

Empowering You for What's Next

Engaging youth in co-designing a comprehensive sexual health web app

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2023 ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY
PREVENTION GRANTEE CONFERENCE

**REUNITE
REIGNITE
RE-ENERGIZE**

INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE
MAY 23-25 | ATLANTA, GEORGIA

FYSB Family & Youth
Services Bureau

Adolescent Pregnancy
Prevention Program

ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



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Workshop Objectives

1. Describe best practices for **virtually engaging youth** in an iterative design process
2. Identify tools and processes for **gathering youth perspectives and implementing their feedback** into program and platform design
3. Discuss **successes and challenges** in virtual youth engagement with a priority population.



About Next4You

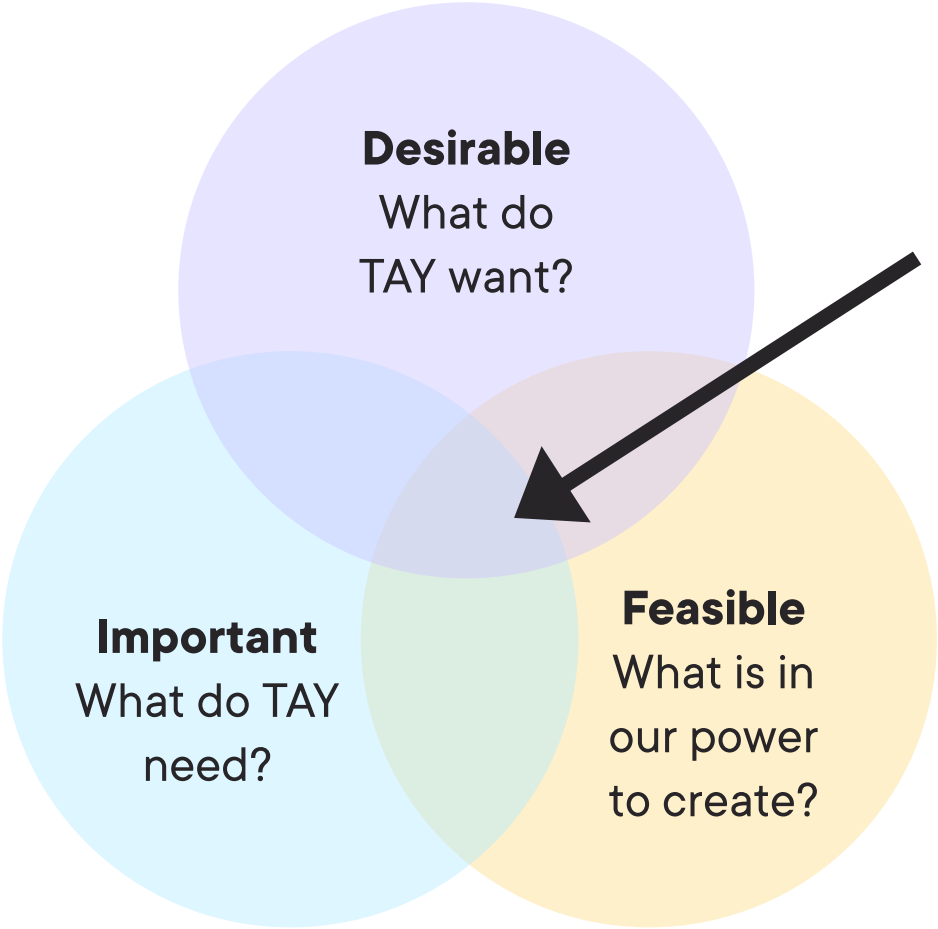


An innovative sexual health education web app
designed by and for youth in foster care



About Next4You

- Empower California youth in foster care through an interactive digital platform
- Content covers topics like healthy relationships, contraception, and building wealth
- Both platform and curriculum built in collaboration with former foster youth co-designers



**OUR
GOAL**

Designed for Youth, by Youth

“I didn’t know how to draw boundaries. I never learned that and that led to experiencing rape and sexual assault.”

