

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER
Realizing the Vision of Mental Health for All



Standing Committee on Children and Youth
Phase II Call for Submissions
Confident Parents: Thriving Kids



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
British Columbia
Mental health for all



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Health Association**
Mental health for all

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Standing Committee Submission

June 24, 2015

**Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth
Phase II Call for Submissions**

Introduction

The Canadian Mental Health Association in BC (CMHA) has a provincial office and a network of 14 branches that deliver high quality community-based services and supports in over 100 BC communities to over 100,000 British Columbians per year living with a range of mental health and substance use problems. Since 2008, the BC Ministry of Health has funded us to deliver *Bounce Back: Reclaim Your Health™*, an evidence-based, telephone-delivered, and person-centred program for British Columbians experiencing symptoms of low mood, anxiety, and stress. We have distributed over 139,000 self-help DVD resources and we have received over 30,000 referrals from over 1,800 clinics across the province. Almost 70% of people who complete an assessment before and after the program leave with symptoms below a clinical levelⁱ.

This proven track record of program reach and impact has provided a strong foundation for CMHA to deliver another evidence-based, telephone-delivered, and family-centred program to parents across the province. Since 2012, the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, with one-time support from the BC Ministry of Health, have funded us to deliver an effective-parenting program. *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* has reached hundreds of BC families, with an objective of preventing, reducing, and reversing the development of mild to moderate behavioural problems amongst children.

Problem Definition, Key Issues, Challenges

BC researchers have estimated 12.6% of children aged 4-17 years are experiencing a range of mental disorders at any given timeⁱⁱ. In BC, this translates to nearly 84,000 children. The same research indicates that only 31% of this population are receiving any kind of specialized mental health services. Estimates indicate that 16,600 BC children and youth live with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and 14,000 meet the diagnostic criteria for Conduct Disorder.

There are barriers to reaching this entire population. Barriers include the unavailability of consistently delivered evidence-based resources, geography, people's willingness to seek help, and of course stigma.

The good news is that we are implementing a highly effective and evidence-based intervention that can prevent, reduce, and reverse symptoms of these disorders, adapted to the diverse population needs of BC, with the potential to realize tangible economic benefits with savings in subsequent costs to public services. That intervention is *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids*.

Strategic Context

The BC government has recently released a number of documents that outline the strategic policy priorities for the next three years. *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* is well aligned with *Healthy Minds/Healthy People: A Ten-Year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in British Columbia*ⁱⁱⁱ, *Setting Priorities for the BC Health System*^{iv} and *Primary and Community Care in BC: A Strategic Policy Framework*^v. In particular, *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* links to the following government priorities:

- To provide patient-centred care
- To implement targeted and effective primary prevention and health promotion through a co-ordinated delivery system
- To implement a provincial system of primary and community care built around inter-professional teams and functions
- To examine the role and functioning of the acute care system, focused on driving inter-professional teams and functions with better linkages to community health care

Description of Confident Parents: Thriving Kids

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids is a parent training prevention and training program designed to address disruptive behaviours in children 3 to 12 years of age. A structured self-management intervention, rather than a clinical intervention, *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* is provided by trained coaches who practice is monitored by mental health specialists. This free program is delivered over the telephone with coaches providing support and guidance to parents who become the primary change agent for their children. The program has a robust evidence base and provides the ability to tailor service to families in 6, 10, and 14-week modules based on the severity of presenting problems and the level of support required by the parents.

Throughout the program, parents learn effective family management practices that promote their child's social skills and cooperation. These practices are proven to prevent, reduce, and reverse the development of mild to moderate behaviour problems that create challenges at home, school, and in social settings. Coaches work days, evenings, and weekends to accommodate the reality of busy work and schools schedules for families.

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids is grounded in the long-standing *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* and includes five key elements:

- Encouraging positive behaviour
- Applying systematic and mild consequences for negative behaviour
- Monitoring of children's activities and interactions with peers
- Problem-solving to prevent problems and address day-to-day family living issues
- Encouraging positive involvement in children's interests, activities, and social development

The 6, 10, and 14-week modules are designed to give parents as much choice as possible and to match the severity of their child’s disruptive behaviours showing up in the home or at school. The program is designed to respond to parents’ unique needs for pacing and depth of content. Each weekly coaching session lasts for approximately 45 minutes, with sessions planned to accommodate parents’ scheduling needs. Currently, our most popular coaching slot is 8:00pm on a weekday evening. As part of their role, coaches work evenings and weekends to ensure maximum access to the program. A listing of the session titles is included below:

