



# Online Danger Awareness – Community Project

School of Social Work, the University of Texas at Arlington

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2232-SOCW-5321-001 Advance Community Practice

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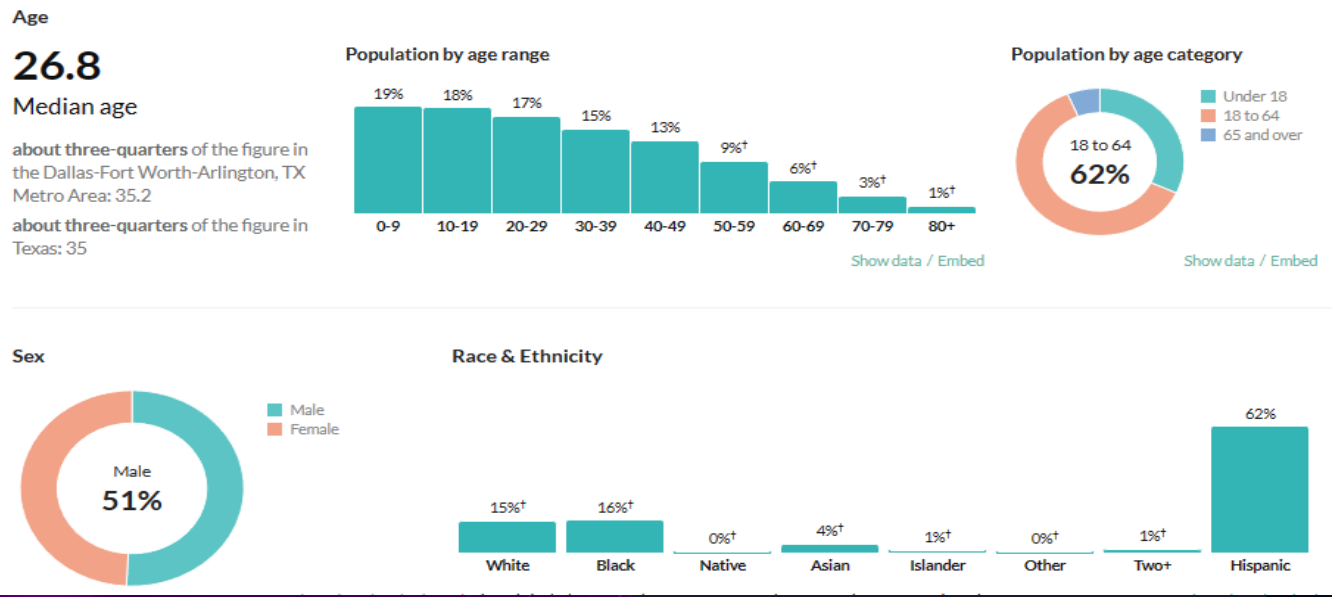
April 23, 2023

NXT GEN Mental Health Internship





**ZIP CODE**  
**76010**  
**Arlington, TX**



# Introduction

*“Whoever walks in the dark does not know where he is going – John 12:35 – (USCCB, 2023).”*

*Hidden dangers exist in the cyber world.*

*The threats are real, such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, and the list goes on (Egen, 2020)*

*Originally called The Information Super-Highway*

*The internet is a two-edged utility tool with a lot of advantages contributing to many enhancements in our daily lives and exposing many vulnerabilities.*

- The target population identified in Arlington, TX 76010, is the young students in the Arlington Independent School District (AISD) who have access to computers and cell phones to do their homework, their parents have no idea about the potential dangers they face. The vulnerability of teen population is an easy target for predators.
- The program brings awareness to the threats and dangers for teens and their parents and develops a new army of interns studying to become mental health professionals to mitigate the crisis.



# Analysis of the Problem

Stakeholders

Cyber Dating

Children

Parents

Online threats do not discriminate. They can happen to everyone, regardless of economic status, gender identity, age, occupation, income, or geographical location (Egen ET-AL, 2020).

Child Molesters

Teens

Young Adults

Cyberbullying

Human Trafficking

Law Enforcement

Sexual Exploitation

Impersonators

Hackers

Prostitution

Suicide

MSW Mental Health Interns

Extortion

Designer Drugs

Internet Gaming Disorders

Abduction





## Analysis of the Problem, Continue

Videos are easier to watch and to grasp the severity of the problem, and four of them expose the magnitude of the crisis.

