New Directions in Phone-based and Web-based Counselling

A Discussion Paper

Prepared by:
Janice Currie
Janice Kelly

June 2010

New Directions in Phone-based and Web-based Counselling

Introduction

Kids Help Phone began counselling the kids of Canada in 1989 and at that time, provided phone-based, individual counselling.   Twenty plus years later, we continue to offer individual phone counselling and have added the option (in 2002) of web-based online counselling through posts to an *internet forum* or *bulletin board* (Smith, 2005) (for definitions of terms, see the Glossary in Appendix A).   On our website, each post receives an individual counsellor response, usually within 72 hours. We also offer indirect counselling on the web through the following means:

- Visiting the "Ask Us Online" topic-specific forums, kids benefit from reading other kids' posts and the counsellor response
- The Info Booth provides well researched and age-appropriate online information on the more than 50 topics counsellors have identified as important to kids
- Self-care strategies are offered through web-based versions of common therapeutic techniques - resiliency building tools, safety planners and high-engagement games to deliver fact-based information and educate
- Posting in "Your Space" where kids can share their innermost thoughts, secrets and feelings in a safe and non-judgemental environment

Technology is changing and helplines around the world are looking at different ways to reach out to kids in need. This year's Fifth International Consultation hosted by Child Helpline International (CHI) is focussing on the theme of exploring new channels for service delivery (October, 2010 in Madrid, Spain, to be attended by Dr. Currie on behalf of the agency).   This makes the current examination of new directions for Kids Help Phone / Jeunesse, J'écoute (KHP/JJ) particularly timely.

Strategic Priorities for 2010

Ensuring the quality, impact, effectiveness and reach in service delivery has been identified as an important overarching priority for Counselling Services this year. Evaluating possible new modalities for service delivery is a significant objective to address this priority, especially to ensure impact and reach for KHP/JJ.

In beginning this evaluation, it is important to consider not only the different dimensions of emerging technology but also the organizational and counselling philosophy of KHP/JJ, when considering future service offerings.

 Our counselling philosophy requires that:
- All technologies must be able to ensure anonymity and confidentiality
- Responses must be individual, to meet individual client's needs
- Service is available 24/7 and response should be as immediate as possible
- The service is free

The different dimensions of emerging technology include:

1. The instrument used for communication – **phone** versus **web** (computer). The new *smartphones* have the capability of phones and internet access built into one device. While they are expensive now and relatively unavailable to the majority of kids, they will become more available with time. Thus, the distinction between phone and computer may become less relevant in the coming years. *Interactive TV* and *gaming platforms* are also possibilities in the future, but are web-based so are similar to web based "computer" options.

	Phone	**Web**
Service Options	Calls, texting	Skype, chat, email, message board

2. S**ynchronous** versus **asynchronous** counselling / communication is another dimension. Currently we offer synchronous or real time service on the phone and asynchronous or time-delayed service on the web (Ask Us Online). Do we want to focus on more direct and interactive service and less on delayed service options?

	Synchronous	**Asynchronous**
Service Options	Phone calls, Skype, chat	Texting, email, message board

3. Another dimension is a Short Messaging Service (**SMS**) versus Instant Messaging (**IM**) chat option. SMS has a limitation of 140 to 160 characters, while IM is virtually unlimited in the length of the message allowed. SMS is a characteristic of phone texting and tweeting (via Twitter), while IM is available on web-based applications.

4. A fourth dimension is **individual** vs. **group counselling**. As an organization, we need to decide if we want to provide less specific and potentially less effective intervention to our clients, and are willing to offer "group counselling" to increase the number of clients to whom we can provide service through one counsellor's intervention (e.g., chat forums).

5. A fifth dimension is location – on **our own website** versus **hosted on a social network** site (either real, including those like Facebook, MySpace [see Boyd, 2007] or Twitter or virtual, like Habbo and Teen Second Life).

	KHP/JJ Website	**Social Network Website**
Service Options	Chat, email, message board	Counselling mediated through a real social network site (e.g., Facebook) or a virtual one (e.g., Habbo or Teen Second Life)

How do these different dimensions affect service offerings?

There are a variety of service channels we could employ to provide anonymous and confidential counselling to the kids we serve. Currently, we provide service through one-to-one phone calls and individualized responses on our message board on the website (Ask Us Online). Other channels to consider (as noted above) include email, texting, instant messaging (chat) and establishing a chat room. We can also think about whether we want to participate on other social networking sites, or remain autonomous on our own website.

