

## Developing Girl2Girl: A Text Messaging-based Pregnancy Prevention Program for LGB Girls 14-18 Years of Age

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Public Health Research  
Decoding how technology influences and can improve public health

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## The “Why”



Data suggest that sexual minority adolescent girls (e.g., lesbian- and bisexual-identified girls) are **2-4 times more likely to become pregnant** compared to heterosexual-identified peers.

Nonetheless, culturally and sexually relevant pregnancy prevention programs for these young girls are **completely lacking**.

## Study development activities

Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>September - February 2016</li> <li>(n=160); 8 groups total</li> </ul>
Content Advisory Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February - May 2016</li> <li>(n=72); 3 groups total</li> </ul>
Beta test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August - October 2016</li> <li>(n=24)</li> </ul>
Survey development pilots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July - September 2016</li> <li>Online survey (baseline; n=267); Text message survey (intervention middle; n=334)</li> </ul>

## Girl2Girl: The Final Product

- ▶ Intervention
  - ▶ Driven by the Information-Motivation-Behavior Model of HIV Preventive Behavior
  - ▶ A seven-week 'core' program with a one week booster delivered after a 3 month 'latent' period
  - ▶ 4 paths were written to address issues specific to sexual experience and identity
  - ▶ Badges promote skill acquisition and level up questions ensure teens are understanding the content. Additional program features include the Text Buddy and G2Genie
- ▶ Control group
  - ▶ Attention matched content based upon 'healthy lifestyle' topics (e.g., self-esteem)
  - ▶ No interactivity

## Eligibility criteria

- ▶ 14-18 years of age and in high school
- ▶ Cisgender: female sex assigned at birth and female gender identity
- ▶ Self-identify as not exclusively heterosexual (i.e., sexual minority)
- ▶ Exclusive owner of a cell phone;
- ▶ Enrolled in an unlimited text messaging plan;
- ▶ Experience texting for at least 6 months;
- ▶ Plans to have the same cell phone number for at least 6 months
- ▶ Has passed capacity to consent
- ▶ Has passed self-safety assessment

## Protecting participant privacy + Informed assent

- ▶ Certificate of Confidentiality
- ▶ Waiver of parental permission from IRB
- ▶ Phone enrollment to verbally read and discuss the assent
- ▶ Including a "capacity to consent"
- ▶ A self-safety assessment to guide youth through different scenarios and determine the potential outcomes/risks

## Capacity to consent

- ▶ Name things you will be expected to do during the study.
- ▶ Explain what you would do if you no longer wished to participate in the study.
- ▶ Explain what you would do if you felt uncomfortable reading one of the text messages or answering one of the survey questions.
- ▶ What are the possible risks for participating in the study?

### Example self-safety assessment questions

What do you think? If your parents saw a program text messages on your phone - say content that talked about having sex with girls[with other girls and boys], using sex toys, and things you can do to keep yourself STD free, what would happen?

What would happen if your friends, your partner, or brothers or sisters saw a message like this on your phone?

→ If it seems unsafe: Based upon what we're talking about here, it seems like taking part in the study might not be a safe decision for you right now. We can talk you through how to make your computer more private by deleting your browser history, how to password protect your phone, and how to password protect the word document. Even so, I'm concerned about your safety. What do you think?

### Presentation 1: Opportunities and challenges represented by online recruitment and enrollment of sexual minority adolescent girls in research

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### Presentation 2: Survey development for Girl2Girl, a text messaging-based pregnancy prevention program for sexual minority adolescent girls

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Michele Ybarra MPH PhD  
Tonya Prescott BA

### Presentation 3: Developing and pilot testing Girl2Girl, a text messaging-based pregnancy prevention program for sexual minority adolescent girls

Michele Ybarra MPH PhD  
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Elizabeth Saewyc PhD  
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Margaret Rosario PhD

## Partnering with the target population is key



Image from: <https://www.vox.com/2016/4/4/11348524/lgbtq-rights-discrimination>

## Results: Focus groups (FG)

- ▶ FG data suggested that most sexual minority adolescent girls were unaware of and skeptical about higher pregnancy rates for LGB compared to non-LGB teens:
  - ▶ "I think that it is very strange that lesbians are more likely to get pregnant than straight because you just wouldn't really think that."
  - ▶ "...I find it hard to believe because I mean, lesbians aren't attracted to guys and it takes a guy to get pregnant."
- ▶ Although some were open to it once exposed to the statistic:
  - ▶ "Wow. I was not aware of that. I think it actually applies to many people I know because we are all very irresponsible to be honest. They are more likely to be taken advantage of because they do not think the sex education applies to them."
  - ▶ "Well I am bisexual and have been pregnant a few times but miscarried. I do believe this statistic is about right including me and people I know."

## Results: Focus groups (FG)

Same-sex attracted girls who had never had sex found it difficult to imagine a scenario in which they or other same-sex attracted girls would have sex with a partner who had a penis:

- ▶ "Yeah, I'd use condoms with a guy. Probably birth control too, though I can't imagine myself ever having sex with a man."
- ▶ "With a guy, I would definitely be happy to use a condom. Though I'm not entirely sure about this, as far as I can tell, penises are kind of gross."

Some sexually experienced same-sex girls were better able to consider scenarios in which same-sex attracted girls might have sex with males.

## Results: Focus groups (FG)

Many also thought STI testing was a reasonable way to protect against STIs and did not foresee pregnancy risk if they were having sex with girls. Therefore, they do not need a plan to have barriers close at hand.

- ▶ "I know I should use barriers even with girls, but I'd also prefer if I could be tested and my partner could be tested. If we're clean, I'd much rather go without any barriers. I really just feel like I'd rather be able to taste someone or feel them exactly as they are."

## Integrating FG data into the content

Program content was written to address the issues raised in the FGs:

- ▶ Messages described reasons why someone might start using contraception even if she was not having sex with someone who had a penis;
- ▶ How dental dams can be used during sex - including how male condoms can be used to make dental dams; and
- ▶ Normed the idea that commitment in a healthy relationship means a commitment to each other's health, including using barriers.

## Content review by target population to ensure saliency



Program content was then reviewed by the two CATs, one that focused on the intervention content, and the other that read the control content.

Subsequently, a second CAT with different participants was conducted to confirm the first CAT's feedback had been integrated in a way that was useful for participants.

- ▶ Feedback suggested that:
  - ▶ The tone of program messages was acceptable and the information was generally well received.
  - ▶ However, many youth said the messages needed to be more gender-inclusive and
  - ▶ Content needed to provide more context around why barriers might be needed when having sex with girls.

Image from: <https://lifehacker.com/how-to-get-the-android-8-0-oreo-beta-on-your-galaxy-s8-1820046557>

## Beta test



Image from: <https://directmailmac.com/blog/2014/10/beta-testing-begins/>

## Conclusion

Iteratively developing Girl2Girl with ongoing feedback from LGB teen girls helped to ensure that the intervention content was acceptable and personally relevant.



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Image from: [http://www.instagram.com/user/?p=L\\_rights%202572373%202577963578988605\\_2062572373](http://www.instagram.com/user/?p=L_rights%202572373%202577963578988605_2062572373)

Discussion

Questions

