

Case Study

Empowering Victims to Find a Voice



Bullying has been linked to increased depression and suicide among young people. PREVNet and Sick Kids partnered to develop a first-ever collection and analysis information system that will help authorities and educators with children's organizations reduce and prevent bullying.

About Sick Kids & PREVNet

The mission of PREVNet is to develop a national strategy to reduce problems of bullying and victimization throughout Canada. PREVNet utilizes a collaborative model that establishes partnerships with researchers from universities across Canada, national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and governments in order to create safe, healthy environments for all Canadian children and youth.

SickKids Hospital is a major paediatric centre for the Greater Toronto Area, serving patients up to age 18.

Sick Kids & PREVNet's Challenges

Getting everyone to talk is not easy. The popularity of the recent film "Bully" captured the perspective of the victim, but did not answer why bullies do it. Why do witnesses stand by? How can adults intervene in a way that is helpful? Enabling everyone to speak up in a secure and confidential manner, researchers at PREVNet and Sick Kids believed was the one of the answers needed to begin solving the problem. Providing a flexible and simple method for "talking," and then capturing and aggregating that information would be critical.

The Solution

It had to be simple. Children as young as four up to the age of 18 would be using it. It had to be flexible. The system would be capturing surveys built by schools across the country, at first nations reserves, and by third party agencies. It had to be robust and secure. Clinicians need reliable data that cannot be tampered with in order to trust the results.

To protect system and clinical trial integrity, a powerful behind-the-scenes engine was built and linked to a user-friendly and flexible surveying, analysis and reporting website. Simple and intuitive, the offering maintains the integrity of the core data, while empowering front-end adaptability. Organizations can modify their own surveys, adding and deleting questions as appropriate, without impacting trial results. Victims, witnesses, families and authorities have a voice, reporting integral elements in a confidential and secure manner.

The Rewards

The initial rollout for a national dance school produced dramatic results. With the anonymity of an online system, all participants – victims, bullies, witnesses, parents, teachers, administrators – were able to report confidentially and the information flowed. The robust database engine streamlined data that had not been available before. Consolidated facts were presented to leaders of the school, highlighting bullying drivers. The new insight prompted an immediate modification around the approach to auditions and finals. This resulted in reduced pressure on the students and decreased both the opportunity and the desire to bully others.

With the new system, patterns and trends across age groups, geographies, and environments are immediately available enabling new programs, heightened awareness, and impact measurements.



Robust database engine
streamlined data



Friendly and flexible surveying,
analysis and reporting



Robust and secure



The data collected will enable scientists and clinicians to help organizations put programs in place that will target unacceptable behaviors and bring about positive changes in relationships for Canadian children and youth.

Sick Kids and PREVNet