

Prevent Abuse of Children Text and Chat Hotline (PACTECH) Project: End of Pilot Data Report

Wendy Wolfersteig, PhD, Director
Diane Moreland, MS, Research Analyst
Marisol Diaz, JD, Research Analyst

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INTRODUCTION

Childhelp is the lead agency for the Prevent Abuse of Children Text and Chat Hotline (PACTECH) Project supported by Grant No. 90CA1855 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau US Department of Health and Human Services. Childhelp is the only national hotline with a primary focus on child abuse; therefore, it is fitting that Childhelp provides oversight of the PACTECH launch as well as managing the collaboration of key partners, ensuring successful implementation and service delivery. The PACTECH project target population is adolescents ages 13-24. PACTECH outcomes will help determine best practices and protocols pertaining to the use of text and chat in the child abuse and neglect helpline environment.

Childhelp partnered with Arizona State University's Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (ASU-SIRC) for the research and evaluation components of PACTECH. ASU-SIRC has extensive experience in overseeing, implementing, and conducting rigorous evaluations. Childhelp and ASU-SIRC have worked together for many years in evaluating multiple projects and collaborated on the approach and design of the PACTECH project. The research design uses both a formative evaluation to report and improve processes and implementation, and a summative evaluation strategy to report on outcomes. Help seekers contact PACTECH utilizing text or chat to seek support and guidance with child abuse and neglect related concerns. Trained counselors respond either using text or chat technology based on the mode of initial contact. Upon initiating each session for all contacts, counselors record non-identifying demographic answers about the help seeker and continue throughout the session completing presenting issues, referrals provided and intervention provided (as the information is shared by the help seeker). Help seekers had the opportunity to opt-out of responding to questions. The iCarol system is used to collect help seeker data. The data collected by the counselor for each call, text and live chat in the iCarol data collection form include the following:

- date of contact,
- time/length of contact,
- gender,
- age range,
- caller relation to issue (parent, self, teacher, etc),
- call content,
- interaction with caller,
- action plan developed,
- level of intervention provided,
- how they heard about the hotline, and
- caller reaction to service.

Additionally, learning from experts in the field including from the experiences of other national hotlines was also determined to be of special attention and two focus groups were planned: the first with members from the National Hotline Consortium (NHC) and the second with Childhelp hotline counselors. ASU-SIRC conducted the first focus group on March 15, 2019 in Washington, DC. The goal of the focus group was to ask NHC members about best practices for implementing text and chat in their hotlines. Nine members were present and three participants attended via phone. Focus group participants represented various hotlines including RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), POLARIS (National Human Trafficking Hotline), NCVS (National Center for Victims of Crime), Pathways, and Childhelp. Topics covered included: marketing, policies/procedures, staff training, mandatory reporting, evaluation, collecting and storing data.

ASU-SIRC conducted the second 90-minute focus group on June 19, 2019 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. with nine hotline

counselors (all females) at the Childhelp Office. The participants were fully informed of any risk, benefits, and expectations associated with their participation. The hotline counselors were asked eight questions focused on the pilot implementation of text and chat. This included an assessment of strengths, barriers, needs, and recommendations. Details of these focus groups have been featured in prior quarterly reports.

Accordingly, the evaluation of PACTECH includes both implementation (formative) and achievement measures of stated objectives (summative). The evaluation approach was divided into three phases:

1. A pilot phase
2. Implementation phase 1
3. Implementation phase 2

The pilot phase of the program was carried out for most of 2019. The pilot data were analyzed for the six-months of February to July 2019 and analyzed in August through October 2019 to determine if the designated outcome percentages were on target for year one. In August, the Childhelp and ASU-SIRC team members met with the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau program officers to discuss the initial findings. At that time, decisions were made about next steps including minor changes to questions, response categories, data tabulation and timelines. These changes were instituted in the fall of 2019 in anticipation of the Implementation phases to follow.

