measure success when evaluating each activity?
- Are there partners in the community we can reach out to?

*“The goal of an Internet Outreach Program is to use chat rooms and other Internet venues to provide evidence-based risk reduction information so gay, bisexual and other MSM can negotiate sexual risks in a way that fits with their own personal values and comfort levels.”<sup>20</sup>*

## Training

**What training do we require to gain sufficient knowledge and skill to deliver the program effectively?**

All members of staff and management teams must be clear on the expectations and activities that are approved for program delivery. Staff must be trained on revised policies and procedures; service providers must receive specific training about online culture and communication, reputable online resources, and professional boundaries and codes of conduct.

**Create an updatable resource about online trends**

Create a webpage, binder or bulletin board with specific information about the social media or online channels you will use in your online outreach program. Update it weekly. Include a section to add emerging trends and research to keep workers up-to-date.

**Your resource should include:**

- instructions for specific social media privacy settings
- key physical and online resources that are relevant to your target population—don’t limit yourself to local resources, as much of the work of online outreach is reaching out to rural populations and is linked to national and international networks
- potential funding sources and opportunities
- contact information and links for reporting agencies regarding online exploitation

## Resource allocation

**Does our organization have the capacity to support an online outreach program?**

It is important to recognize that providing services in another venue is going to diversify the ‘places’ where programs deliver service. Your organization therefore will require additional equipment, data services, and service hours to ensure that

the established services aren't sacrificed. Training will be required to get all members of the organization informed. Budget discussions and decisions should be guided by realistic, researched costs.

## Legal considerations

Frontline workers' obligation to report illegal or life threatening situations online will remain consistent with provincial and federal legislation.

*"My advice to (online outreach workers) in regards to criminal activity that has been disclosed would be to encourage the discloser to seek the services offered by [an online outreach program] in person, and to have the discloser contact police."* <sup>21</sup>

- See Appendix III: Checklists, Templates & Samples
- Legal disclaimers should be posted on all online profiles.
  - Include hours of operations
  - reasonable expectation of responses to online communications
  - affiliation to organization
  - logo and a phone number and address where clients can phone and confirm the identity of the worker represented on the profile.
  - include standard obligations to report, potential recording and documentation of online communications
  - include avenues for feedback about online service to management
  - include expectation of confidentiality and the inability of the organization to guarantee the security of any messages or content posted, emailed or tweeted to them.

## Key Lessons • Netreach Experience

Between 2007 and 2014, HUSTLE noticed a sharp decrease in the street presence of active survival sex work on local strolls and tracks, and an increase in internet presence both for men who are selling sex and youth who are exchanging sexual services in order to meet basic needs.

This significant shift in presence from physical face-to-face locations and support to outreach online provides a clear rationale for the continued development and expansion of an online outreach program.

The primary goals of the Netreach program are to:

- initiate relationships
- reduce isolation
- foster an internet environment of mutual respect
- gather statistical data and information
- develop best practices

Long-term goals:

- Increase program capacity
- Foster an internet environment of mutual respect
- Statistical data/information gathering
- Social media/Internet outreach policy/procedure
- Ongoing training/professional development
- Develop best practices
- Develop an internet outreach training guide



Prior to setting up an online profile or engaging with any clients online, it is imperative that all your policies and procedures have been reviewed with an eye towards the implications of social media use on the principles and values of your organization.

### Policy review and revisions

Policies that govern distinct elements of an organization's expectations of conduct for themselves and their constituents include IT plans, marketing plans, human resource policies, procedure policies and codes of conduct.

Your policies should all be reviewed for the particular nuances that will be in play when workers and at-risk youth interact online. For example:

- professional boundary definition—communicate in as open and public a forum as possible
- clients may seek out personal information about service providers
- workers may post or have posted content to the internet that reflects poorly on the organization
- identity verification online is never absolute
- Freedom of Information legislation compliance

Many of the online tools that assist in social media policy development generally can be adapted for use with youth. See Appendix II : Online Program Development Resources.

See also Appendix IV : Best Practices

### Procedures

Procedures for use of social media are for the protection of clients, organizations and service providers and will help establish ethical use. They should include specific instructions on managing risks, documentation, privacy settings, profile set up, account deactivation, staff change-over procedure and profile management expectations.

