

Kids Like Us

Situation Kids Like Us is a no-cost, confidential counseling program for youth in Frederick County (MD) who are impacted by alcohol or drug abuse in their household. The program had been using a video, produced in 1983, in Frederick County public schools to educate and start conversations with at-risk kids. However, given its severely outdated presentation and production values, it was failing to connect with today's children. The Frederick County Health Department's Behavioral Health Services department enlisted TDC to create a new video that would better engage current audiences while continuing to be relevant for years to come.

Solution Unlike the original video, which focused on one child's story for nearly 30 minutes, our approach included four brief stories, each less than two minutes, that were presented by a diverse range of child actors who narrated their character's unique family environment, parent or guardian's substance issues, and trauma resulting from the adult's negligence or abuse. A young, empathetic adult figure "hosted" the video—introducing the stories, providing insight into the emotions and pain felt by each character, and presenting helpful steps to cope with difficult circumstances. And last but not least was the integration of animation depicting key elements within each story. These vignettes presented thoughtful metaphors and analogies of the dynamics within each story and injected additional visual interest to the overall presentation.

Result The final product, titled, "Short Stories from Courageous Kids," elicited the following comments from our client:

"It turned out so BEAUTIFUL! You all did so much in such a short timeframe. I believe this is going to help a lot of students find their way to help and support."

"Wow. The finished product is better than I could have anticipated. Thank you so much for the care and effort put into this project. It is relatable, engaging, and presented with kindness. More kids will 'tune in' because of it."



