



24/7 chat-based mental health support.

*Helping schools & providers
support **youth** at scale.*

Agenda.



1

A **human-in-the-loop** approach to scale youth mental health.

2

The benefits of **youth co-creation**.

3

Our approach to **impact, evidence and innovation**.

4

Working with **schools, providers and families**.

Problem.



+38%

increase in youth receiving
mental healthcare since
2019.



72%

of youth who need it
don't receive any form
of support.

Problem.

What My Daughter Told ChatGPT Before She Took Her Life

Teen Was Blackmailed with A.I.-Generated Nude Photo of Himself. Then He Died by Suicide

Elijah "Eli" Heacock had a promising future ahead of him, his parents said
By [KC Baker](#) | Published on June 9, 2025 02:58PM EDT

Teen, 14, Dies by Suicide After Falling in 'Love' with AI Chatbot. Now His Mom Is Suing

Megan Garcia argued Character.AI has "targeted the most vulnerable members of society," as they say "we take the safety of our users very seriously"

By [Adam Carlson](#) | Published on October 24, 2024 04:13PM EDT

talkspace |

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SEXTING WITH GEMINI

Why did Google's supposedly teen-friendly chatbot say it
wanted to tie me up?

By Lila Shroff

Problem.



What is Sonny?



24/7 Chat-Based Support *(non-clinical)*

Instant, chat based support with a trained coach for youth and families.



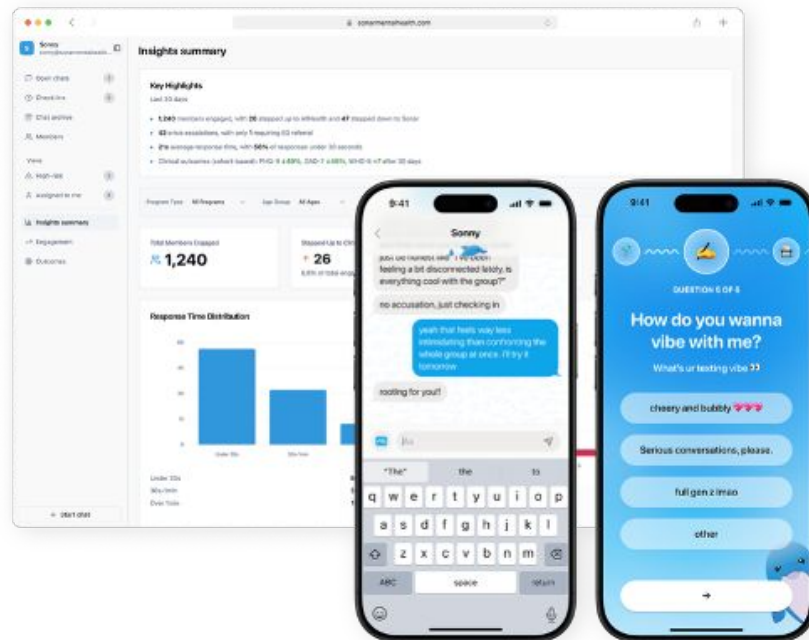
Seamless Connection to Care

Escalation to clinical care as needed, in partnerships with schools, clinics and virtual providers.



Unique Insights

Real time data to enable better reporting and decision making.



Benefits of AI, with the Safety of Humans.



What do humans do?

Ensure safety standards are upheld and users have an incredible experience.

- Respond to messages 24/7.
- Handle escalation, crisis and care coordination.
- Provide feedback on AI recommendations.
- Quality management via our clinical team.

What does AI do?

Makes our coaches more efficient & effective.

- Makes response recommendations
- Ensure personalized responses that are culturally competent.
- Summarize past conversations.
- Create reports for efficient hand-offs.
- Flag risky situations.

Youth Co-Creation: Sonar Changemakers

Sonar Changemakers is a student-facing program designed to gather high-quality product feedback and usability insights directly from our members. It gives students a voice in how we build Sonar while deepening engagement and trust with the brand.

