

Meeting the Challenges of Teens and Technology Today: A SOLOS Community Expert Training Pilot

CET Final Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

This is the final report for the Community Experts Training (CET) Workshops. CET Workshops are based on the “Train the Trainer” model and use dynamic power points, mind mapping, dialogue, small group facilitations and guided Internet experimentation. The Safe OnLine Outreach Society (SOLOS) developed and delivered the two-day Workshops for 3 groups of professionals who work with youth in



geographically diverse areas of British Columbia. Following the Workshop, these community experts* became more effective in supporting awareness, prevention and responses to online child sexual exploitation and trafficking in their respective communities. The CET Workshops targeted human service professionals; social workers, youth workers, family counselors, school administrators, school liaison officers, probation officers, restorative justice practitioners, victim services and mental health workers. Attaining our goal of creating resilience in BC communities was successful, as reflected in the evaluation by participants who reported an increase in relevant awareness, prevention activities and distribution of educational material in their home communities. Some key deliverables that participants provided to their home communities after the training include:

- Community presentations either in collaboration with staff or with local law enforcement
- Resource development for community-wide distribution focusing on unique community issues
- Incorporating SOLOS material in individual counseling and crisis intervention policy
- Policy redevelopment -including revised consent and confidentiality forms to facilitate client relationships
- Communications plans to introduce resident communities to online concerns

The project promoted emerging innovative practices, stressed building community capacity and focused on advancing existing community expertise.



* “community experts” - refers to the criteria that participants were already youth and youth intervention ‘experts’ in their home communities NOT that they would leave the Workshop as “Experts” in online safety.

CET OVERVIEW

Background

In 2007 SOLOS prepared a document titled **“Bridging the Gap: Best Practices and Policies to Address the Online High-Risk Activities of Youth in BC”** with funding from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General of British Columbia. The 128-page report suggests that a policy strategy to combat online sexual exploitation of youth should be based on a human services approach, favour cooperation and coordination amongst industry, government, NGOs and the public, and have a strong focus on education, awareness, research and training.

After conducting a thorough environmental scan of other jurisdictional approaches in the UK, EU and United States, SOLOS recommended British Columbia implement strategies and responses that focused on education generally and on enhancing human-service sector knowledge specifically. The research showed that youth most at risk online, are also those most at risk offline and in all probability would already identified by youth workers, school personnel, child protection and youth-serving professionals in the community. Therefore the risks youth face online are best managed by professionals already working with high-risk youth in those communities. Finally, ‘Bridging’ stressed that the strategies must be ongoing and continually updated in order to responsibly respond to the constantly changing nature of online risks and dangers.

EVALUATION RESULTS

“Honestly it was one of the best workshops I've attended - due to the relevance of the topic. Now I'm thinking more along the lines of technology and seeing how it's been missed in other areas and workshops.” (CET 1 participant)

Professionals who participated in the CET Workshops:

- ★ Have more skills understand and deal with the local incidences of online issues,
- ★ Have the advantage of already being connected to local youth and therefore
- ★ Will transfer their knowledge to their home communities, other professionals and youth populations following the workshop.

Evaluation Research Design and Methods

- ★ Comprehensive evaluation data was collected in three ways; participant observation, surveys immediately following the Workshop and follow-up interviews one month after the Workshop. A final Workshop Summary report was compiled after each retreat. Each Workshop Summary report was used to enhance, adjust or amend the subsequent training sessions.
- ★ Facilitators observed participants as they engaged in the Workshop,
- ★ A post-workshop questionnaire was completed at the end of the second day,
- ★ And participants were contacted approximately one month after the retreat to via telephone interview during which they were asked to reflect on their accomplishments and the barriers they faced in implementing their ideas after the Workshop.

This evaluation style allowed for dialogue and for SOLOS to connect with the participants again thus enhancing relationship building.