“The only time I learned about sexual health was in middle school. Most things I had to find out from my own experiences.”

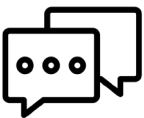
What we proposed



Web app, mobile responsive - no need to download in the App Store, unique log-ins



Micro-lessons - short lessons on important sexual health topics, relationships, and life skills (budgeting, pregnancy planning, etc.)



Gamification - how do we keep in touch with users and keep them coming back?

Modules & Example Lessons



Communication: How to have difficult conversations



Relationships: What's healthy and when is it time to breakup?



Sexual Wellness: STIs, healthcare, pleasure, and intimacy



Contraception: Condoms, birth control, and advocating for yourself



Respect Self & Partner: Boundaries and consent



Building Wealth & Wellness: Financial planning, finding purpose, pregnancy planning, managing emotions

Co-Design Process

- Recruited by consultant with deep experience in foster youth advocacy
- Weekly 90-minute virtual co-design sessions that covered content and platform development
- Compensated through e-gift cards
 - \$75 (\$50/hr) and \$25 food stipend per session
 - Additional compensation for ad-hoc tasks outside of sessions
 - \$25 per task (e.g., surveys, research, content development)

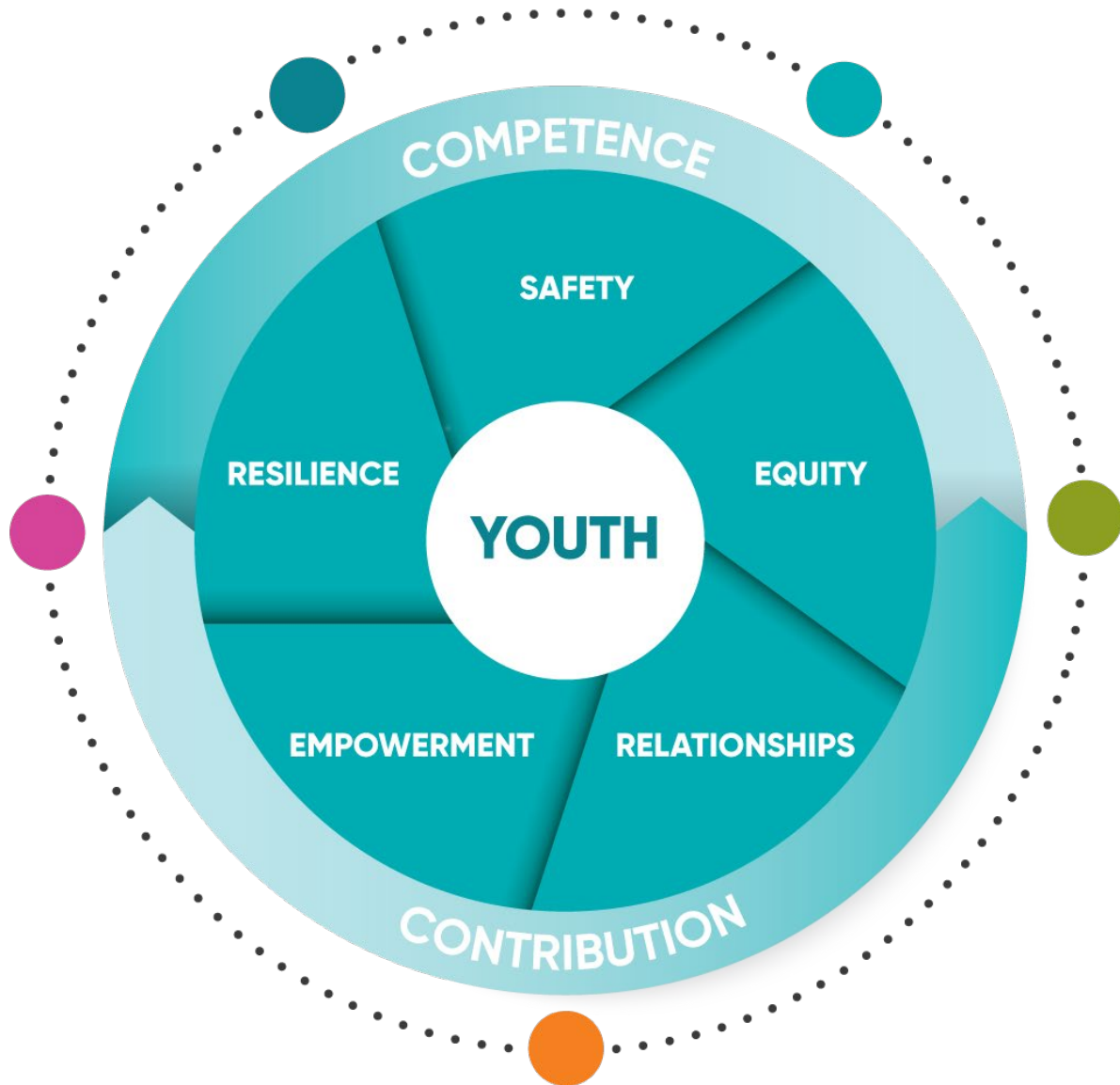
Youth-Centered Health Design

**Positive Youth
Development**

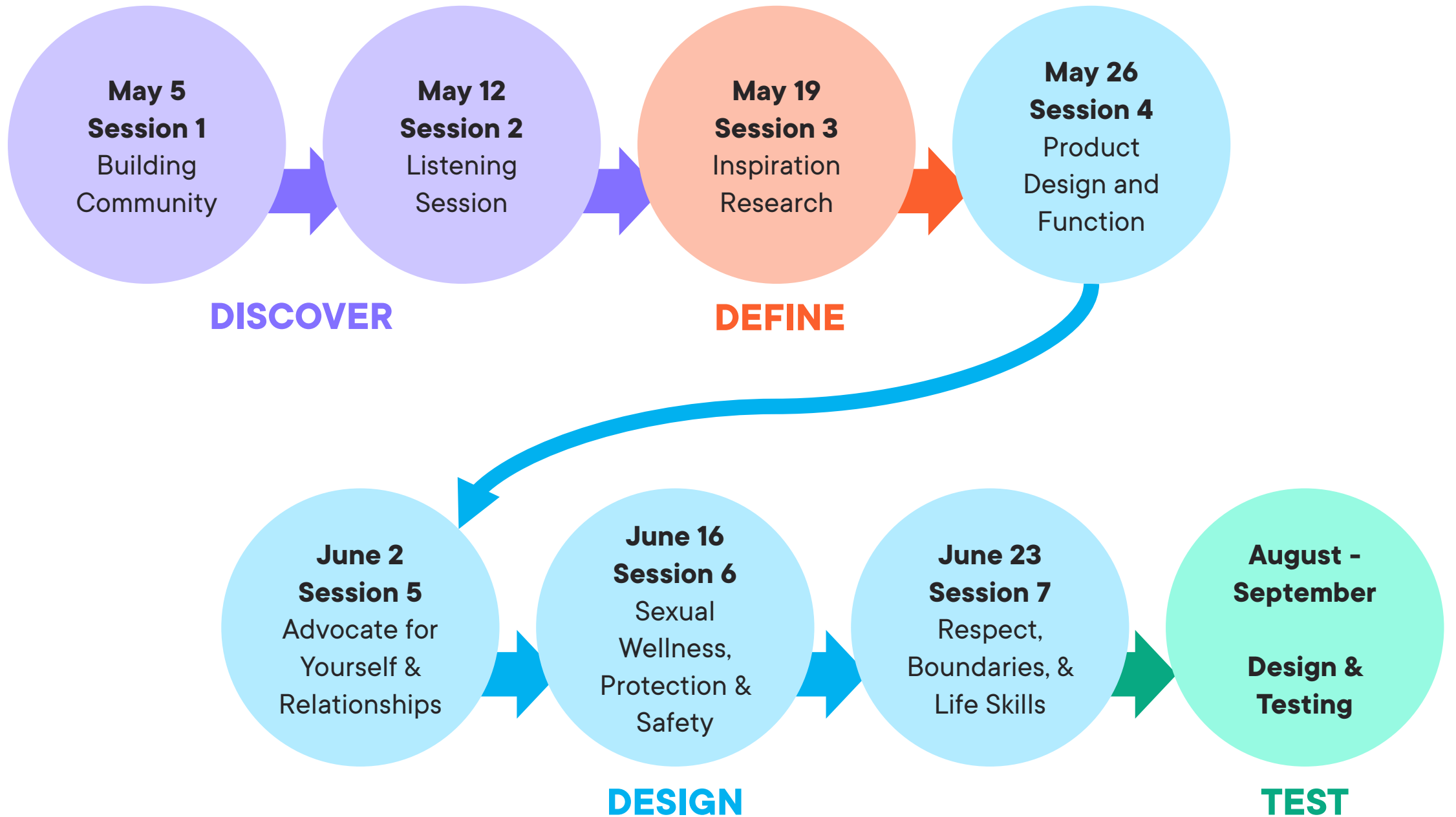
We **involve & engage youth** as partners & respect their **knowledge, strength, & leadership.**