This report highlights the quantitative pilot data collected between February and July 2019. Text contact data were collected for all six PACTECH pilot months. Chat contact data began being collected in April 2019. In addition to data being examined by contact type, data were also split to examine data by level of intervention. Level 1 intervention contacts are information only exchanges and brief in nature, which is the reasoning behind not needing the counselor to answer the survey questions. Level 2 contacts are educational and supportive based contacts, identification of presenting issues, assessment of resources available, and action planning. Level 3 contacts are crisis oriented, and utilize the interventions employed in Level 2, but in addition apply more acute, crisis intervention responses. This report focuses on Level 2 and Level 3 contact responses. Quarterly data reports were submitted in March and June 2019. This document serves as the end of the pilot data report and summarizes text and chat data collected during the entire six-month pilot period.

CONTACT DATA SUMMARY

iCarol is a subscription based, helpline software management system that automates all of the processes associated with managing a hotline. iCarol collects data that are used to assess and measure key aspects of the PACTECH project. Data were entered into the iCarol contact report form in a timely and accurate manner. iCarol data were then securely transferred monthly to ASU from Childhelp in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. Each month, statistical analysis (SPSS) syntax was written and/or modified to define each variable and import the Excel data into SPSS format. After the first month, data were merged with the previous month's data into one master PACTECH pilot data SPSS file. Data were examined and cleaned. New variables were created for analytical purposes. Then analyses were performed to provide results regarding PACTECH objectives and outcomes. Quarterly data reports were written and submitted in March and June 2019. This report summarizes the data for the six-month pilot period of February 1 through July 31, 2019.

- **945 total** chat (67) and text (878) sessions initiated with the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline during the six-month PACTECH Pilot period (February through July 2019)
 - February 2019 – 102 Total Contacts (102 Text Contacts)
 - March 2019 – 84 Total Contacts (84 Text Contacts)
 - April 2019 – 100 Total Contacts (4 Chat Contacts, 96 Text Contacts)
 - May 2019 – 168 Total Contacts (25 Chat Contacts, 143 Text Contacts)
 - June 2019 – 201 Total Contacts (19 Chat Contacts, 182 Text Contacts)
 - July 2019 – 290 Total Contacts (19 Chat Contacts, 271 Text Contacts)
- **67 chat sessions**
 - 3 Levels of Intervention
 - 13 Chat Contacts were not specified due to no response or hang-up
 - Level 1: 12 Chat Contacts
 - Level 2: 26 Chat Contacts
 - Level 3: 16 Chat Contacts
- **878 text sessions**
 - 3 Levels of Intervention
 - 61 Text Contacts were not specified due to no response, hang-up, prank, wrong number or obscene
 - Level 1: 98 Text Contacts
 - Level 2: 556 Text Contacts
 - Level 3: 163 Text Contacts
- **Average contact time**
 - Average Chat contact time was 34.24 minutes (SD=23.28; Median=28.00 minutes; Range 5 to 105 minutes)
 - Average Text contact time was 36.26 minutes (SD=24.05; Median=31.00 minutes; Range 0 to 143 minutes)

- **Average age:** 19 (SD=9.11) for Chat and 19 (SD=9.00) for Text Help Seekers
 - Chat age range of 11-50; most common (mode) and median age of Chat help seekers was 15 years
 - 27 Chat Contacts with no age
 - Text age range of 9-69; most common (mode) and median age of Text help seekers was 16 years
 - 312 Text Contacts with no age
 - 42 responded Prefer not to Answer
- **Gender** (as entered by counselors)
 - Chat Contacts: 67% Female, 12% Male, 4.5% Unknown, 1.5% Other, 14.9% no data entered
 - Text Contacts: 68% Female, 19% Male, 7.9% Unknown, 0.9% Other, 4.7% no data entered
- **Ethnicity** (as reported by help seeker on post-survey)
 - 20 of 20 Chat Contacts reported ethnicity: Asian (14) and White (6)
 - 196 of 224 Text Contacts reported ethnicity: White (100), Hispanic (37), Black or African American (20), Multi-Racial (16), Asian (13), Other (4), American Indian or Alaska Native (3), or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (1) or Don't Know (2)
 - 19 reported Prefer not to Answer; 9 did not answer ethnicity item
- **30,646 text exchanges** between counselors and users
 - February: 3,489
 - March: 2,624
 - April: 3,415
 - May: 6,320
 - June: 6,558
 - July: 8,240
- 20 of 67 **Post-Chat Surveys completed**
 - 30% response rate
- 224 of 878 **Post-Text-Surveys completed**
 - 26% response rate

OUTCOME DATA SUMMARY

There are three outcomes associated with PACTECH data collected from iCarol. Two outcomes pertained to how help seekers reported feeling after the text or chat session and one outcome related to how help seekers learned about PACTECH. The following is a review of pilot data based on year-one targeted outcomes:

75% OF TEXT/CHAT USERS WHO COMPLETE A POST-SURVEY WILL REPORT THAT THEIR STRESS LEVEL DECREASED AFTER THE TEXT OR CHAT SESSION.