Evaluation Results

- ★ In addition to the specific outcomes listed below, our evaluation showed that participating professionals:
 - ★ Began networking with other concerned agencies in their communities
 - ★ Presented safety education to their clients and colleagues
 - ★ Conducted internet safety-themed meetings with local parents to raise awareness
 - ★ Were able to address issues of evidence collection with their clients
 - ★ Began discussing privacy, confidentiality and anonymity in the online environment as policy-relevant risks in their communities.



Evaluation Results from CET Workshop Participants;

- ★ All participants rated the retreat as very educational.
- ★ All participants suggested that the information given at the retreat was very relevant.
- ★ All participants reported that they would recommend the training to their peers.
- ★ All participants stated that they feel MORE equipped post retreat to deal with issues of online safety than prior to the retreat.
 - ★ Evaluations identified a stronger feeling of confidence to deliver materials
 - ★ Evaluations identified that those who had knowledge prior to the retreat were able to identify gaps in their knowledge and to recognize risks that they were not aware of and felt more motivated to consider safety concerns
- ★ No participant identified any thing to be omitted from future CETs
- ★ Most participants did not identify anything that was missing from content
 - ★ One participant suggested that a youth perspective would have been useful
- ★ The most useful information was the new ability to share – in terms of resources and what was learned and to develop a practice policy
- ★ All participants suggested that they would use the information in their practice.
- ★ Some discussed their minds being in “action mode” and wanting to “spread the word”

“Look forward to meeting again and taking this “fight” to the next level on behalf of all those involved with and concerned about preventing and addressing dangers online. What we don’t know we can preach about, protect from, or education about, or for that matter, find ways to appreciate” (CET 3 participant)

Participant used the knowledge they acquired at CET Workshops in four areas; youth education, worker education, workplace education and policy adjustment.

Youth Education

- ★ Heightened my awareness in engagement with youth.
- ★ Attending the retreat caused me to look for new opportunities to talk about issues with youths
- ★ I've had conversations with youth about posting pictures, and the associated criminal implications
- ★ I've shared with kids and given them direction; including youth rather than doing things for youth.
- ★ Updated organization website to include internet safety information
- ★ Delivered internet safety presentation to Grade 8 students in Fort St. James (collaborated with RCMP)
- ★ Used information learned for one-on-one Internet safety education education with child clients
- ★ Updated violence prevention materials and packages to include SOLOS materials

Worker Education

- ★ Several participants further explored the online environments, i.e: Bebo, after Workshop
- ★ Double checked my own security settings on Facebook

Workplace Education

- ★ Engaged in dialogue with my team about different ways to use the Internet to connect with their youths
- ★ Presented info learned to my team (including info on autism sites),
- ★ Talked to supervisor about online behavior/policy
- ★ Did a presentation to our Managers and staff concerns about confidentiality forms and policy and procedures around staff internet usage
- ★ We are scheduled to do an internet safety presentation to the Band Staff including available Council members,
- ★ My staff used some of their time to familiarize themselves with potential risky behaviours with our youth online

Policy Adjustment

- ★ Started a Facebook group for youth centre
- ★ Incorporated questions regarding online activities into intake and risk assessment forms.
- ★ Added a new email signature to state limits of confidentiality and anonymity where communicating via email
- ★ Downloaded the “User agreement” recommended in CET for use in youth centre
- ★ Used CET information to inform OUTSPEAK website
- ★ Met with Aboriginal Education Team and Principal and Band to plan internet safety events for local youth (Smithers and Morricetown).
- ★ Discussed updating school policies to reflect youth involvement online
- ★ Created some survey questions and emailed out to colleagues (other counselors and youth care workers) and have received back about 20 surveys with some excellent concerns. We will compile comments and plot next strategies around approaching district administrators about concerns and changing district policies plus having SOLOS up in fall to do presentation to district administrators. (Kamloops School District)



CET Workshops: Details

Participant Profile:

