



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CDI presents youth crime-reducing app at Design Exchange opening September 20**

**TORONTO, ON**—On September 20, 2019, [Child Development Institute](#) (CDI) invites visitors to explore its **SNAP Youth Justice** technology-based model as one of five featured youth projects presented at Toronto's **Design Exchange** (DX) exhibition for social innovation. The exhibition opens at the DX on Friday, September 20, and continues through Friday, November 1, 2019.

The **SNAP Youth Justice digital app** introduces a new way to **deliver mental health for youth** in real-time. "We are absolutely delighted that DX selected our SNAP YJ model to showcase in collaboration with DX and **Elevate**, a state-of-the-art social innovation summit, given the program's focus on using technology to engage high-risk youth in an innovative mental health and crime prevention model," said Leena Augimeri, PhD, Co-Founder and Director of SNAP Scientific and Program Development at CDI.

SNAP YJ aims to reduce the risk of further contact with the law and/or gang affiliation among males between the ages of 12 and 19 who are involved in the youth justice system, either in custody, on probation and/or in the community. The SNAP YJ model builds on the SNAP model's evidence-based approach.

SNAP, developed at Child Development Institute (CDI) in 1985, is an evidence-based, gender sensitive, trauma-informed, cognitive-behavioural model that teaches children in their middle years (aged 6-11) with serious behaviour problems, and their families, how to stop and think before they act and make better choices "in the moment." The primary goal of SNAP is to increase emotion regulation, self-control and problem-solving skills to help keep children/youth in school and out of trouble.

The SNAP YJ model works with youth using a real-time, interactive, technology and scenario-based platform. With the support of trained facilitators, youth are guided through digitized manual sessions that contain thought-provoking scenarios to discuss how the SNAP strategy can help reduce problematic behaviour and increase social competencies. The SNAP YJ model has been developed and implemented as a result of the generous support from Justice Canada and the Ontario Government.

"The use of technology in the SNAP YJ program has supported youth to feel safe and listened to during a difficult time in their lives. Facilitators support youth in achieving program success and gaining skills that support positive choices as they navigate adolescence and transitions to adulthood," added Augimeri.

To learn more about CDI's evidence-based SNAP program, visit [www.stopnowandplan.ca](http://www.stopnowandplan.ca).

**ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE:** Child Development Institute (CDI) is an accredited children's mental health organization in Toronto, Ont., mandated with the mission to support the healthy development of children, youth and their families. A leader in the field, CDI develops and delivers world-class, evidence-informed mental health programs and services across four streams: Early Intervention Services, Family Violence Services, the Integra Program, and Healthy Child Development. For more information about CDI, please visit: [childdevelop.ca](http://childdevelop.ca).

**ABOUT DESIGN EXCHANGE:** Design Exchange (DX) is a cultural institution that champions creative thinking, inspires problem solving, and celebrates innovative talent in Canada and around the world. It serves as Canada's design hub through the delivery of a range of engaging and enriching public programs and exhibitions. For more information about DX, please visit: [dx.org](http://dx.org).

-30-

#### **PHOTO AND INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE**

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