Environmental Scan:

1. **What are other child helplines providing?**

- While all child helplines provide phone support, many are now offering email, SMS texting, web chat and/or message boards (e.g., like Ask Us Online -AUO)
  - Of the 86 Child Helpline International member child helpline services, all provide phone-based services (CHI 2009).
  - While in 2003, there were no reports of providing chat services of the 64 original members, now 28 of these member helplines offer chat services (CHI 2009).
- Phone support tends to be 24/7 on the helplines in developed countries.
- When email support is available, it advises kids to be patient as it will take time to get a response and so the phone is recommended for urgent issues.
- SMS texting is primarily used to provide "canned" messages from the helpline and further information about how to call directly.
  - Some lines offer a limited texting back and forth (e.g., youthline.com – New Zealand) service.
- Chat services typically are only open for part of the day and/or part of the week. Clients are given the opportunity to try other links/pages on the website while waiting for a counsellor to chat with them. These chat services are one to one.

Examples:

Child Line (U.K.)   Phone, web chat, email, text,
                              Ask Sam (like our AUO)   www.childline.org.uk

Kids Help Line (Australia)   Phone, web chat, email   www.kidshelp.com.au

Youthline (New Zealand)   Phone, email, text   www.youthline.co.nz

Kindertelefoon (Netherlands) Phone, web chat   www.kindertelefoon.nl

Love is Respect (U.S.A.)   Phone, web chat   www.loveisrespect.org

 N.B. Skype is currently being investigated by European child helplines (members of Child Helpline International - CHI) as an option to reduce cost for users and open up the availability of free counselling services online. One problem with Skype for KHP/JJ is that it features a web camera image for those who are talking on Skype (the client and the counsellor). To make this work within our promise of anonymity and confidentiality, we would need to blank out the client's video and our video component or provide some kind of avatar (see Marshall, 2009). As well, there is a problem with our 800 number since current Skype service in Canada does not support 800 numbers such as ours.

2. **What channel(s) are the kids who visit KHP/JJ's website saying they want to use?**

A survey was posted on the Kids' Website from April 15th to May 5th, 2010. Over 516 responded to the survey, of which 14% were male, 83% were female and 4% reported themselves as trans or gender queer. The bulk of the respondents were in the 13 to 16 year old age range (66.3% of English and 49.3% of French respondents), though it is worth noting that on average the French speaking group was slightly older than the English group (there was a relatively large grouping of 17 year olds in the French speaking sample).

The results of this survey indicate that:

- About 96 percent of kids have a computer, while only about 75 percent have a cell phone. This suggests that a web-based modality might be more accessible to our kids than a phone-based one.
- When kids talk with their friends, they use Instant Messaging (IM) the most at about 88 percent. In a close second is Facebook, at almost 87 percent. Third is email at 77 percent and fourth is SMS texting at 75 percent (though this result is skewed by the high number of English respondents who were much more likely to use SMS than email).
- SMS texting appears to be much less popular with French language users than English speakers: 78 percent of English respondents reported using SMS to talk with friends compared to 60 percent of French respondents.
- When respondents were asked what service channel they would prefer to use to receive counselling from KHP/JJ, the highest ranking was Instant Messaging (45 percent put it first). If the channels/modalities which were ranked first and second are combined, IM receives 71 percent support, with phone in third with 28 percent ranking. The second most preferred channel/modality varies with language: In English, 49 percent preferred SMS texting and in French, 38 percent preferred email. Interestingly, our Ask Us Online type of format received a rating of 5 out of 8 choices, indicating it was not a preferred modality/channel, well below IM, SMS, email and phone.

- Social Networking (like Facebook) while popular for talking with friends was not ranked well as a source for counselling. 51 percent of respondents rated it as within the three least desirable options (of eight) for counselling.
- When asked an open ended question about what they would like to see us add, the majority of answers referenced some form of chat – particularly instant messaging.

3. **What can we learn from other counselling and information/referral services?**

Information from other types of helplines which serve adults, such as Findhelp/211 and Employee Assistance Programs has also been sought. These services typically provide service through phone calls.

- Findhelp/211: Information and referrals are also available through their website.
- EAP providers (such as fseap, Sheppell-fgi and Ceridian) also provide "on-line support".
  - o Ceridian and fseap both offer information to clients through a web portal.
  - o Sheppell-fgi provides information but also offers counselling by email. The responses are posted within two days by a counsellor and are personalized and confidential.

<u>*Counselling Considerations for different Channels and Modalities:*</u>

<u>**Chat, Texting, Email, Group Chat and Social Network Sites**</u>

(Phone and message board will not be reviewed as they are our existing channels)

1. **IM Chat Counselling**

Clients
  - o Studies suggest that clients who used chat were somewhat older (e.g., the average age was 14 year old teens) than those who use the telephone (averaged about 12 years old) (Fukkink & Hermanns, 2009).
  - o Some helplines don't offer chat services to younger clients (children rather than teens) as they feel that these youngsters are better served by a phone service (personal communication, Bryan Wilshire, Kidsline, New Zealand, 2009).

