

EVALUATION ABSTRACT: *GIRL2GIRL*: HARNESSING TEXT MESSAGING TO REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY AMONG LGB GIRLS

Grantee

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Intervention Name

Girl2Girl

Intervention Description

Girl2Girl is a 20-week teenage pregnancy prevention program delivered daily via text messaging to female youth ages 14 to 18 years, who self-identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, or other non-heterosexual exclusive sexual identity. In addition to receiving program content, *Girl2Girl* participants are paired with another participant (for example, a Text Buddy) with whom they can text to support each other throughout the program. They also have access to an on-demand advice text line, G2Genie, which shares information about sex, relationships, and LGB community.

Girl2Girl content is guided by the Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills model and focuses on: pregnancy prevention information, motivations to engage in pregnancy prevention behavior, communication skills, behavioral skills (for example, using a condom and HIV testing), and healthy and unhealthy relationships. Brief online videos reinforce behavioral skills content. *Girl2Girl* core content is 7 weeks in length and delivers 4 to 12 messages per day to study participants. This is followed by a 12-week latent period in which participants receive 2 to 3 messages two days per week. A weeklong booster is delivered 12-weeks post-core content end and reviews the topics covered in the core intervention. *Girl2Girl* content is tailored based upon sexual experience (for example, whether one is abstinent or sexually active) and whether one is same-sex or dual-sex attracted.

Comparison Condition

Attention-matched control arm, specifically a healthy lifestyle text messaging program

Comparison Condition Description

The control arm is attention-matched (for example, similar intensity and duration as the intervention, but with different content). Content topics include: nutrition and sleep hygiene, self-esteem and body image, bullying, and drugs and alcohol. Like the intervention, the control condition is 19 weeks in length (6 weeks of core content and one week booster and review) and goes out by text messaging. Messages are didactic and not tailored to user sexual experience or attraction (for example, same sex or dual sex). The comparison group does receive two days of pregnancy prevention content, but this is markedly less than what the intervention group receives. Otherwise, they receive no portion of the treatment program. Additionally, the Text Buddy and G2Genie intervention program components are not available to this group.

Behavioral Outcomes

Use of birth control methods during penile-vaginal sex acts, condom use during penile-vaginal sex acts, and abstaining from penile-vaginal and penile-anal sex (post-intervention)

Non-behavioral Outcomes

Intentions to have sex, intentions to use condoms, intentions to use birth control, attitudes towards condom use, and pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection-related information (post-intervention)

Sample and Setting

Participants will be recruited online nationally using Facebook and Instagram ads. To be eligible for the study, participants must: (1) be ages 14 to 18; (2) be cisgender female (for example, be assigned female sex at birth and endorse a female gender identity); (3) endorse a non-heterosexual sexual identity (for example, lesbian or gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, unsure, other sexual minority); (4) be English speaking; (5) be exclusive owners of a cell phone with an unlimited text messaging plan; (6) have used text messaging for at least six months; (7) intend to have the same cell number for the next year; and (8) be able to provide informed assent, including an acceptable score for the capacity to consent and self-safety assessment.

The evaluation plans to enroll 840 youth across the United States.

Research Design and Data Collection

The research design is an individual randomized controlled trial. Youth are randomly assigned to the *Girl2Girl* intervention group or the attention-matched comparison group at a one-to-one randomization allocation ratio. Participants will be randomly assigned to the intervention or control using a stratified assignment based upon two variables: (1) sexually experienced versus inexperienced and (2) same-sex attracted (for example, lesbian) versus dually attracted (for example, bisexual). During a phone call with study staff, participants will provide assent/consent, complete the self-safety assessment, and pass a capacity to consent. Participants will then receive a text message containing the link to the baseline survey. Random assignment will occur after the youth completes the baseline survey. The intervention group must also accept a Text Buddy Code of Conduct to pair with a Buddy, a core component of the *Girl2Girl* intervention. Data collection will occur online and through text messaging.

The online survey data collection will be comprehensive and assess all behavioral and non-behavioral outcomes on the following schedule: baseline, post-intervention (about 20 weeks after random assignment), 3-month post-intervention, and 6-month post-intervention. Collecting data from text messaging will be brief and only assess sexual behavior outcomes on the following schedule: mid-intervention (7 weeks after random assignment, after the core content has been delivered), 9-month post-intervention, and 12-month post-intervention follow-up.

For the implementation evaluation, fidelity (for example, number of modules completed by responding to a level-up question, texting one's Buddy, or texting G2Genie at least once that week) and quality (for example, if messages are being delivered in the order intended, if target population is being enrolled, and participant engagement) data will be collected. Fidelity data will be automatically recorded and stored by the study program software.

Schedule/Timeline

Sample enrollment and baseline data collection began in January 2017 and will end by December 2017. The follow-up data collection began in March 2017 and the last follow-up assessments will be collected by June 2018.

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