Brief Intervention	Longer Intervention
Session #1 – Strengthening Your Family	Session #1 – Strengthening Your Family
Session #2 – Encouraging Cooperation with Directions	Session #2 – Encouraging Cooperation with Directions
Session #3 – Encouraging Cooperation with Tokens	Session #3 – Encouraging Cooperation with Tokens
Session #4 – Setting Limits with Timeout	Session #4 – Recognizing and Regulating Emotions
Session #5 – Encouraging Cooperation with Incentive Charts	Session #5 – Active Listening
Session #6 – What Matters Most	Session #6 - Encouraging Cooperation with Incentive Charts
	Session #7 – Setting Limits – Introduction to Time Out
	Session #8 – Following Through with Time out
	Session #9 – Teaching Through Encouragement and Discipline
	Session #10 – Problem Solving and Managing Conflict
	Session #11 – Monitoring Children’s Activities
	Session #12 – Promoting School Success
	Session #13 – Building Skills
	Session #14 – Balancing Love, Work, and Play

Evidence Base and Impact in BC

Researchers have reported that the *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* (**branded as *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids in BC***) is the “only intervention for child disruptive behaviours that is well established^{vi}.” The program is identified as “the program with the most support” when parents are the agent of change^{vii}. The California Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare has awarded *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* with a Scientific Rating of #1 meaning it well supported by research evidence, including randomized controlled trials, and is superior to an appropriate comparison program^{viii}. The US Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy has rated the program as “Near Top Tier” through randomized controlled trial results that show sizeable decreases in criminal activity of boys over nine years^{ix}.

Since 1999, with the first implementation in Norway, *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* has been made available to more than 50,000 families from all socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, and family types (single parent, two-parent, step-families and adoptive parents) *outside of BC*. 3,000 trained professionals teach *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* techniques to parents in the U.S.—in New York, Michigan, Minnesota, Kansas, Puerto Rico, and Utah—and internationally in Norway, Iceland, The Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, Mexico, and Uganda. In 2006, Michigan became the first state in the U.S. to implement *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model*. Since then, Michigan has funded the training of *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* professionals in 76 percent of the state’s child mental health agencies.

Our province-wide implementation of the *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* model under the banner of *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* is the first of it’s kind in Canada.

There is accumulated evidence that demonstrates^x:

- The program’s principles work equally well across cultures regardless of family types and socioeconomic backgrounds
- The effects of the program are lasting and far-reaching within families. Studies have shown families experiencing positive effects during a nine year follow up after the intervention
- Boys in one *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* implementation were 60% less likely to have been arrested by age 14
- Mothers experienced improvements in their standards of living, including income, occupation, education, financial stress, and reductions in depression
- One study showed a 20% greater rise from poverty than mothers who did not participate in the *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model* model
- In Iceland, officials are reporting a nationwide reduction in rates of anti-social behaviour and delinquency as a result of *Parent Management Training – Oregon Model*

Closer to home, we have received 494 referrals to the program between January 1, 2015 and May 31, 2015 from 220 different BC physicians. The official launch of *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* was February 1, 2015 and since then parent ratings on the helpfulness of the program related to their family functioning mid-way through treatment indicate 100% of families rated the program 4 or higher on a 5-point Likert scale. Eighty percent indicated resolution of the presenting issues after completing the program. Our referral data shows that 74% of the families referred to the program have male children and 26% female children. The average age of the children referred is 5.55 years of age.

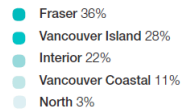
Referrals to Confident Parents: Thriving Kids

January 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015 – 494 referrals received

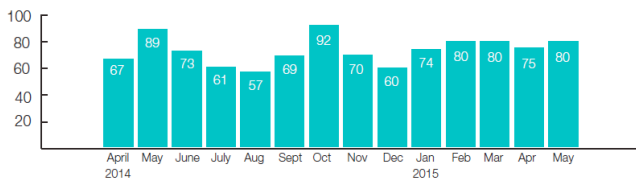
Referrals to Confident Parents by MCFD Region



Referrals to Confident Parents by Health Region



Breakdown of referrals per month



Referral Towns and Cities



With an evidence-based, far-reaching and accessible delivery model, we are meeting BC parents where they are at, and helping them to act positively in reducing disruptive behaviours at home, at school, and in communities.

