

Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice –
2010 – Volume 19, Issue 4, pp. 49–62
URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-101231

ISSN: 1876-8830

URL: <http://www.journalsi.org>

Publisher: Igitur, Utrecht Publishing & Archiving
Services in cooperation with Utrecht University of
Applied Sciences, Faculty of Society and Law

Copyright: this work has been published under a
Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No
Derivative Works 3.0 Netherlands License

Both authors work as project assistants on practice
and policy development on the use of ICT strategies
in Flemish welfare services at the Support Office
for Welfare Professionals (Steunpunt Algemeen
Welzijnswerk). All correspondence to: Diksmuidelaan
36A, 2600 Berchem, Belgium.
E-mail: sandra.beelen@steunpunt.be

Received: 28 June 2010

Accepted: 22 October 2010

Review category: Practice

Theme: ICT and social interventions

SANDRA BEELEN,
KATRIEN VAN DEN
MEERSCHAUTE

BEYOND EXPERIMENTATION. ONLINE STRATEGIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES

ABSTRACT

Beyond experimentation. Online strategies in social services

Young people in Flanders spend considerable amounts of time online and an increasing number of welfare services are exploring the opportunities of social media for reaching their target groups. Accessible and high-quality youth welfare services are crucial in the battle against exclusion. This practice-based paper aims to take a closer look at the challenge of accessibility that welfare services face. By illustrating developments in the JACs, Flanders' leading youth welfare centers, we will describe how ICT is used as a strategy to combat barriers and increase access for youngsters and in particular for those hard to reach. We conclude by making a call for further research to evaluate the effects of ICT in social work in order to inspire, nourish and innovate social work practice.

Keywords

Social work, youngsters, ICT

SAMENVATTING

Het experimentele stadium voorbij. Online strategieën in het sociaal werk

Jongeren in Vlaanderen zijn een groot deel van hun tijd online en een toenemend aantal hulpverleningsinstellingen verkent de mogelijkheid om via sociale media deze doelgroep te bereiken. Toegankelijke jeugdhulpverlening is cruciaal in de strijd tegen sociale exclusie. Dit artikel, dat zich baseert op ervaringen in de hulpverleningspraktijk, gaat nader in op de vraag of en hoe een toegankelijke hulpverlening gerealiseerd kan worden met behulp van sociale media. De auteurs beschrijven aan de hand van ontwikkelingen bij de JAC's (Jongeren Advies Centra) hoe ICT wordt gebruikt als een strategie om drempels weg te nemen en de toegankelijkheid van de centra voor jongeren te vergroten. Zij sluiten af met een oproep tot verder onderzoek dat de effecten van het gebruik van ICT in het sociaal werk evalueert, opdat sociaal werkpraktijken daarmee geïnspireerd en vernieuwd kunnen worden.

Trefwoorden

Sociaal werk, maatschappelijk werk, jongeren

INTRODUCTION

A recent study about media ownership and media use shows that 94% of youngsters in Flanders between the ages of 12 and 18 have internet access at home. The majority of them have access in the privacy of their own bedroom. They spend an average of a little over two hours a day surfing the internet, e-mailing and chatting. 87% of Flemish teenagers have an account on one or several social network sites. Netlog, the most popular social network site for that age group, beats Facebook by 74% to 67% (Courtois, Mechant & Paulussen, 2010).

Spending so much of their free time online, it is not surprising that the internet is also the place where youngsters start their search for answers and solutions when they have questions or problems. Research indicates that the internet is an important source of health information for adolescents (Gray, Klein, Noyce, Sesselberg & Cantrill, 2005). In fact, as internet use is becoming the norm for young people, web-based mental health services will become increasingly important in improving the well-being of youngsters (Borzekowski & Rickert, 2001; King, Bambling, Lloyd, Gomurra, Smith, Reid & Wegner, 2006).

