

# Safe Support

## A Digital Digest for the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres

Summer 2022

### Welcome!

This digest is another component of the OCRCC's Preventing Gender-Based Violence Program - Using Technology to Better Support Survivors in Frontline Settings, which includes building the capacity of the OCRCC member centers to use digital tools.

### Happy Birthday Safe Support Chat!

It is hard to believe that Safe Support Chat has been in operation since the spring of 2020! In April 2020, we began this journey with sexual assault centres from across the province.

Safe Support Chat is a secure and anonymous chat service built for the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres on the fully encrypted open source chat program, Element.

Over the past 2 years, more centres have gotten on board, new features have been added and there's been training for Chat Coordinators as they roll out Safe Support Chat in their communities.

A great big shout out to the Chat Coordinators - thanks so much for your feedback and willingness to 'test' for us! Interested in learning more about Safe Support Chat? Please contact Kim at [info@primalglow.ca](mailto:info@primalglow.ca) or text 343-305-1087.

### Jitsi Meet: A Zoom Alternative

If you are looking for a free video meeting tool that provides a secure and accessible way to connect, Jitsi Meet (<https://jitsi.org/>) is a solid alternative to Zoom. In fact, we believe it's a better tool!

On most browsers, Jitsi Meet provides end-to-end encryption (see <https://jitsi.org/security/>). It also has great quality video, lots of the same bells and whistles of other meeting tools and you don't have to set up an account to use it - either as the host or participant.

It's so safe, it's the video conferencing tool we've added to Safe Support Chat. Want to see Jitsi Meet in action? Join Kim for one of the demo sessions in early September. Register now to attend: <https://forms.gle/FTUMrGF9RXpHw2m1A>

## SMS/Texting Safety

Many folks have limited access to reliable internet or can't afford data packages, so they use sms/texting to connect.

Unfortunately, texting is one of the least secure ways for us to communicate. These conversations are not private! Cellular service providers have access to messages and text message records can be subpoenaed for use in court proceedings.

If you use sms/texting to connect with support seekers, there are ways to proactively protect privacy when texting:

- Learn what the cellular provider stores (messages, information about the data user)
- Do not use texting to share confidential information
- Delete delete delete
- Use a fake name

## Fall Tech Forum

The next Tech Forum is Thursday October 13, 2022, 10:00AM - 12:30PM. Join us for strategies and conversation about tech fatigue and digital wellness. More info coming soon!

## Who's Jane?

At our last tech forum, we learned about the booking app, Jane. Jane is a web based program that offers secure online booking, scheduling and record keeping. Their servers are located in Canada and they offer a limited number of bursaries to not for profit organizations.

If your centre was not able to join us for the Jane demo, you can find demo videos on their site: <https://jane.app/guide>.

## Do the Hustle?

At our May Tech Forum, a centre shared that they were using a mass messaging service called Hustle to connect with folks.

PRIMAL GLOW Communication met with a Hustle rep after the forum to find out more about their service and to ask those questions that drive every tool consideration:

- Where is the data stored?
- How is it protected in transit and at rest?
- What are the vendor's policies around sharing data?

In a nutshell, Hustle is a great way to get important messages out all at once. It is used by many organisations in the US with the recent decision to overturn Roe vs Wade.

Things to consider:

- Hustle uses text messaging, which is not a private or secure way to communicate
- Data is stored in the US
- Hustle does not have access to the content of messages
- Hustle does not have access to your account on their platform

Given this, PGC would not recommend Hustle for direct client support and connecting with those who access your services.

But it may be something to consider if you are looking to connect with your membership and supporters. There are two ways to send messages:

1. Cold texting, without recipient consent to receive; and
2. Newsletter or membership texting, which means that you have consent from the recipient beforehand.

## Slack is Back!

OCRCC has relaunched Slack for communication and collaboration between centres.

Springworks has a great article with 60 Slack tips: <https://www.springworks.in/blog/slack-tips-and-tricks/>. Learn how to activate a "remind me", start a private conversation, manage notifications, set up two way authentication, share files and much more!

As with all digital tools, be sure to read Slack's privacy policy: <https://slack.com/trust/privacy/privacy-policy>. Conversations are stored and accessible!

## Selecting Digital Tools - Part 1: Planning

When you're in the early stages of selecting a new tool for virtual services, take time in the planning stage. Answer these questions:

What do you want to accomplish with this tool?

- Think about the activities you want to do (e.g. counselling, referrals), rather than the features you think you need.

What are the non-negotiables?

- When providing safe support, these are privacy and options for anonymity. Plan for time to read (and decipher!) digital tool privacy policies.

What's the budget?

- Remember that "free" usually means a tool will capture user data that will be sold. That's not private or safe!
- Talk to funders about the importance of paying for digital tools.
- Plan to seek a reduced rate as a non-profit.
- When planning a budget, don't forget costs for ongoing training, updates to the technology, staffing and supervision.

## Promising Practices for Virtual Counselling

For lots of tips on providing online support, check out "Promising Practices for Sexual Violence Distance Counselling", from ANOVA, Ending Violence and SAC Kingston:

<https://endingviolencecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Promising-Practices-for-Sexual-Violence-Distance-Counselling-8-compressed.pdf>.

Strategies cover preparing for a session, engaging the support seeker, self-care and ways to create remote services that are safer and more equitable.

## Safe Facebook Messaging

Did you know you can set up Facebook Messenger so that messages are sent fully encrypted and chats disappear once you close the conversation?! For this to work, both people have to change their settings before chatting. An article by Make Use Of explains how to set up Messenger for encryption: <https://www.makeuseof.com/enable-encryption-facebook-messenger/>.

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