1. Establish authority for use and management
2. Establish procedures for use
3. Establish client feedback process
4. Manage risks
5. Documentation
6. Establish profiles for frontline workers and/or programs

## 1. Establish authority for use and management

Within your organization, decide on parameters for who can access social media, post or modify information, and who has oversight over these actions. No one should go online without having made an arrangement with their organization's management.

### Some recommended guidelines:

#### The service provider:

- must have a valid business reason to use online media, such as a child needs protection or online media is the only reliable way to communicate with a client
- who is making contact with the client must be the same service provider who has responsibility for that client
- is responsible for the day-to-day management of his or her social media accounts
- obtains permission from clients before contacting them through social media
- NEVER searches for information on social media out of curiosity<sup>1</sup>

#### Management:

- grants permission to service providers for social media use
- creates the protocol around valid business reasons
- creates a protocol regarding when and why accounts should be deactivated or deleted. Deactivation (the account still exists, but is dormant until the user logs in) would generally apply in the case of a temporary departure from work, and deletion of an account would apply in the case of a permanent departure. However, within each organization there may be different reasons for deletion or deactivation.

- has the final responsibility to close accounts

## 2. Establish procedures for use of social media

Procedures for use of social media are for the protection of clients, organizations and service providers. Be sure to communicate them clearly to all parties.

**These guidelines will help in establishing ethical use of social media:**

- only use social media in work hours
- do not respond to contact outside of work hours until the next work shift. Set up emergency response parameters if required to maintain this.
- set clear boundaries with clients in the use of social media. For example, tell your clients you can only communicate with them during work hours.

See Appendix II : Online Resources for Program Development

## 3. Establish client feedback process

The email or social media profiles used for your online outreach program should include contact information for the person responsible for dealing with clients' concerns or complaints about the online engagement. For obvious reasons, this should not be a service provider but a manager or supervisor.

## 4. Manage risks

The biggest risk of using social media is that personal information may get to a third party, and from there neither the client nor the service provider has any control over how that information is used.

**The basic steps that all service providers must take to minimize risks for their clients and themselves:**

- establish one email account as the only one used for social media
- communicate in private domains as much as possible
- limit personal information included in communications
- NEVER blend your personal and professional life—maintain separate email addresses and never use your personal devices for work purposes

A policy is required to address misuse of social media by service providers. This may occur when the service provider:

- does not have consent to use a social media
- does not have authority to communicate with the client

- or does not have a valid business reason

Management must decide on appropriate disciplinary measures.

Third parties can use social media to bully or threaten service providers or their clients. In this case, service providers should:

- not engage—do not respond or attempt to contact the abuser
- document the threat
- report the threat to a supervisor or appropriate authority

## 5. Documentation

Online documentation protocols will likely blend in with existing records management protocols in an organization. Keep a record of all private messages, emails, chat logs and comments in an offline document for accountability and ease of access.

**Records should answer where, when and by whom information was received, as well as:**

- who was contacted and/or their username
- any issues raised during the discussion
- any inappropriate behaviours and actions taken

Any follow-up actions required as a result of the interaction (requests for information, additional advice etc).

Managers should keep a list of all requested accounts and a list of all accounts that have been approved.

**In addition, when a social media account is created, record:**

- the name of the social media site
- the service provider site and current password
- the opening date of the account
- date of deactivation or deletion.

**Make sure ALL documentation is secure!**

**Effective ways of recording relevant information are:**

- take a screenshot (print screen)

- copy and paste the relevant information into a word document to print, being sure that the social media site, date, time, sender and receiver are recorded
- failing these options, the information can be transcribed electronically or manually. Be sure to file it in the manner prescribed by your organization.

See Appendix II : Online Program Development Resources

## 6. Create social media profiles

Most social networks will allow the creation of profiles for organizations without having to ask permission from site administrators. However, to maintain legitimacy, check the site's terms of use before creating a social media account and profile.

Some sites will give organizations and workers special profiles that mark them as a service provider. Usually this requires your organization to send the site administrators a letter of intent or follow certain links on their website, or even to phone the administrators to validate your organization.