**Human Trafficking Awareness Video that summarizes the human trafficking industry and the different ways that the lives of children and adults get destroyed if they do not get rescued, 3 Minutes, 49 Seconds**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t69nyhEyZ0>

**Unseen The Movie, 19 Minutes, 34 Seconds, is the dramatic story of a single-parent teen abducted when applying for a rewarding modeling job**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KzrOmdwXGo>

**I was taken by an Internet Predator, 7 Minutes, and 24 Seconds saved thanks to her social-economic status with a non-discriminatory episode, happy-ending with law enforcement able to track the kidnapping predator and capture him and save the girl** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogywyDasrRE>

**KPRC 2 Investigates: Impersonator with a fake employer on Indeed steals thousands from a Job Applicant 3 Minutes, 41 Seconds**

<https://youtu.be/v99K53XzMm0>

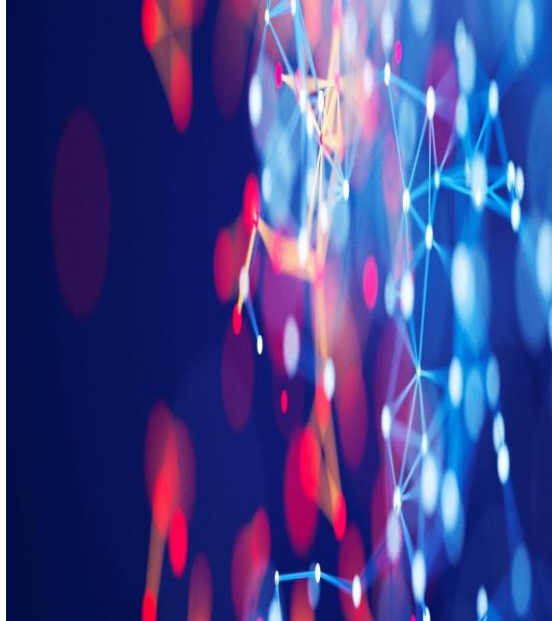


## Analysis of the Population

The population of Arlington is 392,786 within 95.8 square miles and a population density of 4,100 persons per mile (U.S., 2021).

The racial and ethnicity of the City of Arlington is 35% Hispanic, 35% White, 21% Black, 6% Asian, and 3% two or other races, with an income of \$31,722.00 x person and median household income of \$59,889.00 (Census, 2023).

In addition, 14% of this population lives below the poverty line (U.S. 2021).



The demographics in zip code 76010 are 57,448 residents, 62% Hispanic, 15% White, 16% African American, 4% Asian, and 3 % other.

The median age is 27 years, with children below 19 accounting for 37% - The median individual income is \$16,265, & for families is \$38,419.00. 27.8 below the poverty line (Census, 2023).

**AISD reports in January 2023, the demographics of Sam Houston and Arlington High School, near 76010, had a 70%+ Hispanic population, over 20% African Americans, 3% Whites, and 7% others**

The Social Exchange Theory is at play with the community, as the undocumented Hispanic population pays taxes and are recognized residents but live under the oppression of getting deported (Homan, 2015).

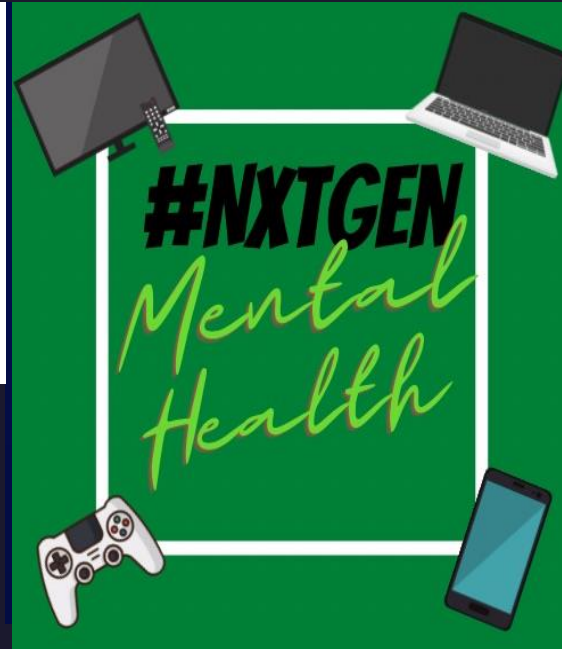
**The fear of getting deported isolates the population to ask for help, and the predators know it.**

The area is a prime target for online predators seeking to find human trafficking victims, sexual exploitation, online designer drugs, and other threats resulting from the lack of knowledge of having online parental control.