- ★ The SOLOS CET pilot reached a total of 23 practitioners representing;
 - ★ Vancouver Island Health Authority
 - ★ Ministry of Child and Family Development
 - ★ Child & Youth Mental Health - Intake/ Triage Clinician
 - ★ First Nations Communities (4)
 - ★ Nanaimo Youth Services - Program Coordinator
 - ★ Canadian Red Cross Society – RespectEd Outreach Coordinator
 - ★ Surpassing Our Survival (SOS Society) Youth Workers
 - ★ Foster Parent
 - ★ One Guardianship consultant
 - ★ Family Resource Worker
 - ★ School Districts (6) (including administration, school counselors and learning assistant teachers)

Pre-Retreat

- ★ Participants were provided with several articles to read prior to each event including:
 - “Cyberbullying: Our Kids’ New Reality – A Kids Help Phone Research Study of Kids Online (2007)
 - “Internet Predator Stereotypes – Debunked in New Study”. (2008) American Psychological Association Press Release
 - “Online Predators and their Victims: Myths, Realities and Implications for Prevention and Treatment” Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell & Ybarra (2008).
 - and a quantitative study reporting the use of online technologies by youth (YouthinBC report).
 - They were also asked to “google” themselves prior to the retreat.

CET Content

- ★ Seven topic areas were covered: understanding online technologies, high-risk activities online, understanding children youth, legal considerations, strategic responses, professional online ethics, and building community specific plans. The content was delivered using a combination of dynamic power points, mind mapping, dialogue, small group facilitations and guided Internet experimentation.
- ★ Day 1 was oriented around delivering content while Day 2 saw participants applying their new knowledge to their specific communities, and building “smart goals” for themselves. “Smart goals were defined as: specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and time specific. (See also Appendix 3)

VENUES

- ★ CET Workshops took place in:
- ★ Nanaimo , BC (www.kiwicovelodge.com) - October 17th to 19th, 2008
- ★ Sorrento Centre, BC (www.sorrento-centre.bc.ca) February 27th to 28th, 2009
- ★ Prince George, BCn (www.nlbc.bc.ca) on April 8th to 9th, 2009.

Post Retreat

★ After the retreat, participants were sent four files to inform their practice: an “Age of consent” information sheet, a sample family contract for internet user dialogue and limits, an academic article, “Making the Connection Between Brain Processing and Cyberawareness: A Developmental Reality” (Berson, 2003) and three mind maps co-created by participants and facilitators during the retreat. These include “Ethical Considerations for Child and Youth Care Workers in Online Settings”, “Understanding Children and Youth in Online Settings” and ”Smart Goals”.



Barriers to Implementation

★ While participants reported wanting to employ their Workshop knowledge in practice, two barriers were common. First, time was a constraint due to already full schedules of practitioners that did not allow for re-direction of resources. Second, institutional policy constraints were prevalent in the practice settings of several participants. In some cases, supervisors were not supportive in making changes to daily practice, whether due to their own time constraints or to

a reluctance to challenge institutional policy.



5. Next Steps

- ★ Due to the success and positive response to the SOLOS CET Workshop Pilot, SOLOS envisions three sequential next steps that would continue to move the goals forward:

Step One: Continued Support and Supplemental Resources

- ★ A critical aspect in the near future is to continue offering support to those experts we've trained to ensure their continued dedication to this area of knowledge
- ★ SOLOS wishes to create pre-packaged presentation material for CET participants to deliver in their communities
- ★ By providing participants with supplemental information and support through electronic updates and online contact, CET participants will:
 - Be constantly updated with new and emerging trends, and
 - Be key information sharers in their communities resulting in more effective and efficient prevention of and response to local incidents of online exploitation.

Step Two: British Columbia Wide CET Workshop Roll-Out

- ★ 2009/2010 Community Experts Training Workshop Program to be expanded and deliver 10 Workshops throughout the province.