Recent developments in the Flemish welfare and health sectors demonstrate this. Since 2002, several large welfare organizations and help lines have been complementing their regular services

with online services such as e-mail, chat and internet forums. Over the years, they have seen a significant increase in the demand for online counseling. Last year's registration figures show that the Youth Advice Centers¹ (JAC) experienced an increase of 23% in chat and e-mail contacts compared to the figures from 2008. The figures for the Children and Youth Phone are even more distinct. They show an increase of 126% in chat and 38% in e-mail contacts (Kinder- en Jongerentelefoon, 2010). Figures also show that although both services expanded their online service during 2009, the demand is still greater than the supply (Mendonck, Delbeke, Cautaeers & Van Menxel, 2009; Mendonck, 2010; Kinder- en Jongerentelefoon, 2010).

"E-social work" in Flanders is clearly on the rise. Social workers are now beginning to explore the possibilities of social network sites and outreaching activities on chatsites. Self test and self help applications are being developed, online drug- and alcohol counseling programs are being set up, and so on. E-social work, e-health and e-mental health services are targeting not only young people but a wide range of target groups and a variety of problem areas such as domestic violence, depression and alcohol and other addictions.

Welfare and health organizations that implement ICT strategies seem to agree upon the fact that the internet has the potential to make social services more accessible.² The arguments to support this are as follows. Firstly, when used in the primary care processes, e-mail and chat can lower the barriers that clients encounter towards professional caretakers. They make it easier for clients to take the first step. Help seekers are more likely to get into contact with social services at an earlier stage before the problem escalates. Secondly, the internet offers a wide range of opportunities to promote the service among a particular target group.

To define e-social work, we have to consider both the diverse range of social work and the diverse range of social media an ICT that can be used. In this article, e-social work "focuses on the primary process of information, advice, support, counseling, treatment or aftercare" (Schalken, 2010). We also take into account the multitude of opportunities that the web offers to increase the visibility and accessibility of social services.

By describing the developments in the JACs, we will illustrate how the use of ICT strategies has evolved from the experimental stage to a more integrated approach. The case of CAW Hageland's Mister JAC illustrates how ICT strategies can complement the JAC "drop in" model and make the service more accessible for youngsters. We conclude the article with a call for further research to evaluate the effects of ICT in social work in order to inspire and promote the innovation of new social work practices.

THE CHALLENGE OF ACCESSIBILITY

Adolescence is a vulnerable stage in a person's life. The decisions young people have to make in terms of education, employment, relationships, housing and so on often determine their

future lives. A significant number of youngsters already carry a heavy load on their shoulders by the time they reach the age of majority. For a number of reasons, they cannot rely on their families or their environment to support them in taking their first steps into adult life. Issues such as complex family situations, difficult relationships with parents, educational disadvantages, unemployment, (mental) health problems, poverty, unstable social networks, criminal records and so on put them at high risk of social exclusion (Gousse, 2009; Serrien, 2009). In addition to their already vulnerable situation, young people face specific barriers when contacting health and welfare services (Owens *et al.*, 2002; King *et al.*, 2006). These barriers are both structural, such as opening hours, travel time, cost, and personal such as the young person being overwhelmed by the unfamiliar issues (King *et al.*, 2006; Van den Meerschaute & Beelen, 2010). Sadly enough, many young people, because of these barriers, do not receive the services they need (Reinherz, Giaconia, Lefkowitz, Pakiz & Frost, 1993; Boldero & Fallon, 1995; Schonert-Reichel & Muller, 1996; Sawyer *et al.*, 2000; King *et al.*, 2006; Van den Meerschaute & Beelen, 2010). Accessible and high-quality welfare services are crucial in the battle against exclusion (Sels, Goubin, Meulemans & Sanne, 2009). Welfare services in general and particularly those targeting teens and adolescents therefore face the important challenge to eliminate existing barriers and make their services more accessible.