## Analysis of the Arena

**Mrs. Shante Lowery, LCSW, CEO and Founder of NXT Mental Health, in her efforts to eradicate the Digital Divide (Digital, 2023) discovered that the students had unrestricted access to the Internet and smart cell phones, exposing them to all the threats capable of harming their mental health development and falling prey to online predators.**



**The hypothesis states that low-income students increase in online presence and acquired unrestricted access to the Internet and smart cell phones, get exposed to all the threats capable of harming their mental health development, and fall prey to online predators.**

**Reaching out to Community Partners presented positive results and interest in protecting the safety of the diverse target population (Homan, 2015).**

- **Sergeant Tarik Muslimovic from the Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit of the APD manifests concern for the lack of awareness and technological preparedness from the parents of children and young adults verifying the online dangers and corroborating the increase in victimization. He attributes the escalation in crime to the ability of perpetrators to stalk, reach, and persuade that the online environment contributes to crime (Muslimovic, 2023)**



## Analysis of the Arena, Challenges

The first challenge encountered in designing a program is that a new Agency is limited in the number of Government and Foundation Grants it can apply. The alternative is to partner with existing and well-established stakeholders, the community outreach programs catering to the target population, such as:



The second challenge is to restrict data access and breach the First Amendment Act's freedom of speech (Nieves, 2023).

INTERNET CENSORSHIP

### The online war between freedom of speech and internet censorship: part 1

By Preston Nieves

The third challenge is coercive and legitimate power (Homan, 2015, p129), when politicians exercise their authority and abuse their power for personal gain (Homan, 2015, p499), as has been the case reported in the media (AP, 2019).

### 90 state lawmakers accused of sexual misconduct since 2017

By The Associated Press February 2, 2019



## Problem Etiology

The crisis is a developmental phenomenon. **Online media was nonexistent for public use before the 1990s.**

During the 70s and 80s, Linux-based systems dominated the major frameworks as closed networks making them secure, fast, and powerful enough to revolutionize data automatization (Wheeler, 2003).

With the opening of the Information Superhighway in the 90s and the transition to personal computers, phishing, & hacking invasions proliferated in 1996 (Ollman, 2007).

The mandated conversion from analog cell phones and TV to digital Smart cell phones and TV technology in 2009, contributed to expanding the field for hackers to find victims (Wellisz, 2016).

COVID created drastic changes in transitioning from an in-person mode to a virtual one (Digital, 2023), increasing the existence of Internet hackers and the flourishing of crime (Muslimovic, 2023).

The social justice initiative movement is to remove the digital divide barriers, and lift restrictions to have equal standing creating equity, & equality (Internet, 2017).

The efforts to eliminate the digital divide are improving significantly, especially in metropolitan areas (TEXAS, 2023), where free Wi-Fi is easily accessible and cellular networks are fully operational.



By: Chris Wellisz

<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2016/09/pdf/wellisz.pdf>





## Gaps in Services

The gap in service is the lack of community awareness of the dark dangers of the cyber world.

Law enforcement, the Department of Education, and the CDC are aware of the crisis and are trying to adjust as best as possible (Department, 2023). The need to act quickly gets warranted by the magnitude of the problem.

An example is the story of cars and the introduction of highways. Cars drove dirt roads in 1901, and many States did not enforce Driver's License Examinations until the 1950s (Year, 2018)

Creating online awareness equals getting a driver's license. Instead of navigating the road, a cyber-license permit should get awarded to children and young adults who take a safety awareness class to understand all the dangers associated with cyberspace.



## Intervention Planning: The Problem and the Proposed Change

The existing problem is the lack of awareness of the dangers existing on the internet that are affecting many lives and the lack of knowledge of parents and guardians to safe-keep their children and young adults.

The proposed change is to use the best-evidence practice to create community awareness and help combat the existing tyranny dominating the web.

The Mental Health prevention program raises awareness of the utilization of technology and its potential harm to the physical, mental, and emotional of the community, particularly the youth. The goal is to keep children and parents safe while using technology.