Examination of pilot data showed that 79% of all help seekers reported their stress level decreased after the text or chat session when averaged across contact type and level of intervention. By category, decreased stress ratings decreased for Chat help seekers by 90% for Level 2 (L2) and 88% for Level 3 (L3), and for Text help seekers, 65% for L2 and 72% for L3. Therefore, the 75% stress reduction objective appears to be on target if examined across all help seekers. However, if looking at text help seekers alone, the targeted outcome percentage may need to be reconsidered.

75% OF TEXT/CHAT USERS WHO COMPLETE A POST-SURVEY WILL REPORT THEIR HOPEFULNESS INCREASED A LOT OR SOME AFTER THE TEXT OR CHAT SESSION.

Examination of pilot data showed that 69% of all help seekers reported feeling more positive or hopeful after the text or chat session when averaged across contact type and level of intervention. Increased positive or hopeful feeling ratings for Chat help seekers were 90% for L2 and 75% for L3, and for Text help seekers, 57% for L2 and 55% for L3. Therefore, the 75% increased hopefulness outcome percentage may need to be reconsidered prior to Implementation Phase 1. A change under consideration prior to Implementation Phase 1 is to revise both this outcome objective to include the response category “a little” in order to capture all help seekers who reported increased hopefulness following the session. All yearly target outcome percentages should be examined based on pilot findings and revised as needed.

Further analysis of the pilot data compared counselor with help seeker ratings by question and level of intervention. Counselor ratings were based only on those contacts for which a post-survey was initiated, and it was deemed a Level 2 or 3: Chat L2: n=10; L3: n=8; Text L2: n=150; L3: n=58. Help seeker ratings had more variation on changes in stress and hopefulness than counselor ratings following the session. Regarding using text or chat versus calling, 90% (L2) and 88% (L3) of chat help seekers reported that they would not have called the hotline if text or chat were not available, and 47% (L2) and 53% (L3) of text help seekers also responded that they would not have called (see Table 1 for a summary of findings).

Table 1. Counselor Question and Help Seeker Post-Survey Responses by Type of Contact and Level of Intervention

| Counselor Question Help Seeker Question | Counselor Ratings | | Help Seeker Ratings | |
|--|-------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| | L2 | L3 | L2 | L3 |
| Does counselor feel help seeker decreased their stress after this chat session? (Yes or Maybe)* Do you feel less stress after this chat session? (Yes)* | 80% | 100% | 90% | 88% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker decreased their stress after this text session? (Yes or Maybe) Do you feel less stress after this text session? (Yes or Maybe) | 93% | 100% | 65% | 72% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker got the information they needed to deal with the situation addressed during this chat session? (A lot or Some) * Did you get the information you needed from this chat session? (A lot or Some)* Was using chat a good way for you to get help? (Yes or Maybe)* | 90% | 100% | 80% | 100% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker got the information they needed to deal with the situation addressed during this text session? (A lot or Some) Did you get the information you needed from this text session? (A lot or Some) Was using text a good way to get help? (Yes or Maybe) | 91% | 100% | 74% | 71% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker increased their hopefulness/more positive after this chat session? (A lot or Some)* Do you feel more positive or hopeful after this chat session? (A lot or Some)* | 70% | 75% | 93% | 90% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker increased their hopefulness/more positive after this text session? (A lot or Some) Do you feel more positive or hopeful after this text session? (A lot or Some) | 87% | 93% | 57% | 55% |