Reason for contact
  - o Chat conversations are more likely to include concerns related to emotional problems - loneliness, self-harm and depression (Fukkink & Hermanns, 2009a).

- o Chat problems tend to be "more severe and more structural in nature", as compared to problems discussed on the phone (p. 764, Fukkink & Hermanns, 2009a).
- o There tend to be fewer requests for information and more focus on the need for emotional support (Fukkink & Hermanns, 2009a) in chat vs. phone interactions.

Counselling techniques/skills required by counsellors
- o The counsellor must be able to type well, spell correctly and express themselves concisely in writing (Goss & Anthony, 2003).
- o While counsellors need to be conversant with the new acronyms kids use, it is recommended that they continue to use symbols and phrases that are consistent with their own communication style.
    - o "It is unwise to copy young peoples' use of symbols to expressed emotion as clients may not think it authentic" (p. 113, Bambling et al., 2008).
- o The ability to focus discussions quickly and obtain detailed information is a necessity (Goss & Anthony, 2003).
- o Counsellors frequently use paraphrasing, confrontation and information-seeking questions with strong immediate effects when chat counselling.
    - o Empathy, encouragement and feeling-oriented questions are used less often during chat (Williams et al., 2009).
- o The structure of chat counselling is different than phone counselling:
    - o Chat counselling involves "minimal exploration of young peoples' goals and the superficial orientation and termination phases of counselling" (p. 97, Williams et al., 2009).
    - o Likely due to limited time in sessions and the slower rate of information exchange.

Technological considerations
- o Kindertelefoon (the Netherlands) found that chat conversations lasted an average of 30 minutes, while telephone conversations lasted approximately 8 minutes. (Fukkink & Hermanns, 2009a).
- o To increase service capacity, the system must be able to handle and track more than one chat session for each counsellor at once.
- o Online security is essential to safeguard, in order to maintain either individual or group privacy and confidentiality (Goss & Anthony, 2003).

Advantages
Accessibility
- • Online counselling may be especially appealing for individuals who are unable or unwilling to see a mental health professional in person (Joyce & Weibelzahl 2006).
- • Clients appreciate the "real-time" access to the counsellor (Shiller, 2009) and interactions can be more spontaneous than when posting a message or through email.

- "Services can be delivered to any location and to groups that might not access traditional counselling services" (p. 110, Bambling et al., 2008). Convenience is the most-often cited reason why people use online counseling services. Online therapy allows client to send an email at 3am or chat at 8am.
  - o This may be especially relevant for youth, who tend to have increased structural barriers to accessing counselling services, including time, cost and travel and personal barriers including being overwhelmed (King et al. b, 2006).
- "Enhanced access allows for early and preventative intervention" (p. 110, Bambling et al., 2008).

Safe space
- Online counselling provides a private and emotionally safe environment.
  - o Counsellors reported that clients found the chat counselling environment relatively safe (Bambling et al., 2008).
  - o Safety was identified as a motivation for clients accessing chat services (King et al. b, 2006).
  - o Clients also stated that the privacy feature was one of the main benefits of online counselling compared to telephone counselling, because in order to access telephone services privately, they had to wait until there was no one else at home (King et al. b, 2006).
- Anonymity facilitates self-disclosure (Goss & Anthony, 2003).
- English language learners often felt more comfortable texting a question (Herman, 2007; Tate & Zabinski, 2004 cited in Shiller, 2009) than asking it orally, especially when they were relatively unfamiliar with English.

Decreased emotional intensity
- Online counselling assists those with a fear of exposing their feelings. For example, a person with grief and loss issues may be fearful of crying in front of a counsellor.
- There is lower emotional intensity online compared to the telephone.
  - o This can make "easier for the client to communicate complex and emotionally charged issues" (p. 112, Bambling et al., 2008).

Increased client empowerment and control
- Clients perceive a more equal power balance between them and the counsellor (Bambling et al., 2008).
  - o Online counselling gave clients a feeling of more control (King et al. b, 2006).
  - o For example, they can edit or even delete what they type before they send it.
- Clients are sometimes more assertive in online chat vs. the telephone, possibly due to the decreased proximity to the counsellor (Bambling et al., 2008).
- Many people are uncomfortable talking about their personal problems while in the physical presence of another, and may be more likely to disclose when they cannot be seen (Joyce & Weibelzahl, 2006). This effect is called disinhibition.