Upscaling the Program and Resource Implications

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids has been consistently profiled in BC's *Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative* and is integrated into the BC physicians' *Practice Support Program*. Almost 220 physicians across BC have referred to the program and 78 of those physicians have made repeat referrals. Physicians have given strong supportive feedback:

- *"The program is accessible and recognizes difficulties of juggling work and parenting."* (Penticton physician)
- *"Very helpful with the phone and evening access in regions where access geographically is very limited. Greatly helpful for those with financial barriers. Program is helpful in teaching behavioural strategies I can't teach. Feedback is timely."* (Langley physician)

- “The program comes to the parents and there are no frustrations with leaving messages and long wait times. It has helped in the home where I am not. It fills a huge gap in services.” (Salmon Arm physician)

Ultimately the program helps to absorb capacity from the primary care system and frees up space for physicians, specialists, and clinicians to serve children and youth experiencing more severe symptoms.

Currently, *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* is a provincially delivered program, providing free positive parenting training to families across BC. This program was selected because of its built in model of *full community transfer*. This means that in 2018, after three years of implementation in BC and having reached certification, the Canadian Mental Health Association will hold the ability to train and monitor *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* independently in BC. As a result, annual licensing fees are minimal, and the investment in the program can be maximized for an even fuller provincial implementation.

The Canadian Mental Health Association will be able to train existing professionals within the child and youth mental health, education, child welfare, and health systems to deliver the program within their own practice settings and the context of their work. For example, a Ministry of Children and Family Development child and youth mental health clinician could integrate working with parents through the *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* model into their practice, having received training from the Canadian Mental Health Association. Ultimately, the province would have the built-in capacity to roll out the program to multiple sectors that interface with parents. Ensuring this program is adapted to be culturally safer for Aboriginal families is an integral part of this long-term plan. There is the potential to reduce disruptive behaviours and prevent more serious behavioural problems *at a provincial level*.

Currently, *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* is already delivered to families across the province from our BC Division office. For 2015-16 we have a target to serve 850 families with an operating budget of \$1.4M.

We do not receive annualized funding for *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids*. We will exhaust our grant from the Ministry of Children and Family Development on March 31, 2016.

Recommendation: Given the strong support from physicians, the Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative, and families, we propose the government annualize the Ministry of Children and Family Development’s investment in *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* at \$1.4M per year to:

- Integrate *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* as a core funded program by the Ministry of Children and Family Development;
- Ensure ongoing support for BC families;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the program on preventing, reducing, or reversing disruptive behaviours amongst participating children aged 3-12;
- Bridge to *full community transfer* and the integrated implementation of the program in child and youth mental health, education, child welfare, and health systems

Reducing Stigma and Discrimination

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids is a program that addresses stigma and discrimination by providing free, accessible, and high-quality service to BC parents on their terms. Barriers related to cost, travel, and help seeking are removed, and BC parents can experience support right in their homes. Delivering this program by telephone, and eventually by video, helps parents to feel safe and accepted as they learn practical and useful skills to help their children. Parents have said:

- “He is much calmer and he is easier to deal with. He is much more cooperative and eager to work on his chore charts and his kids bucks.”
- “The program has been excellent. The topics are taught in small chunks, which allows me time to practice and learn how to use them with my children. It’s not overwhelming. The coaching session is supportive and understanding.”

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids makes a real difference in the lives of BC families and in the long term has the potential to save public services valuable resources.

ⁱ Canadian Mental Health Association. (2015) *Bounce Back pre- and post- measures for FY2014-15*. Vancouver, BC: Author.

ⁱⁱ Waddell, C., Shepherd, C., Schwartz, C., Barican, J. (2014). *Child and youth mental disorders: Prevalence and evidence-based interventions*. Vancouver, BC: Children’s Health Policy Centre, Simon Fraser University.

ⁱⁱⁱ Government of British Columbia. (2010). *Healthy Minds/Healthy People: A Ten-Year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in British Columbia*. Victoria, BC: Author.

^{iv} Government of British Columbia. (2014). *Setting Priorities for the BC Health System*. Victoria, BC: Author.

^v Government of British Columbia. (2015). *Primary and Community Care in BC: A Strategic Policy Framework*. Victoria, BC: Author.

^{vi} Forehand, R., Lafko, N., Parent, J., & Burt, K. (2014). Is parenting the mediator of change in behavioural parent training for externalizing problems of youth? *Clinical Psychology Review*, 34, 608-619.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. (2015). *Oregon model: Parent management training (PMTO)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cebc4cw.org/program/the-oregon-model-parent-management-training-pmto/> on June 18, 2014.

^{ix} Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy. (2015). *Parent management training – the Oregon model: Near top tier*. <http://evidencebasedprograms.org/1366-2/parent-management-training-the-oregon-model-pmto-near-top-tier>. Retrieved on June 18, 2015.

^x Implementation Sciences International. (2015). *Parent management training – the Oregon model fact sheet*. Eugene, Oregon: Author.