For a social service to be accessible means that it is able to address the specific problem situations that their target group faces. We can identify five accessibility parameters: usability, comprehensibility, reach-ability, availability and affordability (Bouverne De Bie, 2005). In social work practice two more have been added during recent years: publicity (visibility and recognizability) and reliability (correctness and confidentiality) (Sels *et al.*, 2009). To illustrate this challenge in accessibility, we will make a small excursion into the history of the JACs and the emergence of ICT as a strategy in youth welfare services.

From the past...

During the 1960s and early 1970s, in a climate of social criticism and countercultural undercurrents in Western Europe, a newly emerging post-war youth class felt a growing need for more freedom, independence and open communication about all aspects of life. The liberalization of sexuality, changing family relationships and growing youth unemployment all created new questions and problems. This new youth class perceived existing welfare services as patronizing, bureaucratic and unable to meet their needs.

Experimental and alternative approaches found their way into Flanders from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Out of a mix of social work, education and social action, Youth Information

and Consultation Centers emerged. The first Youth Information Centre (JIC) in Flanders was set up in 1966 in Ghent, following research by Professor Willy Faché at Ghent University (see www.canonsociaalwerk.be, 1972). Soon, information, advice and counseling services were linked and in 1972 Youth Advice Centers (JAC) were set up in several large cities. These “drop in” centers had long and flexible opening hours and were located in city centers, near student and entertainment districts. Information, advice and counseling but also emergency accommodation in case of crisis were offered free of charge, in a non-committal way, and with respect for the youngsters’ rights (see www.canonsociaalwerk.be, 1972).

Until that time, “young people” as a distinct target group had not yet been defined. The JACs have had a strong influence on the development of Flemish youth welfare services ever since. By the mid-1980s, a new wave of experimental approaches, such as Street Corner Work, was introduced as a response to the inability of welfare institutions to reach rural and more vulnerable groups (see www.canonsociaalwerk.be, 1985). “Vulnerable youth” or “youth at risk” as a new target group emerged and the JACs tried to find better ways to meet their needs. Unlike the outgoing, “in-the-field” approach of Street Corner Work, the JACs traditional drop-in model caused them to set up small antenna posts outside the city centers, in rural and remote areas. Unlike the bigger JACs in the city centers, these antenna posts had limited staff, limited resources and limited opening hours and were not a great success. According to the empowering JAC principles that originated in the 1960s, youngsters are autonomous help seekers, able to go to the centers, address the social worker, define their problem and find a solution. However, in reality, not all youngsters have the resources or skills to do this. Some of them are already experiencing significant difficulties by the time they get to the JAC. Over the years, the JAC model became untenable and JACs began to notice a significant drop in registration figures. Even today, they still face this challenge of accessibility. The JAC model seems to have lost its appeal, youngsters do not know what JACs are, how they work and what they are for. There is also limited awareness of the existence of JACs among referrers and problem detectors such as schools, youth clubs, parents and so on. This means that youngsters often are referred to specialized care too soon. It was high time to rethink the service and implement other strategies. Today, JACs are exploring the possibility of reaching their target group through ICT-based strategies.

...to the present

At the dawn of the 21st century, JACs found themselves on the threshold of the digital age. Rethinking their approach and looking for ways to respond to changing youth culture, the internet slowly made its entrance into social work practice. Youth workers were only just starting to get

BEYOND EXPERIMENTATION. ONLINE STRATEGIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES

used to e-mail when they faced a new challenge. Youngsters started to use the JAC e-mail address to ask for help. Simple requests for information as well as long and painfully detailed letters about their situation at home or issues such as abuse, eating disorders, and so on, would find their way to the JACs through the internet. Unintentionally, a new gateway was created. Interesting and full of possibilities, but unsettling at the same time. Many questions were raised. How do we deal with this? How can we use e-mail for information, advice and counseling? Will this not lead to a dehumanization of the contact between caretaker and client? By using the internet, will we exclude vulnerable target groups even more? How about safety and privacy issues? Although the organization management at that time was very wary about these new media, youth welfare workers did recognize the opportunities the internet had to offer. A few pioneering JACs started to offer e-mail counseling in around 2000–2001. The first online (chat) counseling pilot started in 2003 using MSN messenger. This was quickly abandoned because of safety and privacy issues. For example, on MSN it is impossible to guarantee the authenticity of the caretaker. Virtually anyone with an account can claim to be a JAC worker. Also, depending on the privacy settings, sensitive and private information can remain on the youngster's computer for parents or others to find. In 2005, JACs decided to join forces and formed the JAC Online Network. This second pilot project started out with six JACs across the country and provided 13 hours of online availability using a specially designed software application that was provided through the JAC website. Today, the JAC online network counts 23 member organizations and provides over 61 hours of available chat time.