**Human-Centered
Design**

We **design, iterate, & share solutions** that meet the needs of youth & **reflect their experiences.**



**Youth are at the center
because they are the
experts in their own lives.**



How Might We Question Template

“How might we [action] [issue] for [who] in order to [change]?”



How might we design a web app that fills the need for accessible and engaging sexual and reproductive health, healthy relationships, and financial readiness education so that TAY foster youth have access to the necessary tools for self-care and lifelong wellness?

User personas by co-designers

Three user personas were developed by co-designers during a virtual inspiration research session

- Jane Dooley, 16
- Adam Rocha, 19
- Tara Salazar, 21

Co-designers used these personas to create journey maps for different scenarios:

- Navigating an unhealthy relationship
- Seeking treatment for STD symptoms
- Establishing boundaries for consent

Jane Dooley (they/them); Age 16

About Jane:

They identify as female and bisexual. They are an Aries and their personality is bubbly, really sweet but they like to fight. They can easily get their self into situations – that’s why they ran away. They have polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), a condition in which the ovaries produce an abnormal amount of androgens. They have never had a regular period, but have managed their PCOS using birth control.

Personal history

They were in foster care in Atlanta (placement: Bad Girls Club Group Home) and recently ran away to LA.

What are their experiences with sex education?

They learn all lessons about sex from Twitter! Very social media influenced.

How do they usually take care of their sexual health and wellness?

Using solely TikTok and Planned Parenthood for reproductive healthcare and knowledge.

Are they in a relationship? Do they have dating experience?

Yes they have a girlfriend. She is their first girlfriend. They want to have sex, but is a weenie.





Adam Rocha (he/him); Age 19

About Adam:

He identifies male and as queer/gay. He's a Scorpio and can be rather introverted. He was recently diagnosed with ADHD and depression. He also walks with a limp due to nerve damage from an unhealed injury sustained from physical abuse at his last placement.

Personal history

Adam just aged out of the system and is currently homeless, living at a shelter.

What are their experiences with sex education?

Adam hasn't experienced formal sex education. He might have had a class or two in middle school, but he can't remember any of it. He relies on the advice of older boys he's met at school.

How do they usually take care of their sexual health and wellness?

Adam has never been to a clinic to take care of their sexual health. He's never liked going to the doctor and has a hard time making and keeping appointments.

Are they in a relationship? Do they have dating experience?

He's had multiple partners and is seen as hypersexual, but he's really more about having intimate relationships with people and sex isn't that important to him.

Tara Salazar (she/her); Age 21

About Tara:

Tara identifies as female and bisexual. She is a Cancer and is a very friendly and emotional person. She likes to dress tomboy and took up rollerskating during the pandemic – and actually got really good! She has ADHD and she's sometimes overwhelmed by work and school, but loves her job at the plant store and really likes to learn new things.