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-----|-----|
| Does counselor feel help seeker is better prepared to deal with the situation after this chat session? (A lot or Some)* | 80% | 88% | | |
| Do you feel better prepared to deal with the situation after this chat session? (A lot or Some) | | | 80% | 88% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker is better prepared to deal with the situation after this text session? (A lot or Some) | 85% | 95% | | |
| Do you feel better prepared to deal with the situation after this text session? (A lot and Some) | | | 53% | 57% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker made contact today because chat was an option instead of calling? (Yes or Maybe)* | 100% | 100% | | |
| Would you have called the hotline if chat was not available? (No)* | | | 90% | 88% |
| Does counselor feel help seeker made contact today because text was an option instead of calling? (Yes or Maybe) | 87% | 100% | | |
| Would you have called the hotline if text was not available? (No) | | | 47% | 53% |

A third project outcome was regarding source of referral. Referral data were collected by counselors based on post-survey help seeker responses. The outcome specifically states that 50% of referrals to PACTECH will be from specific social media.

50% OF TEXT/CHAT USERS WILL STATE THEY LEARNED ABOUT PACTECH THROUGH SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA

As captured by the counselors, about 57% of text help seekers and 36% of chat help seekers reported hearing about PACTECH by Facebook, Instagram, Internet Website or YouTube (see Table 2). As reported directly by the help seekers, approximately 65% of text help seekers and 39% of chat help seekers reported hearing about PACTECH by Facebook (text = 0.2%, chat = 4.5%), Instagram (text = 2.4%, chat = 7.5%), Snapchat (text = 0.3), Internet Website (text = 62%, chat = 27%), or YouTube (text = 0.7%).

Table 2. List of Referral Sources by Contact Type

| TEXT REPORT | Frequency | Percent |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Book | 4 | 0.5 |
| Family member/friend | 56 | 6.4 |
| In & Out Burger bag | 1 | 0.1 |
| Marketing Media (magnets brochures bookmarks etc.) | 2 | 0.2 |
| National Domestic Violence Hotline | 2 | 0.2 |
| National Runaway Safeline | 3 | 0.3 |
| Newspaper/Magazine | 3 | 0.3 |
| Other | 13 | 1.5 |
| Other Hotline | 32 | 3.6 |
| Phonebook/Operator | 1 | 0.1 |
| Professional (agency lawyer counselor clergy police CPS etc) | 21 | 2.4 |
| Radio | 1 | 0.1 |
| Repeat Call/Called Before | 66 | 7.5 |
| Social Media: Facebook | 2 | 0.2 |
| Social Media: Instagram | 22 | 2.5 |
| Social Media: Snapchat | 2 | 0.2 |
| Television | 1 | 0.1 |
| Unknown | 113 | 12.9 |
| Website-Internet | 472 | 53.8 |
| YouTube | 6 | 0.7 |
| (missing) | 55 | 6.3 |
| National Live Chat | Frequency | Percent |
| Family member/friend | 3 | 4.5 |
| Other Hotline | 4 | 6.0 |
| Professional (agency/lawyer/counselor clergy/ police/ CPS/ etc.) | 2 | 3.0 |
| Repeat Call/Called Before | 16 | 23.9 |
| Social Media: Facebook | 3 | 4.5 |
| Social Media: Instagram | 4 | 6.0 |
| Unknown | 7 | 10.4 |
| Website-Internet | 16 | 23.9 |
| YouTube | 1 | 1.5 |
| (missing) | 11 | 16.4 |

NEXT STEPS

Implementation of Phase 1 begins in December 2019. The PACTECH team has been reviewing implementation processes and gearing up for full implementation including additional marketing to increase awareness of the chat and text capabilities. ASU-SIRC team members have been working closely with the PACTECH team to understand the pilot results and make decisions on any changes needed to questions, responses and processes. These specific considerations are under discussion:

- Determine final project outcome target percentages based on pilot findings,
- Update outcomes prior to Implementation Phase 1,
- Re-evaluate data fields/variables to be transferred to ASU,
- Review/edit counselor, pre-survey and post-survey questions and responses, and
- Implement all changes prior to Implementation Phase 1.

Any recommendations for changes will be submitted to the program officer as part of the final implementation plan due in November as the precursor to Implementation Phases for the PACTECH project.