ICT STRATEGIES INCREASE ACCESS TO YOUTH WELFARE SERVICES

The issues that young people address using chat or e-mail often are sensitive or highly taboo. Suicide and abuse-related topics occur more often online than in face-to-face conversations (Mendonck *et al.*, 2009). The problems can also be addressed much more quickly and more directly. With face-to-face sessions, a number of sessions are often needed to build up the trust needed to discuss those kinds of topics, while online this relationship comes about almost instantly. Chat and e-mail appear to have characteristics that make it possible for people to talk about subjects that are difficult to discuss.

The online comfort zone: the internet as an emotionally safe environment

Anonymity is the most important motive for help seekers to use chat or e-mail. Being behind the computer screen, accessing social services through the internet creates a heightened sense of

privacy, safety and comfort (Bernhardt, Weaver Lariscy, Parrott, Silk & Felter, 2002; King *et al.*, 2006; Fukkink & Hermanns, 2007; Vanhuele & Vertommen, 2008). Help seekers decide how much of themselves they disclose and they can remain unidentifiable if they choose to. The possibility of an easy escape and the fact that the social worker remains at a safe physical distance increases autonomy and control (Vlaeminck, Vanhove, De Zitter & Bocklandt, 2009a, b). The lack of personal contact is one of the main factors why adolescents choose the internet over the telephone when seeking help (King *et al.*, 2006). In relation to these characteristics, chat and e-mail can help break taboos. Talking about certain issues can be very unsettling and painful. The fear of falling into an awkward silence or not finding the right words can prevent people from tackling their issues. Online, help seekers feel less embarrassed about discussing difficult, sensitive issues. These effects are termed “disinhibition” and “disclosure” (Rochlen, Zack & Speyer, 2004; Vlaeminck *et al.*, 2009a, b).

The benefits and challenges of textual communication

Being able to take some time when typing a reply, and the fact that writing itself stimulates reflection are important benefits of online counseling (Rochlen *et al.*, 2004; Suler, 2004; King *et al.*, 2006; Vlaeminck *et al.*, 2009a). While this clearly has advantages, there are also a number of key challenges involved in text-based counseling. It is difficult for the caretaker to capture specific feelings and emotions correctly and to convey empathy. Help seekers who feel confused or upset might also find it hard to explain exactly what they mean. This can lead to misunderstandings (King *et al.*, 2006). Online counseling requires specific discussion and conversation skills that focus on asking clarifying questions, the translation of feelings and emotions into text, expressing empathy and so on (Vlaeminck *et al.*, 2009a).

Free choice of time and location

Being free to choose a time and location is another feature that makes online services attractive (Vlaeminck *et al.*, 2009a). Help seekers do not have to travel or make an appointment. An e-mail can be sent at any time and chat services are often available until late in the evening. On the other hand, waiting times, limited opening hours and restrictions on conversation time can have adverse effects similar to face-to-face counseling. Being unable to access a full chat room, or having to wait more than 48 hours for an answer to an e-mail can be very frustrating (King *et al.*, 2006; Beelen & Van den Meerschaute, 2010). This becomes clear when one considers the speed at which young people text each other. Having to wait for an answer equals not being heard or worse, being ignored.