Step Three: Special Projects

- ★ The ACCET Program – Aboriginal Community - Community Expert Training
 - SOLOS has designed a new project based on the CET pilot which will specifically target BC Aboriginal communities with culturally adjusted content and resources – The Aboriginal Centered Community Experts Training Program (ACCET).
 - This project is now in proposal stage and has the potential to be rolled out during 2010 depending on government, corporate and community support.
- ★ The OOSWG – Youth Worker Policy Re-development
 - Given the great demand for policy-relevant work realized during SOLOS activities and more recently during CET, SOLOS is spearheading the Online Outreach Strategies Working Group (OOSWG)
 - This group involves youth-serving professionals concerned about how to ethically engage with young people in online settings. More information is available by request.

Appendix 5: The Safe OnLine Outreach Society

ABOUT SOLOS
PROGRAMS
ONLINE BOOKING
PUBLICATIONS
LIBRARY
SUPPORT SOLOS
BLOGS



SOLOS

INFO that CLICKS!

We've recently updated our look, our programs and our outlook.
Check out what's new at the Safe Online Outreach Society...

Spring 2009
Special Edition

Updated Youth Presentations:
Teens and Teens; Cyber-bullying and "Teens and Teens: Gaming, Sexting and Social Networking" are our new youth presentations.

Facebook Fan Page
Have you always been a secret fan of SOLOS? Now you can join our Fan Page (like Facebook friends but without the obligations) and make it official.

Website Redesign
You'll see evidence of it here in this newsletter but to get the full effect of our new design you have to go to our website.

Professional Development Workshops
Our increasingly popular professional presentations address concerns expressed by youth workers, teachers, counselors, probation, law enforcement and criminal justice professionals.

Logs and Blogs
SOLOS is now home to two blogs; Roadtrips and Ramblings is Meryn Horton's (SOLOS ED) musings and pictures from travels throughout B.C.

PROGRAMS
ABOUT SOLOS

PUBLICATIONS
BLOGS

SOLOS Completes 500th Community Presentation

From Atlix to Coquitlam and Squamish to Port Alford and hundreds of points in between, SOLOS Presentations have been delivered in classrooms, community theatres and Friendship Centres across British Columbia.

It's been a long time since the initial launch of SOLOS programs and pilots. Initially a National Crime Prevention Pilot, the materials, resources, in-person presentations and awareness distributed by this Mission-based Society is astounding. SOLOS presented to it's 500th audience this spring in Port Hardy on June 8th. . From a pilot project to a respected, thriving and relevant organization that presented to over 17,000 individuals last year alone, SOLOS vision is to "Eradicate the online exploitation of children and youth".

"Although my children are still young (8 & 10), the information was incredibly valuable and eye opening. Communicating this type of information to parents and kids should be as standard as sexual health classes!"

Jennifer Muzzini, President Blykeburne Elementary Parent Advisory Council, Coquitlam

Merlyn Horton, Executive Director of SOLOS, receives B.C. Crime Prevention Association Individual Achievement Award - October 4, 2008



Photo (l to r): Byron Bouchey, Superintendent of the RCMP "E" Division; Merlyn Horton; Wally O'Connell

Internationally recognized for her dynamic, passionate pro-technology and youth-centered approach, Executive Director, Merlyn Horton has presented her ideas and curricula in Europe and throughout Western Canada. Sought after for not only her fast-paced presentations, but for her vast knowledge of online dynamics and youth culture, Horton's background in the social service sector sets her apart from anyone else working in the field of internet safety education.

"I have attended Merlyn's presentation on three separate occasions and each time have come away amazed at the stuff that is out there that I was unaware of. I have found myself talking to my kids, on numerous occasions, about things that I have learned in these presentations. I have talked to the administration at my teenage son's school to encourage them to have this brought to the school."

Monica Bodner, Chilliwack Foster Parent

We Need Your Help to Keep Up the Work!

SOLOS has a critical need for sponsorship to fund the development and delivery of our programs. We are looking for individuals, businesses or organizations in your community who understand and support the importance of our work for the children and youth throughout BC. If you or someone you know is concerned about keeping children safe online—we need your help.

Please see our website and donate to our Fundraising and Sponsorship Campaign 2009. www.safeonlineoutreach.com



"If there is technological advance without social advance, there is, almost automatically, an increase in human misery, in impoverishment." Michael Harrington