The intervention program offers an assessment to identify the problem resulting from the overuse of technology and how it impacts an individual's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It also opens the door to conducting Intervention Research and best practices to develop the most effective therapeutical treatment for online addictive symptoms.

The way to get started is 2  
quit talking and begin doing.

- Walt Disney



Mrs. Shante Lowery, LCSW,  
CEO and Founder of NXT  
Mental Health



LCSW Agent of  
Change



## Intervention Planning – Mission, Vision, and Goals

**The vision** of NXT Gen is for motivated Mental Health Interns to guide the youth and their parents to navigate safely through the information superhighway mastering its domains and remaining safe from online dangers and threats, promoting community mental health and physical well-being.

**The mission** is to promote online safety awareness to the youth and their parents by providing training counseling sessions enhancing holistic well-being and mental health through employing Youth Development Specialist Interns through a stipend-scholarship program that partners with local universities and community-based organizations.

**The first goal** is to start the pilot program for the Fall Semester of 2023 to find placement with youth groups for Interns from the University of Texas School of Social Work to start the awareness program.

**The second goal** is to secure funding for the stipend to meet the agency's budget and expand the program for the Spring Session of 2024.

**The third goal** is to evaluate the success of the Fall pilot program and the expanded Spring and Summer 2024 program to increase the number of placements for the Fall Semester of 2024.

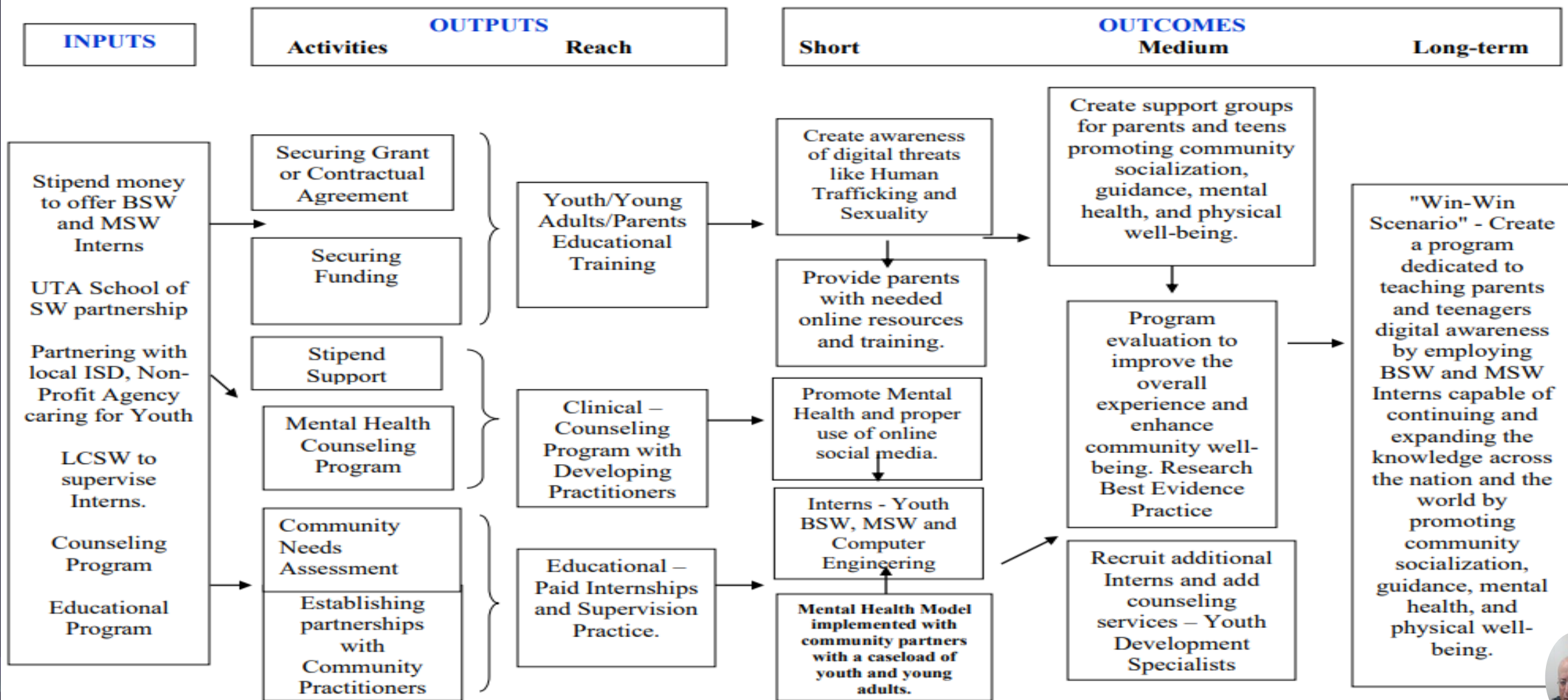
**The fourth goal** is to continue finding funding sources to expand the successful program to other areas.