No instant remedy for every illness

Although chat and e-mail are accessible media for many Flemish youngsters, there are some challenges. First, organizations encounter similar issues concerning accessibility online to those that they encounter in face-to-face services. Youngsters seldom take the first step in looking for help. Offering online counseling can facilitate that, but if the service is not well-organized, this will create even more barriers. The website and online service must be easy to find and the capacity must be able to meet the demand. Second, some youngsters do not benefit from the positive effects of chat and e-mail, because they have limited resources to go online, or limited skills to conduct a conversation using written language. Implementing ICT strategies therefore has to happen in addition to regular and outreaching strategies. Organizations should also look at how ICT can be integrated into face-to-face counseling to help youngsters build ICT skills. Third, to build up a high standard of online services, several structural and organizational issues need to be considered such as the investment of time, money and manpower in infrastructure, training and support for the staff and reassessing the organization's policies and priorities (Beelen & Van den Meerschaute, 2010).

From the help seeker's perspective, the first two issues relate to how young people feel about existing welfare services. What are their needs and how do they prefer to be approached? How do they feel about online counseling? If welfare services are seeking to improve the accessibility of their services by using ICT strategies, they must first gain a better understanding into the needs of the target group.

From the caretakers' perspective, one needs to be well aware that implementing ICT strategies is not something that can be done overnight. It demands a great deal of effort from the organization and requires organizational changes on all levels (Beelen & Van den Meerschaute, 2010).

The implementation of online counseling strategies in the JACs evolved slowly and from the bottom up. The pioneering work of the JACs was to begin with solely dependent on the motivation of a few "believers" amongst the youth welfare workers. The JACs were given the liberty to explore and experiment with ICT but the organizational management provided no structural support. Between 2006 and 2009, things changed and e-social work in Flanders took a big leap forward. Together with three major helplines (Children and Youth Phone, Tele-Onthaal & Center for Suicide Prevention) the JAC network helped to set up an exchange platform on online counseling (OHUP). Together with OHUP, the Artevelde University College³ carried out research into online counseling and developed "Ch@tlas", an online conversation method (Vlaeminck *et al.*, 2009b). In the same period, the JACs, together with the Support Office for

Welfare Professionals (Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk), applied for project funding at the Flemish Ministry of Welfare, Health and Family. This project (on which this article is based) ran between September 2008 and October 2010 and focused on four goals: the development of e-social work practice, quality improvement, policy development and research into adequate chat software. Thanks to the cooperation and networking between OHUP, Artevelde University College and Support Office for Welfare Professionals, the JACs are now in a better position to take things beyond the experimental stage and implement the use of ICT strategies at the organizational management level.

The JACs have recently been seeking to reach out to young people through social network sites. Netlog and Facebook are used to actively promote the service. But some JACs go one step further and integrate social network sites into their total package. Their Netlog or Facebook page literally becomes a new front door. In the following case-study, we describe how CAW Hageland revived their JAC and how they integrated ICT strategies into their overall approach towards local youths.

A PROFESSIONAL FRIEND: YOUNGSTERS' PERSPECTIVES ON WELFARE SERVICES

In 2006, CAW Hageland⁴ published the results of a survey on how youths aged between 12 and 25 in the region of Hageland-Leuven feel about the services provided by the JACs (Vandenberk, 2006). More recently, CAW Leuven participated in a similar survey conducted by RISO Vlaams Brabant⁵ on the experiences of young adults (18 to 25) with local welfare services (Goussey, 2009).

Both surveys aimed to help understand the opinions of both youngsters and care takers on existing youth welfare services. Special attention was paid to those youngsters whom care takers would describe as "vulnerable" or "at risk". The goal was to identify the needs of youths in the greater region of Leuven (urban) and Hageland (rural), in order to enhance the services offered to that group. The research population in the Hageland survey included all minors of school age (12 to 18) in all levels of education (2392 respondents) and a representative sample of adolescents between 18 and 25 (174 respondents). The adolescent group consisted of university college students, employed young people, job seekers, unemployed young people and young people undergoing counseling. The differences between the needs of urban and rural youths were also examined. The RISO study focused specifically on "adolescents at risk" between 18 and 25 (45 respondents).

