Evaluation and Collaboration During the First Year of the TextToday Crisis Intervention Program for Youth

Workshop Presented at the 2011 Garrett Lee Smith Grantee Meeting
Laura Davidson, M.A.
Evaluation Team,
University of Nevada, Reno
Idavidso@unr.edu

Misty Vaughan Allen, M.A.
State Suicide Prevention Coordinator,
Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention
mvallen@dhhs.nv.gov

Kathy Jacobs
Executive Director,
Nevada Crisis Call Center
kathyj@crisiscallcenter.org
WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- Background
- Program Description
- Evaluation Methodology
- Evaluation Results
- Program Demonstration
- Conclusion/Future Directions/Q&A
- Brainstorming Activity
YOUTH’S USE OF CCC

Ages of Callers to CCC from 2005-2008

- 2% of callers were 0-17 years old
- 11% were 18-30 years old
- 5% were 31-50 years old
- 19% were 51-64 years old
- 19% were 65+ years old
- 44% were 65+ years old

Age of Callers

- 0-17
- 18-30
- 31-50
- 51-64
- 65+
- Unknown

Background | Program | Evaluation Method | Evaluation Results | Conclusion
SUICIDE AND NEVADA YOUTH

- Nevada youth have rates of suicide and ideation that are almost twice the national average (YRBS, 2009)
  - 10% have attempted suicide
  - 18% have considered suicide
  - 30% have felt so sad they have stopped regular activities
According to researchers...
(and anyone who knows a teenager)

Teens **really** like
to text!
Text, palm computer, and online health interventions are gaining in popularity (Heron & Smith, 2010).

Promising for:
- Delivering MH services in low SES and rural areas
- Screenings and risk assessment
- Accessing hard-to-reach youth
A New Approach to Crisis Line Interventions

- Piloted May 2010
- First live, 24-hour, text-based crisis line in the United States
- First disseminated findings from text-based crisis line evaluation
UR not alone

If you or someone close is suffering...

- Violent girlfriend or boyfriend
- Violence at home
- Rape or sex abuse
- Drugs, Alcohol
- Thoughts about cutting, hurting yourself
- Being bullied, or know someone who is

Text “listen” to 839863

We can help. Crisis Call Center now has a text message program. Take us home, and text us later.
*Standard text message rates apply

Background | Program | Evaluation Method | Evaluation Results | Conclusion

SOCIAL MARKETING MATERIALS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Marketing Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiology Offices</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Fliers in offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyramid Lake Jr/Sr High School</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Rural, Native American</td>
<td>Presentations to students, posters in bathrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton Jr/Sr High School</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Presentation at parent night, some local media attn, posters in bathrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia City High School</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Posters in bathroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernley Middle School</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Posters in bathroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCSD</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>4 Urban Schools</td>
<td>Posters in bathroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Primary Goals of the TextToday Evaluation

1. Assess effectiveness of social marketing materials
2. Assess youth’s readiness for text-based crisis line
3. Assess how effectively crisis line meets needs of “texters”
4. Identify primary characteristics of texters
PILOT EVALUATION PLAN

Evaluation Methods

▷ Focus groups with 55 middle and high school youth
▷ Focus groups with Crisis Call Center’s 8 TextToday staff
▷ Post-intervention text sheets
▷ Cell phone carrier data
Social Marketing Materials

- Generally positive
- Considered them age-appropriate and relatable
- Considered tone appropriate
- Frustration with destruction of materials by classmates
- Some confusion about what posters advertised
Idea of Text Message-Based Crisis Line

- Generally positive
- Best when youth “just want to talk” and want anonymity
- Prefer texting when feeling “shy” or “embarrassed”
- Youth who had used system:
  - “They texted back pretty fast so that kinda shows like... they like care.” “Yeah it showed they took it seriously and that they were concerned.”
YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

Issues Faced and Current Resources Available

- Relational bullying, sex-related issues, drug/alcohol abuse, interpersonal violence and conflict (school-specific)
- Frustration with current resources available
- Reliance on friends during crisis
- Mistrust of school-based resources
YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

Barriers to Text Line Use

- No cell phones
- Concern about confidentiality/anonymity
- May not be appropriate for all crises
Goal 4: Characteristics of Texters

- 141 total text conversations
  - 16 Answer, 59 Listen, 48 Hope/Care, 9 Connect,
    8 CCC, 3 SASS
- 49.4% of texters have texted in more than once
  - 28.2% texted in twice
  - 22.4% texted in three times
  - 50.6% of texters only texted in one time
# TEXTER CHARACTERISTICS

## # of Texts Sent by User

- 36% < 5
- 32% 6-20
- 32% > 21

## Resolution of Conversation

- 57.4% information/support
- 30.5% no resolution/opt out
- 7.8% texter calmed/de-escalated
Basic Demographics

- Gender:
  - 51.1% female
  - 13.7% male
  - 35.3% unknown

- Age:
  - 61.7% ages 17 and under
  - 6.5% are 18 and older
  - 31.2% unknown
Goal 3: Assess Effectiveness of TextToday Line