Personal history

When she was 13, she was placed into a group home for a few years before being placed in a foster home. Then when she was 18, she was had an extended Transitional Housing Placement (THP+). She just moved out and is now renting her own apartment where she lives with her pet dog, Teddy, who is a Hersheys-colored pomeranian.

What are their experiences with sex education?

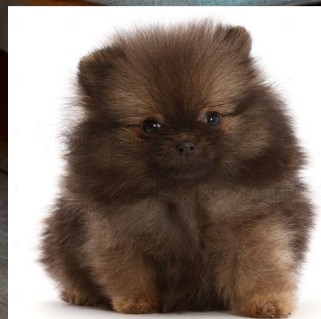
Tara attended sex-ed class in 5th grade, but otherwise has learned mostly from experience.

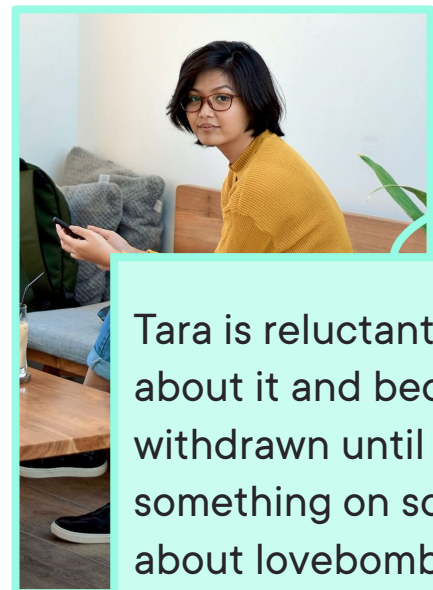
How do they usually take care of their sexual health and wellness?

She goes to Planned Parenthood for birth control and regular check-ups.

Are they in a relationship? Do they have dating experience?

She has had some sexual experience: Tara dated a boy in highschool who was her first sexual experience. Last year, she dated an older woman who showed her the ropes, but they broke up after only a few months.



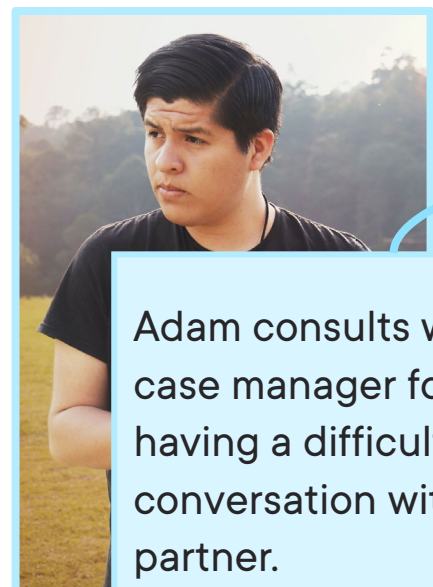


Tara is reluctant to talk about it and becomes withdrawn until she sees something on social media about lovebombing.

Then she asks a friend about what lovebombing is and they send her links to some resources, like the Next4You app.

She is then more comfortable talking about the situation with her friends after being able to identify what is going on.

She confronts her partner about their behavior knowing her friends can support her through the situation.