BEYOND EXPERIMENTATION. ONLINE STRATEGIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES

In relation to the accessibility parameters described earlier, both surveys reached similar conclusions.

First, youth welfare services are not well known among youths and have a problem with their image. They need to invest time and money in promoting and gaining insight into how to communicate with youths: it is important not only to employ a variety of strategies and means of communication but also to differentiate between the language, frequency and location of the communication (Vandenberk, 2006; Gousse, 2009). Second, youngsters are looking for the "person" behind the service (Vandenberk, 2006). That person needs to be trustworthy, discrete, understanding, and willing to listen. He or she can give good advice in a non-committal, non-pushy way and stimulates the youngster to take action (Vandenberk, 2006; Gousse, 2009). Third, youngsters seek help in their immediate surroundings. Service providers should be approachable in the youngsters' own environment and be available after school hours and in the weekends (Vandenberk, 2006; Gousse, 2009).

Based on the results of the survey in 2006, CAW Hageland decided to change course in its three JACs. A youth participation project was started in 2007 to rethink the entire JAC concept together with local youths.⁶ This process led to the development of a JAC mascot and with it a new "face": the moose called Mister JAC. Today, Mister JAC is everywhere. Offline he is embodied by several youth workers who are available in schools, at events, in pubs and so on. Mister JAC is also on social network sites (<http://nl.netlog.com/groups/jacdiest>, <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1616403119>) and has his own TV channel on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/MisterJacTv>). Social network sites are supposed to be fun, and that is one thing Mister JAC has understood very well. Youngsters are engaged in activities such as making YouTube movies, participating in contests such as "Dress Up Mister JAC" or games such as "Find Mister JAC", where stickers are hidden all over the village. This gives the service a "fun" aspect and has helped to reduce the problems related to its image. It means that youngsters do not necessarily have to have a "problem" to join in and come into contact with youth workers. Youth workers use Netlog or Facebook account as a new "virtual" front door. Youths can contact the JAC by text message, e-mail, chat, and social network sites. Visiting the centre is still possible but consultation hours have been reduced. The center-oriented JAC model is complemented by online and outreach strategies which have all been integrated into a new target group-oriented approach. There is more differentiation between various communication strategies, the image problem has been tackled and help has been offered in the immediate surroundings of youngsters online and offline.

In 2009, CAW Hageland felt that it was time for an impact assessment. They did a small survey among young people in the region's high schools⁷ in order to measure the effect of the Mister

JAC mascot on the accessibility of the JACs' services. The results were encouraging. 70% of the youngsters recognized Mister JAC and 59% related him to the JACs. In 2006, 51% of the youngsters had never heard of the JAC. In 2009 this figure has dropped to 19%. Almost 70% of the youngsters knew where to find the youth workers and most youngsters preferred chat and e-mail to visiting the centers in person. Seventeen percent knew that they could find Mister JAC on Netlog. Eighty percent of all respondents knew that the JACs are free of charge and guarantee confidentiality (CAW Hageland, 2010). This change gave a new dynamic to the JAC's in the region. Because of the close involvement of local young people in the development process, the engagement of youth workers, the support of management and the requisite amount of time and money, this integrated approach to offline and online strategies became a success. Mister JAC inspired JACs all over the country to take the opportunity to rethink their drop-in centers.

CONCLUSION

Changing contexts give rise to changing needs and expectations. Young people in Flanders spend considerable amounts of their time online and an increasing number of welfare services are exploring the opportunities for using social media to reach their target groups. This has led to a multitude of initiatives on community sites, chat sites and social network sites, some more successful than others.

Throughout this paper we have highlighted the important challenge of accessibility that welfare services face and we have illustrated just some of the positive effects seen by integrating ICT strategies to make JACs more accessible. We have also examined the challenges that organizations will face when they consider implementing ICT. We have not aimed to carry out an exhaustive study, or to describe best practice. What we have aimed to do in this paper is provide a description of the inspiring evolutions in Flanders' leading youth welfare organizations.