Getting to the point
- An advantage of using synchronous counselling methods such as instant messaging is the fact that paraphrasing and reflection via text is very similar to a verbal exchange.
- Counsellors felt that clients were more likely to "talk about their concerns from the first statement" in chat counselling vs. telephone counselling (however, it is also possible that chat doesn't allow them to get to the deeper issues).
  - In addition, some clients were not very forthcoming with information during online chat; possibly a reflection of ambivalence, as chat allows them to "divulge and withhold great amounts of information more easily" (p. 112, Bambling et al., 2008).

Increased time to think and reflect on responses
- Clients have more time to think online (King et al. b, 2006).
- Counsellors have more time to think about their responses (Bambling et al., 2008).

Written transcript of counselling is available
- "Counsellors may have greater opportunity to reflect on their online practice by accessing the full text records of sessions" (p. 110, Bambling et al., 2008).
- Helpful for supervision and coaching of counsellors.

Cost factor
- Kids who have access to a computer with the internet can have access to online "chat"; thus, it doesn't require additional technology and is free for the client.

Disadvantages

Time issues
- Time was identified as a major challenge online for a number of reasons which include:
  - Time zones make chat more difficult unless it is offered 24/7, which not all services can provide.
  - Frequent time delays are inevitable due to technology/slowness of typing.
  - Session duration :
    - Counsellors also frequently stated that it was challenging to provide intervention within an hour.
    - Session duration may be a stronger determinant of the amount of tasks accomplished during the chat than the extent of rapport building (Williams et al., 2009).
    - However, there was a concern that "longer online sessions might not enhance the effectiveness of the counselling and would just

        increase wait time for other clients" (p. 114, Bambling et al., 2008).

- o Insufficient time was mentioned as a concern by both clients and counsellors alike (King et al. b, 2006).
    - ▪ Clients:
        - Felt rushed and not valued (King et al. b, 2006).
        - Clients were concerned with the amount of time they had to wait in queue to chat with a counsellor (King et al. b, 2006).
        - While waiting in queue, clients reported that they did their homework, chatted with friends online or engaged in other home activities.
        - Clients were also concerned with insufficient hours of availability of chat services (King et al. b, 2006).

    - ▪ Counsellors: felt inefficient and disconnected which made it hard for them to feel engaged in the counselling process.
        - Counsellors felt time pressure when responding; they believed their responses should be prompt, so that they would appear attentive.
        - Counsellors were concerned about the amount of time it took to gather data in order to allow them to understand the problem.
        - Counsellors could only ask one question at a time, so it takes longer online.
        - This is consistent with research stating that text-based counselling can be somewhat inefficient, which can result "in a focus on problem clarification and possible solutions without sufficient exploration of client goals" (p. 110, Bambling et al., 2008).
        - If counsellors are handling more than one chat session at once (to increase service capacity), it can become confusing and stressful for the counsellor. Also, there exists the possibility of confusion between chats, with missed or even incorrect therapeutic responses because of the confusion.

Weaker therapeutic alliance
- Therapeutic alliance with the client is thought to be weaker in chat counselling than in telephone counselling (Bambling et al., 2008).

Lack of non-verbal cues
- There is the loss of facial expression and vocal tone, which is a significant disadvantage. Also, it may be difficult to express feelings of empathy, positive regard and genuineness in a natural way without these non-verbal cues. This

concern is also valid for message board counselling (e.g., Ask Us Online), texting and email counselling (Bambling et al., 2008)

- o The faceless and voiceless nature of online communication is captured in the term "channel reduction" (Fukkink & Hermanns, 2009).
- o Clients also stated that they found it more difficult to express emotion through text (King et al. b, 2006).
- o However, clients also stated some advantages to the lack of voice quality, stating that telephone counsellors sometimes appeared "disengaged or even bored" and chat counselling shielded them from this (p. 172, King et al. b, 2006).

Missing serious issues/suicidality

- Counsellors were most concerned with the risk of missing serious issues or suicidality on chat, due to the lack of non-verbal cues (Bambling et al., 2008).
  - o However, this fear may be unfounded as there is little evidence that clients are bothered by difficulties communicating problem severity (Bambling et al., 2008).
- The overall lower emotional intensity of chat counselling may "encourage complacency or under-estimation of the severity of client problems" (p. 112, Bambling et al., 2008).

Misunderstandings

- There is a potential for misunderstandings in chat counselling.
  - o Active listening or empathic statements could be misunderstood by clients.
  - o Clients also worried that they could be misunderstood (King et al. b, 2006).
  - o Some counsellors found "that careful exploring of emotions and issues and asking the client for feedback reduced the risk of miscommunication" (p. 112, Bambling et al., 2008).
- Clients stated that it was difficult to type clearly when they were upset (King et al. b, 2006; Goss & Anthony, 2003).

Feeding into social avoidance

- Some argue that online counseling may, for some individuals, feed into their tendency to avoid "face to face" interactions when what would be most beneficial would be the actual physical presence of a professional counsellor.
- Instant messaging (chat) could enforce, if not increase social isolation.