**The fifth goal** is to keep track of meeting all goals in a timely fashion to secure the success of the expansion, program development, and overall benefit and holistic wellness of all communities involved.



# Activities – Logic Model

**Project Name: Online Danger Awareness Program, an NXT Mental Health Program**



## Expected Results– Outcome Objectives

- The short-term outcome objectives are to create awareness among parents, teens, and young adults of digital threats and dangers.
- The second short-term outcome is to provide parents with needed online resources and training.
- The third short-term outcome is to promote the proper and responsible use and best evidence practices of online social media to teens and young adults.
- The fourth short-term outcome is to further the professional development of interns.
- The fifth outcome is consistently evaluating the mental health model implemented with community partners to analyze expansion and needed improvements

**The long-term outcome is to create a "Win-Win Scenario" - implementing a program dedicated to teaching parents and teens digital awareness by employing BSW, MSW, and Mental Health Interns capable of continuing and expanding the knowledge across the nation and the world by promoting community socialization, guidance, mental health, and physical well-being.**

- The first medium-term outcome objective is to create mental health support groups for parents and teens, promoting community socialization, guidance, and physical well-being.
- The second outcome is to conduct a detailed program evaluation, including the best-evidence practices gained by research to improve the overall experience and enhance the program and the stockholders' well-being.
- The third outcome is adding locations and mental health counseling interns to different regions and expanding the program



## Implementation and Monitoring

**The pilot program begins the UTA Fall 2023 session on August 21, 2023, and lasts until December 13th, 2023. The Interns must accumulate 240 hours to satisfy the program requirements. The program calls for the Interns to be direct-hired from the partnering Agency as Youth Development Specialists.**

**The Interns will elaborate their planning requirements under the direction and supervision of Mrs. Lowery, LCSW, and with the approval and consent of the partnering entity.**

**The internship program will recognize 14 weekly hours of those work for the partnering Agency and require the Interns to spend the remaining ten hours conducting individual counseling sessions with the youth or parents, group sessions with the parents, and professional supervision with Mrs. Lowery. The Interns will receive a \$5000.00 stipend in recognition of those additional hours.**

**The pilot program expectation is to launch the awareness program and set the parameters for all future sessions. Creating meaningful awareness among the youth will be a long process.**

**Many students affected may not disclose at first that they are affected or realize they are victims of misconduct. The program calls for the interns to slowly and surely reveal all the existing dangers when navigating the turbulent cyber waves and gaining the trust and confidence of the student body.**

**The program cases are to be monitored closely and evaluated weekly to understand, follow, and use the best practices available always.**



## Evaluation and Dissemination

Interns will spend quality time reflecting and preparing the daily agenda under the supervision and guidance of an LCSW and a High-School educator.

All participants, including students, parents, and intern practitioners, will be aware that the project is a research and counted as the randomly selected experimental group sample. The rest of the student population would serve as the control group. Everyone participating will sign a consent.

The second semester of the program will feature a revised and enhanced program.

Steeper funding will be in place to add Computer Engineer Interns to the program that can update and enrich the preventive steps required to protect the teens and enhance the parental control recommendations.

Weekly progress reports will guide the program designer and team to improve and supervise the program continuously.

Once the program gets underway, the program director intends to invite the U. T. A. School of Social Work to conduct tier-one research (UTA, 2023) involving the National Institute of Health, NIH, to disseminate the results and improve the program to be used nationwide.

The program intervention is to improve the awareness program continuously and help stop online crime, exposing all those who work under the darkness and cover of cyberspace.