### **When creating a social media profile for frontline workers and/or programs:**

- create a separate profile in no way linked to any personal profile
- use your organization's logo or mascot as a profile picture
- include hours of work
- include real worker names
- include services offered
- include your work email address or phone number, as established in your procedures for use

See Appendix II : Online Program Development Resources

## Key Lessons • Netreach Protocols

Employees and volunteers must always first gain authorization from administration prior to using social networking, media and online outreach for work-related tasks. HiM social media communication guidelines and Netreach protocols include (but are not limited to) the following areas:

- Culture: online outreach is a process, open to change and growth as advancements unfold
- Trust: communicate and develop relationships of trust and respect with individuals online
- Transparency/Disclosure: disclose all professional connections and provide methods for individuals to verify their professional identity
- Accuracy: verify with administration before posting information and program content
- Engagement: clearly communicate the organization's online engagement policy/strategies
- Support/Counseling: it is unethical to continue to provide formal counseling once the nature of the situation has been deemed critical/traumatic
- Respect your audience: respect our audience's privacy and encourage voluntary engagement
- Documentation: record all online communication
- Privacy/Confidentiality: clearly communicate that confidentiality is impossible to guarantee online
- Responsibility: ethical responsibilities are not altered, or in any way diminished, by the use of technology
- Accountability: always have two workers online during outreach for debriefing and accountability
- Visual/Video: the service provider is never permitted to upload photos, films and video that have not been previously approved by administration
- Security: computers accessed for the purposes of Netreach are password protected and all information is stored on a separate flash drive
- Online profiles: never permitted to be logged on to professional profiles from personal computers and/or devices

## 1. Gain consent from clients

The necessity of gaining consent from clients will depend in large part on the services provided to them, especially when dealing with children and youth.

In general:

- obtain consent directly from the individual you are communicating with online
- the client must be informed of the risks of communicating via social media before you obtain consent. These can include insecure message transfer, the public nature of all online data, and the challenges to confidentiality that presents.
- consent is given for all social media for which the client provides their contact information
- consent can be withdrawn by the client; they only need inform you that they withdraw it.

*“Organizations should recognize and adapt to special considerations in managing the personal information of children and youth. Children’s information is considered sensitive and merits special consideration under privacy laws. Organizations should implement innovative ways of presenting privacy information to children and youth that take into account their cognitive and emotional development and life experience.”* <sup>23</sup>

## 2. Manage social media profiles

Service Providers

Service providers are responsible for the daily maintenance of their social media sites. They should observe the following protocols:

- use their real name and gender
- disable wall postings, except for sharing links
- keep friends lists private

- have a disclaimer on profile/sites, stating that the page is not monitored 24 hours a day
- provide alternate numbers in case of emergency, if required
- should a birthdate be required, do not use your real birthdate; invent one close to your real age.

#### **Online activities for frontline workers should include:**

- approach site administration to introduce yourself, your program, your intended activities and the benefits of their participation in your program
- approach relevant community partners who may be doing online outreach already and build relationships and mutually beneficial services
- research relevant services and information for your clients

#### **Management**

Managers are responsible for the maintenance of an account when the service provider is not actively using it.

#### **Within five business days, managers should:**

- change the account password and record the new password
- confirm with clients and others who may be in contact with the account that it is closed
- confirm that all records associated with the account are up to date and filed
- should the service provider not be returning to the position for which the account was required, the manager should delete the account as soon as possible, unless the social media provider does that after a certain amount of inactivity (ie., Twitter).

*"The Manager of Development and Communications approves designated personnel to create and access official agency blogs and social networking profiles/pages and to create or post content therein." <sup>24</sup>*

Please refer to Appendix II: Online Program Development Resources for references and further information.



## Evaluation

The key to an effective evaluation mechanism is to build it when you create your goals; this allows you to directly compare your feedback questions to your goals. Include feedback mechanisms for clients, statistical documentation and management review.

Include contact information for the person responsible for dealing with clients' concerns or complaints about the online engagement. For obvious reasons, this should not be a service provider.

## Sustainability

In order to ensure that your online outreach program is maintaining accountability, identifying best practices and is indeed meeting the needs of your target populations, include a comprehensive evaluation process built into the program. The evaluation should directly involve participants; their experiences in your online outreach provides you with working knowledge of the program, which in turn you should integrate into the ongoing development of the program.