The statement that ICT strategies can lower barriers to caretakers is supported by literature on online counseling, registration figures and practical examples of how social media can complement youth welfare services. The evaluation data supplied by initiatives in the field point out that chat, e-mail and social media can offer opportunities towards all youths, including those at risk.

But what really works, for whom, and on what terms? Concerning the facilitation or enhancement of social work practice with ICT strategies, evaluating the effects of different strategies for different target groups is not easy. In today's world of ever faster innovations, social work organizations need a new breed of tools to help them better define and compare those strategies

that were successful and those that were not. Further research on how to evaluate the effects of ICT and social media in social work will inspire and encourage future developments in social work practice.

NOTE

- 1 The Youth Advice Centres are part of the Flemish Autonomous Centres of General Welfare (CAWs). The 25 regional CAWs have a total of 33 JACs and an average of 100 youth workers.
- 2 We mean accessible to the target group in general, rather than for the disabled in particular.
- 3 Supported by Cera, a co-operative financial group with a social mission; www.cera.be
- 4 In collaboration with Xios University College in Hasselt.
- 5 Non-profit organization that sets up community-building initiatives in the region of Flemish Brabant.
- 6 This project was set up in collaboration with In Petto (National Service for Youth Information, Participation and Prevention) and funded by the region of Flemish Brabant.
- 7 The largest section of the population is represented by the lower educational levels.

REFERENCES

- Beelen, S., & Van den Meerschaute, K. (2010). *Beleidsdossier Onlinehulpverlening. Toegankelijke hulpverlening: Online* [Policy dossier on online counseling. Accessible welfare services: online]?! Berchem: Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk.
- Bernhardt, J. M., Weaver Lariscy, R. A., Parrott, R. L., Silk, K. J., & Felter, E. M. (2002). Perceived barriers to internet-based health communication on human genetics. *Journal of Health Communication, 7*(4), 325–340.
- Boldero, J., & Fallon, B. (1995). Adolescent help-seeking: What do they get help for and from whom? *Journal of Adolescence, 18*(2), 193–209.
- Borzekowski, D. L. G., & Rickert, I. V. (2001). Adolescent cyber surfing for health information. A new resource that crosses barriers. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescence Medicine, 155*(7), 813–817.
- Bouverne De Bie, M. (2005). Het OCMW en het recht op maatschappelijke dienstverlening [The public centres for social welfare and the right to social and welfare services]. In J. Vranken, K. De Boyser & D. Dierickx (Eds.), *Armoede en sociale uitsluiting. Jaarboek 2005* (pp. 203–216). Leuven: Acco.
- CAW Hageland. (2010). *Effectiveness study*. Unpublished memo.

