

TECHNOLOGY

Fine-tuning for best fit

SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS

1 Anonymous vs. Confidential



Assess the level of information visible. An anonymous hotline does not see phone/SMS numbers or IP addresses. Choose a system that offers what the program prefers.

2 Block Numbers



Determine if the system is able to block a number, for how long, and whether it can be done internally or requires assistance from the tech vendor.

3 Data Collection



Decide if your technology needs to include a data collection form within the system or if data will be collected on a secondary system.

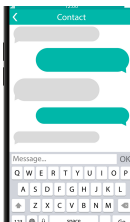
INTERACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1 Auto Bouncebacks



Determine which messages need to be stated exactly the same. Legal considerations may inform this. Can these be built into the system being utilized?

2 Pre-populated Messages



Routine questions can be answered quickly, but overuse risks sounding robotic so consider limited use. Does the system allow for customized messages to be built in?

3 Pre/Post Surveys



Does the system allow for pre and post-surveys? Can the surveys be sent automatically or does it require a manual process?

MISUSE

1 Bots/ Spam Contacts



Implement a "captcha" type step to help filter and/or reduce bot contacts, such as requiring responses to the question(s) prior to contact with counselor.

2 Prank/ Dishonesty



Leverage user information (IP address, SMS, device) to identify and address extremely repetitive and/or disruptive contacts that show evidence of malicious intent.

3 Obscene/ Abusive



Train counselors to set and uphold healthy boundaries and provide clear communication about hotline services. Protocols may include standardized messaging and/or determining when it is appropriate and necessary to notify authorities about the threats/perpetrator contacts.

Technology

The Prevent Abuse of Children Text and Chat Hotline (PACTECH) project provided an opportunity to plan, implement, and research text and chat services in the hotline environment with a target population of 13-24 year olds and a primary issue of child maltreatment. Over the past 5 years, one of the lessons learned was the importance of having the organization's technology staff take a key role in the implementation and coordination of technology. Utilizing technology to deliver crisis intervention and support services requires a thoughtful balance of the mechanics/ technological side of the service along with the supportive/practical elements of victim services.

Another vital lesson learned is the importance of recruiting and hiring a workforce that is familiar and proficient with technology, in addition to having subject-matter expertise. Identifying and reinforcing these skills ensures that interactions maintain operational and clinical best practices.

Lastly, it is beneficial to recognize that this is a dynamically changing field with consistent advancements in technology (e.g., AI, bots, etc.) and an organization should be prepared to adjust accordingly in order to maintain quality services.



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Research findings are available at www.childhelphelp.org/research

For further information or questions, contact mfingerman@childhelp.org or ljacobs@childhelp.org



This project was supported by the Children's Bureau (CB), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$6m (75%) funded by CB/ACF/HHS and \$2m (25%) funded by non-government source(s) over the past 5 years. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CB/ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit Administrative and National Policy Requirements.