**Online outreach demonstrates tremendous potential as a complementary effort to traditional services—it is an innovative supplement, but not yet a replacement.**

## Key Lessons • Netreach Evaluation

In 2014, an external evaluator conducted an evaluation of Netreach's programming and activities, including the following:

- analyzed program data for the development of a Netreach Project Progress Report and Project Development Plan
- worked with the Program Manager to develop a survey instrument to be used online and in-person to assess the efficacy of the Netreach Project within the target population
- worked with the Program Manager to develop interview and focus group questions and discussion points for 20 participants in the Netreach Project
- provided documentation of all interviews, focus group discussions, and completed questionnaires to the Program Manager on an ongoing basis
- compiled all survey and interview results and stored them on an encrypted, password-protected drive
- drafted a Netreach Project Evaluation and Progress Report and Project Development Plan
- used collected data and key findings of the written evaluation report in the development of key program recommendations and area for future project development

Some key findings relevant to online activities include:

- 92% of sample size have internet access
- 70% maintain profiles on 1-5 sites
- 60% online an average of 1-2 hours per day

As transition from on-street to online outreach continues to gain momentum, the following is a summary of the Netreach evaluation recommendations and next steps:

- Diversify funding streams
- Mix online and offline outreach to increase visibility
- Specific Netreach branding and promotion
- More focus on social networking sites versus dating and escort sites
- Additional hours and staffing

## Summary

This Toolkit was developed to assist service providers, managers and directors to develop the online outreach policies and practice required to prevent and reduce the sexual exploitation of children and youth at-risk.

The Toolkit will be immediately publishable for free public online access and use by organizations in Vancouver and BC and can be accessed at

[www. safeonlineeducation.org/onlineoutreacht toolkit](http://www.safeonlineeducation.org/onlineoutreacht toolkit)

This Toolkit includes a rationale for online outreach as an important tool to prevent sexual exploitation of children and youth. That rationale may change as the ever changing dynamics of the internet change as well.

Online Outreach is a new concept, particularly here in North America and we hope that this document will assist those who are in the midst of navigating this complicated new area of service delivery. Youth work is going to have to change and include the online world in order to stay relevant and effective.

With the information from this Toolkit, service providers and organizations can discuss, strategize and mitigate the liabilities, potential challenges, ethical issues and organizational responsibilities that stand in the way on online service delivery.

The future of youth work includes online communication.

We hope that this Toolkit is of service in that necessary work.



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## Appendix II : Online Outreach Program Development Resources

General reading to supplement the section indicated. See sub-heads for more description.

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Developing a Technology Philosophy for Digital Youth Work." , Cohlmeier, Dana.  
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BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)

[http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws\\_new/document/ID/freeside/96165\\_00](http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96165_00)

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Guidelines for Online Consent, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.2013, (Chapter 5- Youth and children)

[https://www.priv.gc.ca/information/guide/2014/gl\\_oc\\_201405\\_e.asp](https://www.priv.gc.ca/information/guide/2014/gl_oc_201405_e.asp)

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## Appendix III : Checklists, Templates & Samples

1. Rationale/sample letter to Board of Directors/Manager
2. "Worksheet: putting together a case for social media use" UK, Youth Engagement & Social Media - an online guide. Practical Participation.  
[http://www.practicalparticipation.co.uk/yes/why/making\\_the\\_case\\_worksheet](http://www.practicalparticipation.co.uk/yes/why/making_the_case_worksheet)
3. Making the Case - Practical Participation. Youth Engagement & Social Media - an online guide. Explores a range of reasons you might use to build your case for using social media. - [http://www.practicalparticipation.co.uk/yes/why/social\\_media](http://www.practicalparticipation.co.uk/yes/why/social_media)
4. Information Risk Assessment Checklist, Helpful Technology, <http://www.digitalengagement.info/2012/03/21/information-risk-assessment-checklist-for-social-media/>.
5. Beginner Guide to Facebook, Mashable, May 2012, Updated October 2013, <http://mashable.com/2012/05/16/facebook-for-beginners/>
6. Non-Profit Guide to Facebook OR Key Trends and Application for Facebook Pages - <http://www.onlineyouthoutreach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Key-Trends-and-Applications-for-FACEBOOK-PAGES.pdf>
7. Online Outreach Tools and Evaluation Advice, <http://www.hersheycause.com/pdf/online-outreach-tools-guide.pdf>
8. One-Page Guides
  - a. Twitter - <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12859309/One-page-guide-to-Twitter#scribd>
  - b. Wiki - <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12871684/One-Page-Guide-to-Wikis>
9. Key Trends and Application for Twitter - <http://www.onlineyouthoutreach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Key-Trends-and-Applications-for-Twitter.pdf>
10. How to Use Multimedia to Engage Children and Young People in Decision-Making, <http://www.timdavies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Use-Multimedia-to-Engage-Children-and-Young-People-in-Decision-Making.pdf>
11. Template Online Outreach: OCHART Tracking Tools, <https://www.ochart.ca/documents/2012/trackingsheets/Online%20Outreach%20-%20OCHART%20Tracking%20Tools%20for%202012-2013-%20Final%20June%2026.pdf>
12. Example Data Sheets AU.pdf, WA Centre for Health Promotion Research / Curtin University of Technology, Internet Outreach / A Guide for Health Promoters and