- Courtois, C., Mechant, P., & Paulussen, S. (2010). *Apenstaartjaren 3. Research report*. Grafitti Jeugdendienst vzw and Jeugdwerknet vzw in collaboration with Ghent University – MICT/IBBT, Ghent.
- Fukkink, R., & Hermanns, J. (2007). *Ervaringen van de Kindertelefoon. Een vergelijking tussen de ondersteuning bij de chat en de telefoon* [Experiences from the Dutch children's helpline. Comparing chat and telephone services]. Amsterdam: SCO-Kohnstamm Instituut.
- Goussey, B. (2009). *Van over naar met. Een participatief proces met jongeren over hulpverlening in Leuven* [From "about" to "with". A participative process with adolescents concerning social and welfare services in Leuven]. RISO Report Oktober 2009, Kessel-Lo.
- Gray, N. J., Klein, J. D., Noyce, P. R., Sesselberg, T. S., & Cantrill, J. A. (2005). Health information-seeking behaviour in adolescence: The place of the internet. *Social Science and Medicine*, 60(7), 1467–1478.
- Kinder- en Jongerentelefoon. (2010). *Jaarverslag 2009* [Annual Report Children and Youth Phone 2009]. Brussels.
- King, R., Bambling, M., Lloyd, C., Gomurra, R., Smith, S., Reid, W., & Wegner, K. (2006). Online counseling: The motives and experiences of young people who choose the internet instead of face to face or telephone counseling. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 6(3), 169–174.
- Mendonck, K. (2010). *Extract from the CAW registration data for 2009*. Unpublished memo.
- Mendonck, K., Delbeke, J., Cautaers, A., & Van Menxel, G. (2009). *CAW in beeld: cijfers 2008* [CAW in the picture: statistics 2008]. Berchem: Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk.
- Owens, P. L., Hoagwood, K., Horwitz, S. M., Leaf, P. J., Poduska, J. M., Kellam, S. G., & Lalongo, N. S. (2002). Barriers to children's mental health services. *Journal of the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 41(6), 731–738.
- Reinherz, H. Z., Giaconia, R. M., Lefkowitz, E. S., Pakiz, B., & Frost, A. K. (1993). Prevalence of psychiatric disorders in a community population of older adolescents. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 32(2), 369–381.
- Rochlen, A. B., Zack, J. S., & Speyer, C. (2004). Online therapy: Review of relevant definitions, debates, and current empirical support. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 60(3), 269–283.
- Sawyer, M. G., Arney, F. M., Baghurst, P. A., Clark, J. J., Graetz, B. W., Kosky, R. J., Nurcombe, B., Patton, G. C., Prior, M. R., Raphael, B., Rey, J., Whaites, L. C., & Zubrick, S. R. (2000). *The mental health of young people in Australia*. Canberra: Publications Production Unit, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.
- Schalken, F. (2010). *Handboek Onlinehulpverlening* [Manual for online counseling]. Houten: Bohn, Stafleu & van Loghum.

BEYOND EXPERIMENTATION. ONLINE STRATEGIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES

- Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Muller, J. R. (1996). Correlates of help seeking in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 25(6), 705–731.
- Sels, P., Goubin, E., Meulemans, D., & Sanne, L. (2009). *Het sociaal huis. Werken aan een toegankelijke dienst- en hulpverlening* [The social house. The creation of accessible welfare and social services]. Brussels: Politeia.
- Serrien, L. (2009, April). Ook "Perspectief!" op een meer preventieve aanpak? ['Perspective! Towards a more preventative approach?'], presentation at the hearing in the Flemish parliament of Welfare, Health and Family in reaction to the youth welfare policy note "Perspectief!" [Perspective!"].
- Suler, J. (2004). The online disinhibition effect. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7(3), 321–326.
- Vandenberk, M. (2006). *Gezocht: een professionele kameraad! Eerstelijns hulpverlening door de bril van jongeren* [Wanted: a professional friend! Welfare and social services Through the eyes of youngsters]. Research report CAW Hageland, Diest.
- Van den Meerschaute, K., & Beelen, S. (2010). Toegankelijke Jeugdhulp: Online?! [Accessible youth welfare services: online?!]. *Welwijs*, 21(2), 30–33.
- Vanhuele, H., & Vertommen, M. (2008). Online: een meerwaarde voor de eerstelijns hulpverlening? [Online counseling in welfare and social services. Added Value?]. *Sociale Interventie*, 17(2), 47–57.
- Vlaeminck, H., Vanhove, T., De Zitter, M., & Bocklandt, P. (2009a). *Onderzoek naar methodiek voor online hulpverlening in eerstelijns welzijnswerk*. [Research into methods for online help in welfare services]. Ghent: Artevelde University College, COMPahs Social Work.
- Vlaeminck, H., Vanhove, T., De Zitter, M., & Bocklandt, P. (2009b). *Ch@tlas. Methodiek voor online hulpverlening in het eerstelijns welzijnswerk*. [Ch@tlas. Online conversation methods for welfare services]. Ghent: Artevelde University College, COMPahs Social Work.