



## MCFD is now using Microsoft Teams

Good morning,

Over the past couple of months, with many of us working remotely, it has become very clear just how important communication and collaboration are. In order to support staff, Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) has been rolled out across government in response to the increased number of employees working from home.

As of July 13 2020, all Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) staff received the MS Teams tool on their computers for use of the chat and meeting features only. MS Teams is becoming our first-choice collaboration tool, as it will eventually replace Skype for Business.

MS Teams is a workplace tool that is part of the Office 365 suite which allows individuals and teams to collaborate, share information, and connect. It has a similar look and feel to collaboration tools that have the capacity to see multiple people on video at the same time. MS Teams has several improvements over Skype, including higher quality video and voice communications, with the capacity to see 9 people at the same time during the video call, and one to one chats. Some additional features planned for the future include an increase to 49 people visible during virtual meetings and document collaboration.

As you know, a lot of the work done in the ministry is sensitive in nature and falls under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)*. We are pleased that MS Teams has been approved for all *CFCSA* work, including mediations. We want to support our clients to ensure that this tool is easy to use and meets of the families and youth we serve. **This tool is not to be used for any programs and services under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)*, as we haven't received security and privacy approval yet.**

We test piloted the MS Teams chat and meetings features with several teams across the ministry, including those who provide services under *CFCSA* legislation to test with clients and agencies and for CYMH staff to test with families and youth to ensure this tool would meet their needs. The focus was on testing the video conferencing and chat tools, as well providing training to staff across the ministry.

Thanks to those who participated in the pilot:

- Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN)
- Children and Youth with Mental Health (CYMH), Mental Health Support
- Provincial Centralized Screening (PCS)
- Information Management Branch – Information Policy and Privacy Team

- Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD)
- Adoption & Permanency Branch
- Autism Information Services (AIS)
- Policy, Legislation & Litigation Branch

Now that ministry staff are using MS Teams, you may want to explore licensing options that best meet the needs of your organization, which can be acquired directly from Microsoft. Prices vary depending on the licensing option selected. When ordering a license, **please select “Canada” when asked where data is to be stored.** (Non-profits and charities may want to check out TechSoup for a discount.)

Thank you,

**Sheila Robinson**

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