Peer Educators, <http://www.waaid.com/Publications-Research-Manuals/View-category.html>

13. YCWW Infographic, Media Smarts. <http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/images/publication-report/infographic-YCWWIII-Life-Online.pdf>
14. Disclaimers for Profiles or Online Sites
15. Netreach Sample
16. Best Practices Sample

## 1. Rationale/sample letter to Board of Directors/Manager

To: Board Members

From: Program Manager

Memo: Request to engage client youth on social media

In order to maintain our program relevance and effectiveness, we wish to begin communicating with our client using social media as part of our program activities.

We feel that by going online we can reach youth where they are, be more easily found, communicate with youth in surroundings familiar to them, meet the changing expectations that come with online technologies and take advantage of networks to spread information and engage in online networking and educational opportunities.

We have identified the following benefits to taking our program online: the ability to publish content once and use everywhere, reduce travel costs, listen and respond more effectively with our clients and partners, be more aware of the risks and threats our high-risk clients are exposed to online, to converse knowledgeably with youth clients about their online lives and experiences and inform them about safer online practices.

We believe the Web is safer when responsible adults are engaged and involved and we want to be online with our clients to provide them with accurate information about online risks and activities, role model good online behaviour for them and to stay current with the dynamics and complications that online communication presents for our clients.

We understand that you may have concerns and cautions that will need to be addressed. We are also cognizant of the need to review our existing policies to make sure that we have procedures and parameters for online contact with clients established prior to engaging online.

We have included the Online Outreach Toolkit (2014) as a resource to help us have this conversation.

Thank you.

Program Manager

Site Disclaimers are a way to establish your professional boundaries and client expectations consistently. The front page of the channel, descriptions/fb page descriptions/twitter profile should contain the basic notifications that will notify the user of what the channel is, who you are, and why they would want to interact with you. The tone should mirror how you welcome client's into the physical space. Site disclaimers address the following: site purpose, parameters of services, (times, days, response time), an alternate emergency number, how to verify the site/profile with the Organizations, and limits of information verification for clients.

For example:

"Hi, welcome to our PROGRAM Facebook page. We'd love to hear about your suggestions for new programs, how you like the events we host or any other ideas you have. This Page is NOT the way to get ahold of a specific worker however. Program staff will be adding information here about our activities and upcoming events and will be checking in to read your comments five days a week during office hours (9-4)."

"If you would like to verify the identity of a site administrator or anyone who identifies themselves as staff on this channel, please call our offices located on XXXX St. by phone and inquire."

"If you need emergency assistance please, contact the 911. If you need to get services for yourself or others, please contact us at xxx@xxx.com or 604.xxx.xxx."

"Links on this site are provided for the purpose of further research to interested parties. Though every effort is made to provide accurate links to resources that are in keeping with The Organizations' mandate, the Program is not responsible for content or information provided at different sites. If you find an inactive or objectionable link, please notify us."

## 15. Netreach Samples.pdf



### **Online/Telephone Safety Procedures (non-face-to-face)**

#### **Purpose:**

- To ensure the safety (relative freedom from danger, risk, or threat of harm/abuse, injury, or loss to personnel and/or property, whether caused deliberately or by accident) of all staff, volunteers and people we interact with through non-face-to-face communication;
- To ensure HIM's non-face-to-face communication remain as safe and confidential as possible for the people accessing them;
- HIM is committed to ensuring an appropriate level of response in cases where an incident, as defined, has occurred;
- HIM staff/volunteers recognize that their ethical responsibilities are not altered, or in any way diminished by non-face-to-face communication.

#### **Incidents include, but are not limited to those which:**

- Have the potential for causing physical or emotional harm to staff, volunteers and/or participants/clients;
- Have the potential for causing a breach of confidentiality of the people accessing non-face-to-face communication as well as the staff/volunteer providing the service;
- Result in the need to involve emergency services;
- Seriously breach Policy as referred to in your volunteer/online outreach handbook;
- OR others as deemed critical by the observing staff or volunteer member.