## Summary - Conclusion



Online threats are real. The target population is Arlington, TX, 76010. The young Hispanic AISD students have access to computers to do their homework and cell phones, and the parents have no idea about the dangers they face. With the fear of deportation, their parents might not report the teens missing. The vulnerability of the children and the young-adult population is an easy target for predators. The Agency plans to use MSW UTA Mental Health interns and pay them a \$5000.00 stipend per semester. The first goal is to start a pilot program in the Fall session that can help develop the project and subsequent research and set the course to establish the best potential awareness program **exposing all those who work under the darkness of cyberspace.**



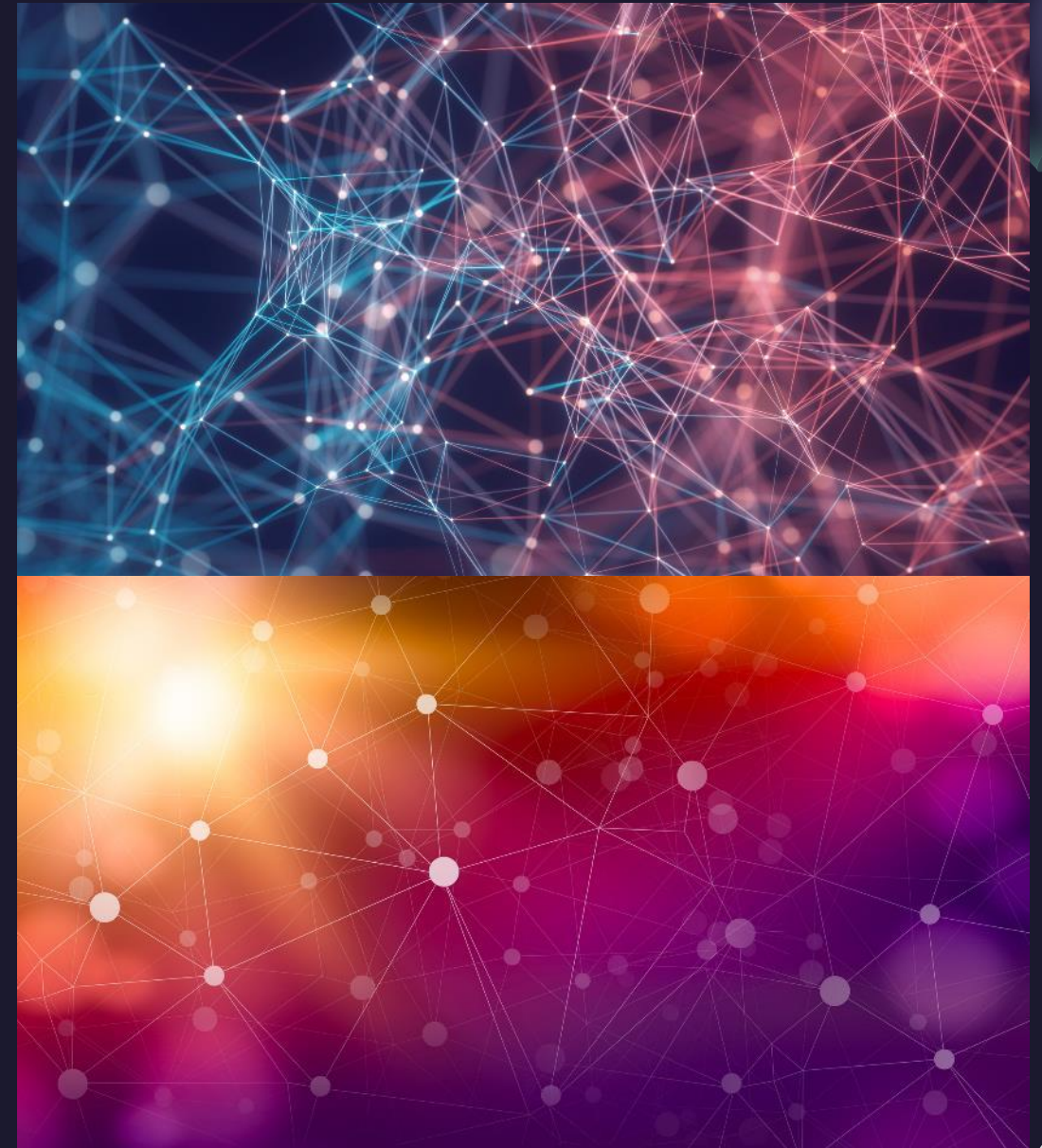


# Thank You

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[www.nxtgenmh.org](http://www.nxtgenmh.org) & [www.arlorg.info](http://www.arlorg.info)



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