

## **Canada Health Inforoute Teams up with Kids Help Phone to Provide Crisis Support Via Text**

**May 10, 2018 (Toronto)** — [Canada Health Inforoute](#) (Infoway) and [Kids Help Phone](#) have formed a partnership to help expand the reach of ***Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone***.

In January 2018, Kids Help Phone — the only nationwide counselling and support service of its kind for youth in Canada — formed a service partnership with U.S. based helpline and technology pioneer, Crisis Text Line, to provide people in Canada with the first ever, 24/7, free nationwide crisis texting service. A pilot introduction of ***Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone*** began in Manitoba in February and the service will be rolled out to other provinces and territories in English and French later this year.

“We are proud to be a partner in this important initiative and we look forward to making the service available to young people across the country,” said Michael Green, President and CEO, Infoway. “One of our goals is to improve access to health care through digital services. More and more young people prefer to communicate by text, so this is a great way to support those who are in crisis.”

“The service trial is already proving to be an essential service; more than 1,000 young people have used the service and since we launched, we have tripled the number of youth in Manitoba reaching out to Kids Help Phone for support — not only through texting but through our other services as well,” said Katherine Hay, President and CEO, Kids Help Phone. “That means the emotional health and well-being of more youth is being supported as a result of this service. That’s a very significant indicator of how powerful this support can be, and how necessary it is to continue securing the resources needed to make this service available to all young people across Canada.”

When ***Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone*** is rolled out nationally, any young person in Canada will be able to text a short-code to connect with a trained volunteer Crisis Responder who is available to “talk through texting” about any subject, big or small. The Crisis Responder will help move the person from a “hot moment to a cool calm” using a five-stage structured conversation. The service requires no data plan, internet connection or app, and is especially relevant for people living in remote or rural areas where such services can be limited.

“Mental Health Week is an opportune time to highlight the benefits that this texting service can have for all youth, no matter where they are — from those in remote and rural areas, where access to the internet or a personal device with internet may be limited, to those living in urban centres,” Green said. “Help is just a text away.”

“We have developed a training module to prepare our volunteer Crisis Responders to communicate with all young people, so that they can help address any type of issue, no matter how big or small,” Hay said. “We also encourage anyone who is interested in supporting youth mental health and well-being to consider volunteering as a Crisis Responder or join our growing list of donors. We’re proud to have supporters from across the country! Together, we are part of a national movement to support the mental health of people in need.”

### **About Kids Help Phone**

[Kids Help Phone](#) is Canada’s only 24/7 national service offering professional counselling, information, referrals and volunteer-led text-based support (available nationwide by the end of 2018) for young people. Kids Help Phone’s free services are available in both English and French. Kids Help Phone is a registered Canadian charity, and we raise the majority of our revenue from individuals, foundations, corporations, and community fundraising.

### **About Canada Health Infoway**

Infoway helps to improve the health of Canadians by working with partners to accelerate the development, adoption and effective use of digital health across Canada. Through our investments, we help deliver better quality and access to care and more efficient delivery of health services for patients and clinicians. Infoway is an independent, not-for-profit organization funded by the federal government.

-30-

### **Media Contacts:**

#### **Jayani Perera**

Strategic Communications Consultant

Kids Help Phone

(416) 272-2650

[Jayani.Perera@kidshelpphone.ca](mailto:Jayani.Perera@kidshelpphone.ca)

#### **Karen Schmidt**

Director, Corporate Communications

Canada Health Infoway

(416) 595-3167

[Email Us](#)

## **Backgrounder**

### **How the texting service works:**

Kids Help Phone is partnering with Crisis Text Line and using their established technology platform and service model in Canada. The service is accessible by youth through a free, easy to remember short-code. Youth can reach the service using any text/SMS-enabled device and do not require a data plan or internet connection.

Texts are directed to Crisis Text Line's online platform in Canada where Kids Help Phone's volunteer Crisis Responders read and respond to the messages. Kids Help Phone supervisors are available to provide in-the-moment coaching to the volunteers and to take over an escalated situation should an active rescue be required. All conversations between the texter and responder are confidential.

### **The importance of a texting support service:**

Technology is rapidly changing the way young people communicate. Texting is their preferred mode of communication. The free, 24/7 volunteer-based texting service will provide youth everywhere across Canada greater access to confidential crisis resolution, thus reducing barriers for people living in rural, remote, and under-served communities.

Research has shown that suicide accounts for 24 per cent of all deaths among 15 to 24-year-olds in Canada and suicide is the second leading cause of death between the ages of 10 and 24. Kids Help Phone studies have revealed that youth in rural and remote regions are 52 per cent more likely than youth in urban areas to discuss suicide; 55 per cent more likely to receive a crisis intervention during a counselling session and 66 per cent more likely to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity. Indigenous youth are five times more likely to die by suicide than non-Indigenous youth.

**An overview of the texting process:**

1. A person uses any text/SMS enabled cell phone to text TALK to a short-code.
2. First time users receive an automated Kids Help Phone message providing details about its Privacy Policy and duty to report.
3. A connection is made with a trained, volunteer Crisis Responder who is available through a web-based online platform and can read and respond to text messages.
4. A texting conversation begins.
5. The volunteer Crisis Responder is trained to help bring an individual from a hot moment to a cool calm.
6. The texter's phone number is not visible; all information shared with the Crisis Responder remains confidential unless it is necessary to call emergency services.
7. At any time, the individual can type STOP to end the conversation. No further communication with the Crisis Responder will take place.
8. There is no charge for sending or receiving texts and the service will not use up any prepaid texts as part of an existing texting plan.

Until this service is available nationally, youth can reach out for support through visiting [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca) or call **1-800-668-6868** today. Kids Help Phone is available, 24/7/365 for young people in need.

**More information:**

If you want to learn how to become a volunteer Crisis Responder, use ***Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone*** or donate, visit: [kidshelpphone.ca/text](http://kidshelpphone.ca/text).