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OneSeventeen Media Promotes Mental Health in Schools

By Cait Etherington

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In mid June, OneSeventeen Media, a women-owned, Austin-based AI edtech company, launched a crowdfunding campaign on iFundWomen. OneSeventeen Media has developed two mobile-delivered mental health and behavior management tools for K-12 students: ThinkingApp and reThinkIt!. With these apps, OneSeventeen Media hopes to extend its mission of changing attitudes and changing minds about mental health in the K-12 education space.

OneSeventeen Media's History and Mandate

OneSeventeen Media (<https://oneseventeenmedia.com>) may be raising funds, but its founders aren't new to business. Amy Looper and Beth Carls first took their Internet consulting firm public in September 1999. As stated on their website, "The team created the largest mid-cap, high-tech IPO and had grown 8,164% in a mere 35 months. By creating the first internet consulting company to fully integrate a cracker-jack team of tech and creatives under one roof, they picked up a Fortune 500 group of early adopter clients such as Exxon, Chevron, Dell, Sony, Enron, Halliburton, Master Card, United Airlines, Hilton, M&M Mars, Continental Airlines, Merrill Lynch, Duke, Marathon Oil, USAA, and more." However, for Looper and Carls this early success was just the start. They realized early on that they wanted to engage in social venture entrepreneurship with a focus on serving kids.

As Looper, co-founder and COO of OneSeventeen Media, recently told *Built in Austin* (<https://www.builtinaustin.com/2018/07/27/oneseventeen-media-edtech-mental-health-apps>), scaling their company has taken time, largely due to changing levels of social awareness on mental health issues: "We started our company in 1999 in the social emotional learning sector, which is tied to mental health. The challenge was, in the field of

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education, nobody used the word 'mental health.' It was almost like it was a dirty word until the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting [in Parkland, FL], the Sante Fe shooting, the Sutherland Springs shooting. That was the tipping point."

As awareness and new technologies has evolved, so has OneSeventeen Media. Looper and Carl emphasize that unlike many school mental health initiatives, OneSeventeen Media's solution is proactive not reactive. ThinkingApp and reThinkIt! are both based on trauma-informed, restorative and social and emotional learning (SEL) principles and aim to provide real-time emotional digital triage for distraught students well before their feelings escalate into damaging reactions. In this sense, the apps aim to promote safer, inclusive learning environments for everyone. Specifically, the apps have been developed to assess emotional and mental states and help students process their emotions, understand their behaviors, and deal with their peers' emotions and behaviors.

In a press release (https://oneseventeenmedia.com/wp-content/media/IFW_Press_Release_2.pdf) issued on June 19th, OneSeventeen Media emphasized that its technologies are backed by seven years of evidence-based research and that components of their new mobile-based technology have resulted in a "statistically significant reduction in students' emotional distress." Their press release further notes, "the same components even helped one Texas school avert a potential shooting due to real-time, actionable insights provided to educators about a troubled student."

Current Funding Initiative

There is no doubt a need for apps like ThinkingApp and reThinkIt! and that is why Amy Looper and Beth Carls are currently raising funds to scale their venture. As Looper emphasizes, "Women have to get creative with their fundraising venues, which is why we chose iFundWomen. We want to reach investors of all dollar amounts who appreciate that women have game-changing ideas." At the time of launching their fundraiser on June 19th, their initial goal was to raise \$100,000, with over 75% of the funds raised being invested directly in the artificial intelligence, data analytics and content development of ThinkingApp and reThinkIt!.

Looper and Carl are not only optimistic about their fundraiser but also their apps' potential to change how K-12 schools address mental health. "When a child is upset," says Looper, "Our app can meet this child in his or her tech-based culture, and make them feel comfortable. It's helping kids get their thoughts together without bias."



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