- Strengths of system
- Weaknesses of system
- Opportunities to improve system
- Threats to improving system
## CCC FOCUS GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting unmet youth need</td>
<td>No voice cues from texter OR staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymity of CCC staff</td>
<td>Length of text conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved record of all text conversations</td>
<td>Need to multi-task between text and call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff can adapt call strategies to build rapport and conduct risk assessments</td>
<td>Frequent opt-outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone numbers not blocked</td>
<td>Some technical problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledging differences between text and calls</td>
<td>Need more texts!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigning select staff to texting full-time</td>
<td>May never be as effective as phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource and strategy-sharing</td>
<td>Difficult to connect youth to resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of staff who excel at texting</td>
<td>Difficult to transition crisis texter to phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting call sheets to text capabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Background

- Program
- Evaluation Method
- Evaluation Results
- Conclusion

## Evaluation Results
NEW MARKETING MATERIALS

Background

Program

Evaluation Method

Evaluation Results

Conclusion
NEW MARKETING MATERIALS

Background

Program

Evaluation Method

Evaluation Results

Conclusion
NEW MARKETING MATERIALS

If you or a loved one is suffering...
- Depression/grief/loss
- Domestic violence
- Sexual Assault
- Substance Abuse
- Thoughts of self-harm

Text “hope” to 839863
We can help. Crisis Call Center now has a text message program. Take us home, and text us later.
*Standard text message rates apply

Resources

Crisis Call Center
Text support, text “hope” to 839863
Telephone support, call (800) 273-8255
www.crisiscallcenter.org

Crisis Call Center
Sexual Assault/Rape
For text support, text “sassy” to 839863
(775) 784-8090

Safe Place
Homeless/At-risk Youths
(775) 352-8090

Healthy Communities Coalition
(775) 246-7550

Prevent Bullying (text only)
Text (775) 291-6772 to report bullying or harassment to a school administrator.

B safe Wr. phone. Don’t text and drive.

Text “hope” to 839863
We can help. Crisis Call Center now has a text message program. Take us home, and text us later.
*Standard text message rates apply
TextToday Demonstration Program

Step 1: Write SUPPORT in subject line of text
Step 2: Send text to 839863
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caller ID</th>
<th>Responder</th>
<th>Time of Text</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Last Incoming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8053319505</td>
<td>jonathan</td>
<td>02-01-11 10:09</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>Thank your this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6126703408</td>
<td>tom</td>
<td>02-07-11 17:52</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>Yes just give me a call on m...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6508670530</td>
<td></td>
<td>11-09-10 13:36</td>
<td></td>
<td>93001</td>
<td>Hi lookin fer foodbank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2183931904</td>
<td></td>
<td>02-04-11 11:41</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>EMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6126188383</td>
<td></td>
<td>02-03-11 12:17</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>Ems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4437456578</td>
<td></td>
<td>01-29-11 17:47</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Bully</td>
<td>Bully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8313320296</td>
<td></td>
<td>01-29-11 17:47</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Bully</td>
<td>Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9167292345</td>
<td></td>
<td>01-29-11 17:46</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Bully</td>
<td>Got it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8053405884</td>
<td></td>
<td>01-26-11 17:24</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>Ems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9095767563</td>
<td></td>
<td>01-06-11 14:43</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>teen</td>
<td>I'm depressed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

Name: Tom Evans  
phone: 8053319505  
email: tom@emsmail.org  
created: 2008-01-06 09:22:12 -0800  
keyword: EMS  
assigned: jonathan

When you create a note, it appears here
T.Evans  
Caller very active

**Recent SMS for this user**

Thank your this

8053319505 to EMS PPTMS Demo, CCC-Demo on 02-01-11 10:09

Thank U 4 txting us! You will be contacted shortly by one of our text message support staff. (opt out at any time by texting "stop")

EMS PPTMS Demo to 8053319505 on 02-01-11 10:03
CONCLUSION

- TextToday has helped increase youth help-seeking behaviors
- Initial response to program and materials very positive
- Youth and adults use Crisis Line differently
- Many phone-based strategies can be adapted for use with texting
- Difficult to gather demographics on texters
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Use evaluation data to make changes to program and materials
- Expansion throughout Nevada
- Follow-up with text line users
- Coordination with other text-based treatment programs
- Specialized training programs
- Evaluation of long-term outcomes
Thanks To The Rest Of Our Team:

William Evans, Ph.D.
Lead Evaluator,
University Of Nevada, Reno

Jonathan Holly And Tom Evans
TextToday System/Marketing Developers
Educational Messaging Services

Stacy Gillham
Program Coordinator,
Office Of Suicide Prevention
QUESTIONS?

- Laura Davidson, M.A.
  University of Nevada, Reno
  ldavidso@unr.edu

- Misty Vaughan Allen, M.A.
  Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention
  mvallen@dhhs.nv.gov

- Kathy Jacobs
  Nevada Crisis Call Center
  kathyj@crisiscallcenter.org