Accessibility of the Internet

- Certain populations are underrepresented on the internet, such as "ethnic minorities in most developed countries. . . low-income individuals, residents of rural areas, individuals with less than a high school education. . ." (p. 61, Goss & Anthony, 2003).
  - o Individuals within these groups are underrepresented on the internet; therefore, they may not have access to chat counselling services.

     o   This may be an important concern for First Nations clients, particularly those on more northern and remote reserves.

Reliability and security of technical connection
- Internet connections can be unreliable (not so much now since broadband was introduced). A dropped connection will not only disrupt the flow of the counseling session, but could leave the client feeling hurt and vulnerable if they cannot retrieve the connection with the counsellor.
- Sites offering online counseling need to ensure that data is maintained on a secure server and that the highest level of encryption is used to prevent interception of information through computer hacking.

2. Texting

This form of counselling shares many of the advantages and disadvantages of chat noted above. In addition, the following are advantages and disadvantages which are Text specific.

Advantages:
- Text messages have many of the advantages of email, namely visual anonymity and asynchronicity (to allow the client and the counsellor time to reflect) (Shiller, 2009).
- Cell phones may be a good way to reach youth, as adolescents in particular have the highest rate of SMS communication (Herman, 2007; Lorente, 2002; Lenhart, 2010; Trump & Tuttle, 2001).
- The medium forces the client to express themselves briefly and concisely, focussing on essential points (Shiller, 2009).
- Could be useful and effective as a tool to direct clients to other service offerings at KHP/JJ: phone, web or chat service.
- Is being used effectively in mHealth circles, more as a reminder or quick status update than for on-going communication.

Disadvantages:
- Texts are slow to produce unless the phone has a QWERTY keyboard, which could discourage kids from texting (Shiller, 2009).
- It is not possible to save and printout text messages on a regular cell phone (Shiller, 2009).
- Acronyms and "Texting Codes" are:
  - Constantly changing and vary with age and locality, making it more challenging for counsellors to communicate effectively with clients through this medium.
  - More challenging for counsellors to adapt to this medium (Haxell, 2008; Wright, 2007).
- The short length of message constrains therapeutic effectiveness:

  o Many of the therapeutic drawbacks noted under chat also apply to texting, with the added handicap of the 140-160 character limit per message (Haxell, 2008; Wright, 2007)**.**

3. Email Counselling

This counselling form shares many of the advantages and disadvantages of chat noted above with the major difference that it is asynchronous, meaning that it is never immediately available but rather provides time-delayed counselling. In many ways, it is like our message board counselling (Ask Us Online – an individual response to a specific question), with the disadvantage that other kids can't benefit by reading the individualized responses counsellors provide (as they do with Ask Us Online format).

Advantages:
- It provides a private way of receiving a response from a counsellor when the issue is very sensitive or the client feels shamed by a revelation.
- Staff are already familiar with responding to posts, so no further training would be required.

Disadvantages:
- Emails can be misdirected by the client and compromise their confidentiality.
- Like the message board approach of Ask Us Online, emails have the disadvantage of providing an asynchronous and therefore delayed answer. Since it is one-to-one counselling, it does not provide ancillary benefit of counselling information to groups of kids who read the message board.
- With email therapy a client must be able to hold onto their feelings whilst waiting for a response - this could be painful or damaging for the client.

4. Individual vs. Group Counselling

Group counselling is a very different process than individual counselling. It requires the counsellor leading the counselling to set clear group norms regarding group participation. In the case of online group counselling, counsellors would need to set up group norms related to "how often they are expected to post, how to share their concerns in the group and expectations for privacy and 'netiquette'" (p. 67, Goss & Anthony, 2003). Self-disclosure would need to be established as a group norm; however members would also be encouraged to share issues at their own pace (Goss & Anthony, 2003). The role of the active group leader is most important in the beginning stages of the group (Goss & Anthony, 2003), in order to set the tone and manage the therapeutic outcomes.

Advantages:
- Group chat involves therapeutic elements including "support, diminishment of shame and guilt, and acknowledgement of the universality of the experience" (p. 61-62, Goss & Anthony, 2003).

- Counsellors can serve more than one client at a time on issues common to the participants.
- It allows counsellors to serve more children at once, expanding the reach of an individual counsellor.

Disadvantages:
- Group chat rooms can be difficult to secure and moderate (Shiller, 2009).
- Individuals don't benefit as much from group chat, as the intervention is not tailored specifically to their issues, strengths, needs and goals.
- Not all staff may be trained in group counselling methodologies.

5. **Social Network sites to provide Counselling**

This form of counselling shares many of the advantages and disadvantages of chat noted above, as it too provides a form of online counselling. The following advantages and disadvantages are Social Network site specific.