#### **Procedures for dealing with any of the above:**

1. If an individual in a non-face-to-face engagement seeks counseling/support or discloses dangers/harms to self or others (especially self-identified youth 19yrs of age and under), HIM staff/volunteers will attempt to speak with them either in person or by phone as soon as possible;
2. In the event that phone contact is not possible, but an email address is available, staff/volunteers will provide the necessary crisis line info to the individual as well as HIM phone number, office location and address and who/how/when to connect in person with a support worker; If the person arrives at the HIM office in crisis you should follow the "Crisis Reponse Policy"
3. Once all attempts have been made for phone/in person contact with the individual in crisis and all crisis line info has been given, HIM staff/volunteers recognize that it is unethical to continue to provide any type of formal counseling or support in a non-face-to-face setting and they are to disengage from the communication immediately.

#### **1. Interacting with a problematic person:**

- Stay calm and be respectful to the person. As we cannot verify someone's identity and circumstances in a non-face-to-face engagement, assume that they are telling the truth.
- At some point you may need to be assertive and take control of the situation if it seems to be escalating and/or getting out of hand.

## 16. Best Practices

There are many many themes of policy and procedure that need to be examined prior to program implementation.

They include;

- Setting Principles, Goals and Objectives
- Defining Roles and Responsibilities
- Management and Support
- Ethics
- Employee Privacy and Confidentiality
- Documentation and Record Keeping
- Client Feedback and Grievances
- Boundaries/Defining Personal vs. Professional

Boundaries for example are particularly challenged when service providers begin to build online relationships with clients. Traditionally the rules and professional codes that define how or when professional socialize with clients, are aware or involved in their personal lives or engage with clients outside of the work setting are very clear and reinforced consistently. When service providers go online however, boundaries must be reconsidered and accommodations made for the unique situations presented by online and social media spaces. Different organizations have managed this with various policy amendments. Below are examples of how different organizations have managed this challenge.

- “Why “personal” and “private” are not the same: While communication through social media networks is primarily a personal matter, this does not mean it is private. Written conversations inside these networks can often be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, the permanence and transferability of anything published or posted online means that there is a possibility that what you have said may be made visible to a wider audience or taken out of context. As a result, all conversations within social media networks should be considered public rather than private.” “Social Media Guidelines of Canadian Red Cross Staff and Volunteers”, Red Cross



- “BASW encourages the positive uses of social media, to which social workers should apply the values and principles of the Code of Ethics particularly developing professional relationships, upholding the values and reputation of the profession, maintaining professional boundaries, sharing information appropriately, maintaining confidentiality managing and assessing risk and challenging discrimination. BASW recognizes the opportunities and challenges social media presents for social workers in their practice and the possible risks both for social workers and service users, particularly young people or other vulnerable people.” British Association of Social Workers, Social Media Policy, (2012) (U.K.) The Policy, Ethics and Human Rights Committee.
- Personal / professional boundaries online: HIM Netreach employees will disclose all professional connections with clients to project administration when conducting internet outreach. There are to be NO personal connections made by employees with individuals online at any time. Transparency and authenticity are critical. When attempting first contact with an individual, send a message (contact request) first explaining who you are and why you are contacting them. Whenever possible, have employees provide methods for individuals to verify their professional identity by freely giving information on organization (including telephone number and website address) for verification.” HIM Netreach Policy
- “What’s Out ... Keep in mind the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in your role as an online educator. Some information is inappropriate and crosses the line, and should not be put into your online profile, including:
  - Personal sex statistics, such as penis size, sexual position of choice, or sexual desires. (If a site requires you to include this type of information in your profile, select options that relate to safer sex.)
  - Personal e-mail addresses or websites/homepages/blogs. Personal cell phone numbers, home phones, pagers, etc.
  - Personal pictures or statements saying you can e-mail personal pictures.
  - Links to websites that sell products not related to sexual health. Links to pornographic websites or sites that sell pornography. Discriminatory or judgmental statements. ”
- S.H.E.I.R. Sexual Health Educator Internet Resource, 2009



[www.safeonlineeducation.org](http://www.safeonlineeducation.org)



[www.checkhimout.ca](http://www.checkhimout.ca)

