

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the 2020
Budget**



Kids Help Phone/ Jeunesse, J'écoute

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$3,000,000 to expand texting solutions to support Indigenous youth through partnerships (2019-2025)
- **Recommendation 2:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$2,400,000 to launch a public data website on youth mental health (2019-2025)
- **Recommendation 3:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$9,000,000 to develop a national peer to peer support program (2019-2025)
- **Recommendation 4:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$6,000,000 to expand texting support across Canada (2019-2025)
- **Recommendation 5:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$3,500,000 to break down barriers to better support young black Canadians

Executive Summary

There are few issues in the country that are so urgent to address, that affect so many so deeply, and that are of such profound public interest. **As the demand for mental health support for young people in Canada far outstrips the ability to serve their needs, Kids Help Phone has a vision and a plan to transform the landscape.**

Since 1989, Kids Help Phone has been the pioneer and leader in e-mental health solutions in Canada. We are an essential service in every province and territory, an irreplaceable component in the continuum of care. We know what the issues are, what young people are grappling with and how to reach them because we speak with them every day. As kids are changing faster than ever, and technology even faster – it is imperative we also innovate and evolve to better to meet the mental health journey of all young people in Canada. **To creatively tackle these issues head on, Kids Help Phone is proposing a bold and innovative vision for the future.**

Our services help ensure that young people across Canada have the best start in life and have a real and fair chance to succeed. As the country's virtual care expert and provider of e-mental health support services, Kids Help Phone cannot simply stay the course of "steady state". **To meet and sustain current demands for youth mental health services and anticipate and develop future ones, we must create something breakthrough, true to our innovative spirit.**

To fuel our future, and continue to accelerate change in the youth mental health and well-being space, **Kids Help Phone must enter the next phase of transformational growth to meet the large and growing needs facing our young people today.**

The following recommendations will make great strides in improving the availability and accessibility of proven, effective mental health and well-being supports and services. Kids Help Phone has carefully considered the requirements for achieving these results and **identified the following recommendations as pillars in the foundation for this success.**

Recommendation 1

Funding Proposal:

- 2019 Costs: \$500,000.00
- 2020-2025 Costs: \$2,500,000.00

Overview:

With support from the Federal Government in 2019, Kids Help Phone will expand the highly acclaimed Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone service to better support Indigenous youth across the country. This service, which was trialed in Manitoba in early 2018 and launched 24/7 nationally in November, has already taken over 100,000 conversations and is on track to provide support more than 150,000 times in 2019. The texting service model uses volunteers who have completed 36 hours of online training, including a specific training on supporting Indigenous texters. The volunteers sign on to an integrated platform from their homes and are overseen, in real time, by paid, professional social workers.

The service evaluation has demonstrated the services' efficacy as texters end their conversations feeling less distressed, less alone, more hopeful and more in control. Currently, approximately 6% of users of the texting service identify as Indigenous. But, we know the need and the opportunities are far greater.

Recommendation 2

Funding Proposal:

- 2019 Costs: \$400,000.00
- 2020-2025 Costs: \$2,000,000.00

Overview:

With support from the Federal Government in 2019, Kids Help Phone will launch a free, real-time website, providing data and trends on youth mental health across Canada. This Public Data Website, will be the first-of-its-kind in Canada and will map what young people speak about every day through our texting service, highlighting regional and time-specific differences.

The Public Data Website will fill a critical need for data on Canada's youth mental health and well-being and is a vital first step to being able to predict, identify, mitigate, and prevent mental health issues faced by youth across the country. This data, which will be available to policy makers, researchers, and the public, can be harnessed to build systems and supports that truly meet the needs of young people and ensure better outcomes for all.

Recommendation 3

Funding Proposal:

- 2019 Costs: \$1,500,000.00
- 2020-2025 Costs: \$7,500,000.00

Overview:

With support from the Federal Government in 2019, Kids Help Phone will begin development of a national, 24/7 Peer-to-Peer support program to allow young people in distress to confidentially connect with young people who have had similar experiences.

We look to the Federal Government to provide the seed funding to develop and announce this exciting and needed focus on peer support in 2019. The funds will support bringing on partner organizations to support the service, striking a steering committee with youth representatives, developing the implementation plan and hiring staff to launch the service. Our plans are to announce the program in 2019 and trial the service in early 2020. Together, Kids Help Phone and the Federal Government can demonstrate that Canada is on the forefront of recognizing the importance of peer support.

Recommendation 4

Funding Proposal:

- 2019 Costs: \$1,000,000.00
- 2020-2025 Costs: \$5,000,000.00

Overview:

With support from the Federal Government in 2019, Kids Help Phone will expand the highly acclaimed Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone service to even more young people across the country. This service, which was trialed in Manitoba in early 2018 and launched 24/7 nationally in November, has already taken over 80,000 conversations. The texting service model uses volunteers who have completed 36 hours of online training, including two hours on supporting Indigenous texters. The volunteers sign on to an integrated platform from their homes and are overseen, in real time, by paid, professional social workers.

The service evaluation has demonstrated the services' efficacy as texters end their conversations feeling less distressed, less alone, more hopeful and more in control. And the service is providing an important outlet for young people. In fact, 76% of texters report that without the service they would have done nothing – they would have ignored the issue, hoped it went away and not reached out to anyone. In addition, 7% of users say that without the service they would have gone to an emergency room, a savings of over \$500,000, since launching.

Recommendation 5

Funding Proposal:

- 2019 Costs: \$350,000
- 2020-2025 Costs: \$3,250,000.00

Overview:

Funding from the Government of Canada would allow:

- Development of a partnership working group that would inform and implement this work so that, from the very beginning, and through each stage, Black Canadian youth and their supporters are involved
- Literature review of the needs of black Canadians, key stakeholders, current services and other relevant program development components
- Focus groups with young black Canadians to understand first hand their issues, needs and whether or not Kids Help Phone can be service they feel meets these needs
- Professional development materials and trainings will be developed for our Service team based on the outcomes of the literature review and stakeholder consultations to ensure our team has the most up to date resources as well as the skills when supporting young black youth
- Young Black Canadians are consulted in the development of Kids Help Phone marketing and outreach materials to ensure the brand resonates with them
- Our Services will be marketed to young black youth, based on the feedback they provide so that is can be a service to support them 24/7 but one we know actually resonates as well
- Our Community Resource Database of programs and services from across Canada will be updated to ensure that all relevant services supporting young black Canadian youth are included so that our counsellors can make appropriate referrals