Advantages:
- Kids use these sites daily and these sites are a part of their "culture" (Boyd, 2007).
- It might attract more kids who might be unwilling to admit they have difficulties but become aware of our service through the Social Networking site.
- Finland uses "Habbo" as a portal for online counselling because of large number of youth living in rural parts of the country (Questionnaire Information Finland, 2008) and the "Habbo" portal is easily accessed by youth across the country.
- Kids could refer other kids within the site to the service, through their personal pages.

Disadvantages:
- KHP/JJ loses control of the security and reliability of the site itself.
- External portals lack any kind of clinical credibility, unlike our site.
- External sites have advertising on them (we eschew any websites with advertising in order to protect kids from any negative effects).
- Opinions on other parts of external sites are not moderated by professionals and contrary advice could be confusing for clients.

Implementation: Questions and Considerations

1). **What are we trying to achieve?**

– Are we striving to increase our client base and number of users?

› Do we want to extend our reach to new users that don't feel comfortable with our current service offerings?

› Do we want to make available additional or different service options that our current users would prefer to use?

– Are we seeking to improve the efficiency/quality of our web-service (make it synchronous rather than asynchronous)?

– Are we seeking to launch new channels as a way of attracting additional funders?

2). Does the service channel need to meet our guiding principles?

– All technologies must be able to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

– Responses should be individual, to meet individual kid's needs.

– Service is available 24/7 and response should be as immediate as possible.

– The service is free* to kids.

› Or do we expand our guiding principles as an organization (e.g., group counselling services)? Or perhaps change some (e.g., Will any new service channel be offered 24/7)?

› *Note: there are issues related to free service for kids who use cell phones – calls and texts are currently not free on mobile devices. Is this something we need to follow up by approaching companies that offer mobile plans to request they offer #6868 as free and anonymous service to kids?*

3). Our counselling staff are only barely able to meet current demands. How do we resource a new modality?

– How many more staff will we need to hire in order to offer new channels, in addition to our current offerings?

– Would we look at a separate budget and dedicated staff for any new channel?

– Would we consider changing our current offerings, or even dropping one if we add something else?

– What training will be required?

4a). How difficult will a new service channel be to implement?

– What technology (software and hardware) does any new channel require?

– How much would any new channel cost to implement?

– What are the requirements to ensure that the service offering is reliable and where might it fail at the point of service making it a risk for KHP/JJ to offer?

b) Will any new service channel be piloted prior to full implementation?
– Would availability of funding be a criterion for moving forward with a pilot of any new channel(s)?

Discussion Points from the KHP Board Strategic Planning Day (May 30/2010):

The following key themes arose from the insights provided by Board members from the four break-out discussion groups at the Strategic Planning day:

1. Our current guiding principles as an organization are:
   o All technologies must be able to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.
   o Responses should be individual, to meet individual client's needs.
   o Service is available 24/7 and response should be as immediate as possible.
   o The service is free to kids.

   Any new service channel must align with these principles.

2. It is critical that any service channel we offer has high therapeutic value.

3. Any new service offering must reflect a communication channel that kids prefer to use. Chat (instant messaging) was indicated as the first choice for counselling by the kids who completed our online survey.

4. A pilot of any new service channel offering must be completed prior to full implementation of that service channel.

5. The referral database (or a subset of it) should be made available directly to clients online.

Next Steps:

1). Initiate discussion with Counselling staff in Toronto and Montreal. In Toronto, meet with the Counselling Managers and work with the unionized staff through the Employer Employee Relations Committee (EERC). It will be important for all Counselling staff to be aware of the issues and to get their input on the pilot of any new channel from the standpoint of workforce impacts.

2). Initiate research into the costing and implementation issues involved in adding Instant Messaging to Centre Ice, Skype Instant Messaging and MS Live Messenger services.

3). Present information re: the proposed new service channel to the Social Services Working Group during the next SSWG meeting, prior to the September Board Meeting.

4). Prepare a funding proposal that can be offered to foundations and other potential sources of funding for the new service channel.

5). Ensure alignment with the Jack Windeler Memorial Fund next steps (re: offering a Chat pilot for the 17-20 KHP/JJ demographic).

References

Bambling, M., King, R., Reid, W. & Wegner, K. (2008). Online Counselling: The experience of counsellors providing synchronous single-session counselling to young people. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research.* 8(2): 110-116.