Purpose

1. Involve students in shaping the Sonar experience
2. Get fast, actionable feedback on new features, and usability pain points
3. Build community and advocacy among our members



Ananya
MN



Emily
OR



Adyant
CA



Seli
NJ



Preston
NY



Shifali
MA



Ava
VA



Imad
TX

Keys to Co-Creation



Build real relationships



Define a clear, shared purpose



Diversity



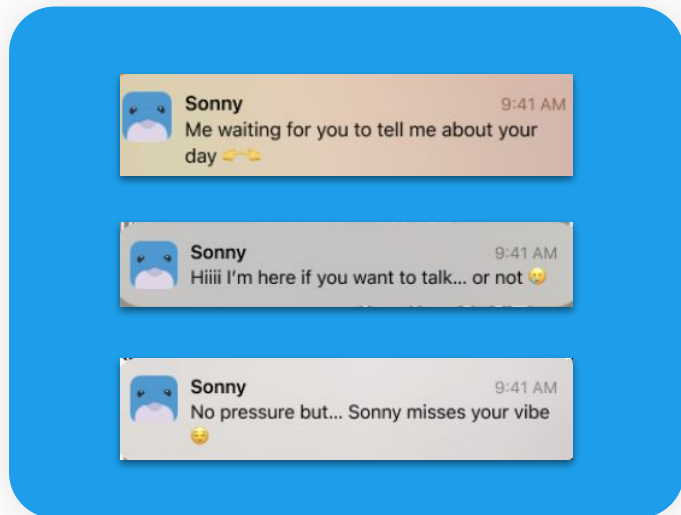
Real decision making influence



Strong feedback loops

The screenshot displays the Sonar website interface. At the top, there are two main sections: "INSTRUCTIONS" and "MAP YOURSELF!". The "INSTRUCTIONS" section lists four steps: 1. Locate Your City/State, 2. Drop Your Pin, 3. Write Your Name & Fun Fact, and 4. Share Out. Below this is a "Stamp Collection" and a "Sticker Collection". The "MAP YOURSELF!" section features a stylized map of the United States with various cities labeled (e.g., Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, Dallas, Houston, Denver, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Anchorage). The map is decorated with icons representing different states and cities. To the right of the map is a "5 MIN SCAVENGER HUNT" section with a list of tasks and a grid of images showing people participating in the activity. Below the map, there is a "Make Waves with Sonar" section with a description of the Sonar Youth Ambassador Program and a "What is Sonar?" section with a description of the Sonar app. The Sonar logo is visible in the bottom left corner.

Co-Creation Case Studies



Check-Ins & Notifications



Conversation Tone / Style

Impact.



Supporting a diverse & traditionally underserved population.

Population Served

- 65% urban / 35% rural
- 70% economically disadvantaged
- 31% Black, 28% Hispanic, 34% White, 6% Asian
- 50% first gen college

High engagement where gaps historically exist.

Engagement

- 6.9 conversations per month for engaged members
- 3.9 new moments of new self disclosure per month
- 74% of conversations occur between 4pm and 7am

Broad engagement leads to a better overall support system and improved outcomes.

Outcomes

- 26% YoY reduction in disciplinary incidence
- 100% crisis escalation success rate across hundreds of cases
- 3.7% better trend in GPA
- 8 fewer missed days of school

Why this works?

Engaged Youth
At Schools



40%
Engaged

Coordinate with
Families



Free Support
to Families

Refer to
Clinicians



+50%
Timely Referrals

sonar

Summary & Lessons Learned.



1

A **human-led approach** when providing support (even if non clinical) is necessary. AI helps with the rest.

2

Youth co-creation is a necessity, leading to higher engagement and better outcomes.

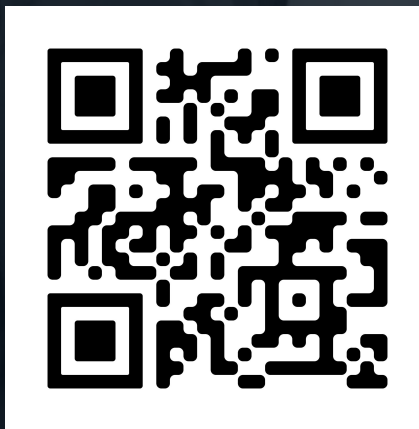
3

Supporting youth with schools improves outcomes through increased engagement and coordination.



sonar

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Appendix

Coach Recruiting, Credentials and Oversight.



Coach recruiting and vetting

- Recruit from schools of social work, medicine, psychology or organizations supporting youth (e.g., crisis lines, schools/counselors, etc.) – ~30K applicants to date
- Multi step interview process: screen, case, live test, references, background checks.
- 40-60 hours of training (classroom, live shadowing) through Sonar certification process.

Who are our coaches?

- Contractors who do shift work; covering youth conversations 24/7/365.
- 100% have a background in social work or psychology.
- 80% have lived mental health experience.
- 80% have experience with trauma informed care.
- 83% identify as BIPOC.

How are they overseen?

- Hiring, feedback and oversight led by our clinical lead (Faraz, Adolescent Psychiatrist) and operations lead (Alex, LCSW).
- Live testing, spot checking, weekly feedback and ongoing coaching.
- Additional safety net of an emergency rotation to support coaches in handling crises.
- AI flags risks for escalation/review.