Boyd, D. (2007) "Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics in Teenage Social Life." *MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Learning – Youth, Identity, and Digital Media Volume* (ed. David Buckingham). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
http://api.ning.com/files/JjEhzw70PyWMt7vAQMhgAMnuCAPFQJAv5AKVBnsBlwlI8SP 5kN9tx5AmJc3IjAdJ3ngBmR7AjHbejqRGpSxEBkKNDC5FTO0y/WhyYouthHeart.pdf

Child Helpline International (2009). *Connecting to Children: a compilation of child helpline (2008 data).* Amsterdam: The Netherlands.

Cichanowicz, E. (2003). Live Reference Chat from a Customer Service Perspective. *Virtual Reference Services: Issues and trends.* Pp. 27-32.

Fukkink, R. & Hermanns, J. (2009a). Children's Experiences with Chat Support and Telephone Support. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry.* 50(6): 759-766.

Fukkink, R. & Hermanns, J. (2009b). Counseling Children at a Helpline: Chatting or Calling? *Journal of Community Psychology.* 37(8): 939-948.

Goss, S. & Anthony, K. (2003). *Technology in Counselling and Psychotherapy: A practitioner's guide.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Haxell, A. (2008) Cn I jus txt, coz I don wan 2b heard: Mobile technologies and youth counselling. *Proceedings Ascilite Melbourne 2008.* 405-408.
www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/melbourne08/procs/haxell.pdf

Herman, S. (2007). SMS Reference: Keeping up with your clients. *The Electronic Library.* 25(4): 401-408.

Joyce, D. & Weibelzahl, S. (2006) Text messaging as a Means to Lowering Barriers to Help-Seeking in Students with Depression. In: *Proceedings of IADIS International Conference e-Society 2006, Dublin, Ireland* (pp. 211-214). Lisbon: IADIS.
*www.**weibelzahl**.de/literatur/**joyce**-esociety06-bibtex.html*

King, R., Bambling, M., Reid, W. & Thomas, I. (2006). Telephone and Online Counselling for Young People: A naturalistic comparison of session outcome, session impact and therapeutic alliance. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research.* 6(3): 175-181.

King, R., Bambling, M., Lloyd, C., Gomurra, R., Smith, S., Reid, W. & Wegner, K. (2006). Online Counselling: The motives and experiences of young people who choose the Internet instead of face to face or telephone counselling. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research.* 6(3): 169-174.

Lenhart, A. (2010) Teens, Cell Phones and Texting. *Pew Research Centre Publications.* http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1572/teens-cell-phones-text-messages

Lorente, S. (2002) Youth and Mobile Phones: Something More than a Fashion. http://api.ning.com/files/3u6zXagG8S1q-ePi9tmldO2skitlbF9WsZQSfBFxH1E_/YouthAndMobilePhones.pdf

Marshall, J. (2009). Skype. *European Regional Consultation for Child Helplines, October 2009. http://api.ning.com/files/9VVrFFnAPGFd5-74ObiDD8PtdqqT8svDApOIxmlIHGQ_/Skype.pdf*

Shiller, I. (2009) Online Counselling: A Review of the Literature. *East Metro Youth Services: http://www.emys.on.ca/pdfs_fordownload/onlinecounselling_literaturereview.pdf (March 15, 2010).*

Smith, E (2005). Online Counselling Comes of Age. University of Toronto: NEWS@UofT. *http://www.news.utoronto.ca/bin6/051011-1731.asp*

Trump, J. & Tuttle, I. (2001). Here, There, and Everywhere: Reference at the point-of-need. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship.* 27(6): 464-466.

Walker, V.L. & Rockinson-Szapkiw, A. Educational Opportunities for Clinical Counselling Simulations in Second Life. *Innovate. http://www.innovagteonline.info/index.php?view=article&id=711*

Williams, R., Bambling, M., King, R. & Abbott, Q. (2009). In-Session Processes in Online Counselling with Young People: An exploratory approach. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research.* 9(2): 93-100.

Wright, J. (2007) Online Text-based Counselling: Reflections of a Technophobe. *New Zealand Journal of Counselling.* 27 (1): 43-54.

Other sources for reference:

pro juventute : 147, Conseils par SMS de pro juventute
Conseils 147 Mode d'emploi du logiciel de répondance par SMS
*http://api.ning.com/files/S5NC8ecaXZEHBF-xGMOmw9UZ*m6bz9Yq1ytsBTMA*-8_/LogicielSMS147_ModedemploiV2.4_fr_0904.pdf*

Appendix A: <u>Definitions of the technical terms used in this review</u>
(adapted from Wikipedia, 2010)

Asynchronous/synchronous describes how a communication technology is perceived by humans—e.g., chat happens in *real time* and so is **synchronous** while email has a time delay between being sent and getting a response, so it is **asynchronous**. A similar analogy for phones would be a live conversation (synchronous) versus a voicemail (asynchronous).

Avatar – It is a computer user's representation of himself/herself or alter ego, whether in the form of a three-dimensional model used in computer games, a two-dimensional icon (picture) or a one-dimensional username used on Internet forums and other communities.

Blog (a contraction of the term "**web log**") It is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning *to maintain or add content to a blog*.

Electronic mail, most commonly abbreviated **email** and **e-mail**, is a method of exchanging digital messages.

Instant messaging (**IM**) is a form of real-time direct text-based communication between two or more people using shared client (a **client** is an application or system that accesses a remote service on another computer system, known as a server, by way of a network). The IM text is conveyed via devices connected over a network such as the Internet.

Message board or Internet **forum** is an online discussion site. It originated as the modern equivalent of a traditional bulletin board, and a technological evolution of the dialup bulletin board system. From a technological standpoint, *forums* or *boards* are web applications managing user-generated content. Ask Us Online is a form of forum or message board.

mHealth (also written as m-health or sometimes mobile health) is a recent term for medical and public health practice supported by mobile devices, such as mobile phones, patient monitoring devices, PDAs, and other wireless devices. Like **online counselling** or **e-therapy,** it is a form of health care made possible by advancements in communication technologies

Online chat (also known simply as "**chat**") can refer to any kind of communication over the Internet, but is primarily meant to refer to direct one-on-one chat or text-based group chat (formally also known as *synchronous conferencing*), using tools such as **instant messengers.**

Online counselling generally refers to the provision of professional mental health services / concerns via internet communication technology. Often called **e-therapy**,

etherapy, e-counselling, online therapy, or coaching, services are typically offered via **email**, **real-time chat**, and/or **video conferencing** (the latter of which is not possible for KHP/JJ because of our anonymity policy and associated privacy concerns).

Smartphone – It is a mobile phone offering advanced capabilities, often with PC-like functionality (PC-mobile handset convergence). There is no industry standard definition of a smartphone. For some, a smartphone is a phone that runs complete operating system software providing a standardized interface and platform for application developers. Other definitions might include features such as e-book reader capabilities, Wi-Fi, and/or a built-in full keyboard or external USB keyboard and VGA connector. In other words, it is a miniature computer that has phone capability.

Social network service - This type of service focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people, e.g., those who share interests and/or activities. A social network service essentially consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Although online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks.

The main types of social networking services are those which contain category places (such as former school-year or classmates), means to connect with friends (usually with self-description pages) and a recommendation system linked to trust. Popular methods now combine many of these, with Facebook, Bebo and Twitter widely used worldwide and MySpace and LinkedIn being the most widely used in North America.

Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet. Calls to other users within the Skype service are free, while calls to both traditional landline telephones and mobile phones can be made for a nominal fee using a debit-based user account system. Skype has also become popular for their additional features which include instant messaging, file transfer and video conferencing.

Synchronous conferencing is the formal term from the computer-mediated communication, collaboration and learning field, to describe online **chat** technologies. Today it is occasionally also extended to mean audio/video conferencing or instant messaging systems, given they provide a text-based multi-user chat function.

Text messaging, also known as "**texting**", refers to the exchange of brief written messages between mobile phones over cellular networks. While the term most often refers to messages sent using the Short Message Service (SMS), it has been extended to include messages containing image, video, and sound content (known as MMS messages). Individual messages are referred to as "text messages" or "texts". SMS may incur phone service provider fees

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as *followers*. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Since late 2009, users can follow lists of authors instead of following individual authors. All users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications. While the service itself costs nothing to use, accessing it through SMS may incur phone service provider fees.

Virtual world It is a genre of online community that often takes the form of a computer-based simulated environment, through which users can interact with one another and use and create objects. Virtual worlds are intended for its users to inhabit and interact, and the term today has become synonymous with interactive 3D virtual environments, where the users take the form of avatars visible to others graphically. These avatars are usually depicted as textual, two-dimensional, or three-dimensional graphical representations, although other forms are possible (auditory and touch sensations for example). Some, but not all, virtual worlds allow for multiple users.

   a. *Habbo* (previously known as *Habbo Hotel*) is a social networking website aimed at teenagers. The website is owned and operated by Sulake Corporation. The service began in 2000 and has expanded to include 32 online communities (or "hotels"). As of June 2008 over 118 million avatars have been registered. There are an average 8 million unique visitors monthly, and 75,000 avatars are being created every day.
   b. *Second Life* (*SL*) is a virtual world developed by Linden Lab that launched on June 23, 2003 and is accessible via the Internet. A free client program called the Second Life Viewer enables its users, called Residents, to interact with each other through avatars. Residents can explore, meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, and create and trade virtual property and services with one another, or travel throughout the world (which residents refer to as "the grid"). Second Life is for people aged 18 and over, while Teen Second Life is for people aged 13 to 17.