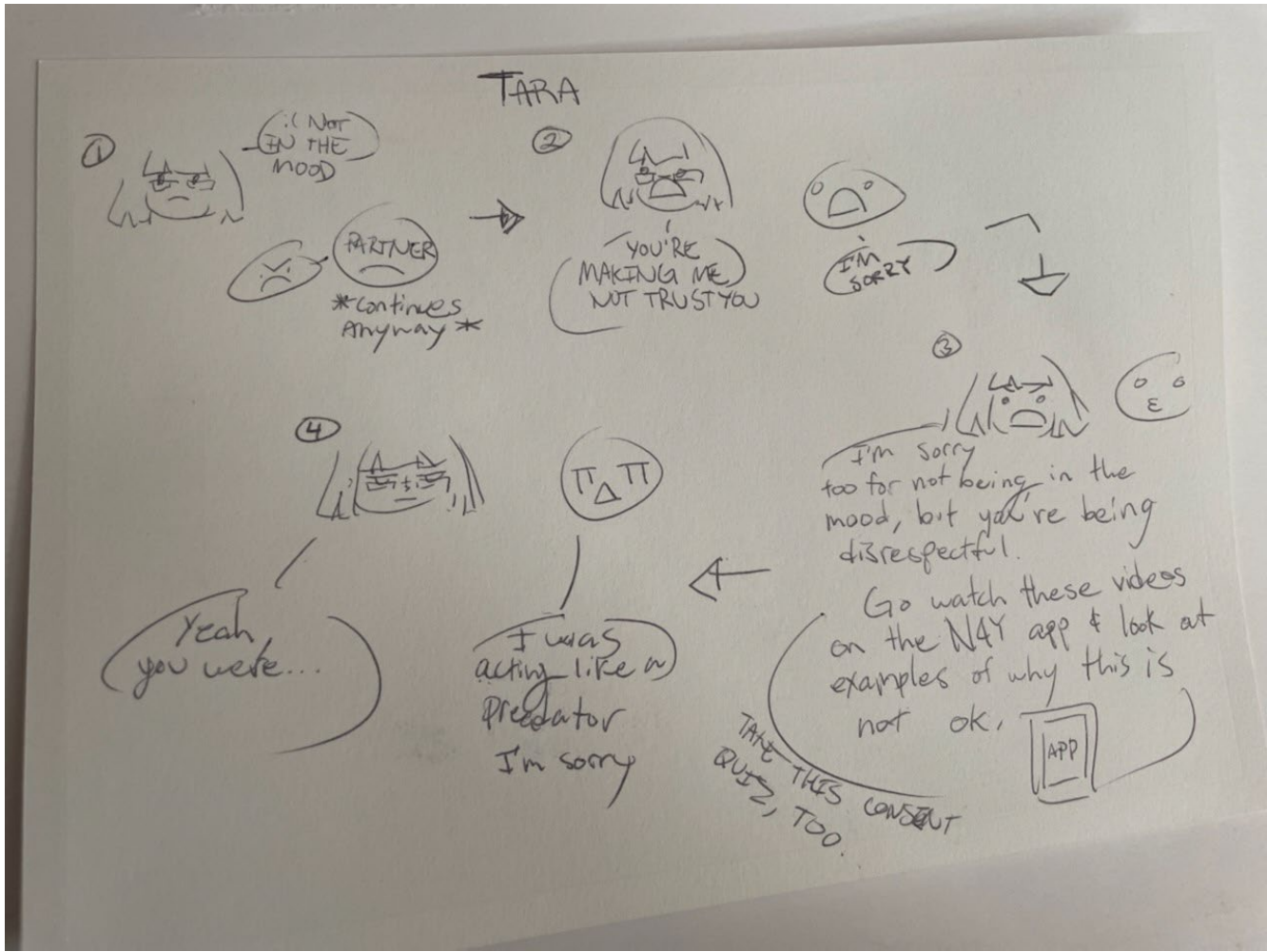


Adam consults with his case manager for support having a difficult conversation with his partner.

He uses the Next4You app because his case manager says he is too busy to help him. He needs a new case manager.

He learns about setting boundaries in the app and learns about tips about self-love, which empowers him.

He asks a friend about their experience and how they feel about it. He also reaches out to his therapist.



Journey map showing the use of Next4You, drafted by a youth co-designer during a discussion of consent and drawing clear boundaries with one's partner.

Visuals

- Bright and vibrant colors that hold your attention are preferred over neutral palettes
- Easy-to-read, simple fonts
- Having the option to edit your color scheme and toggle between light and dark modes
- Relatable images without stock photo cheesiness: “Golden Retriever Calendar energy”
- Clear organization, with icons and graphics to help navigate



Moodboard options presented to co-designers for feedback

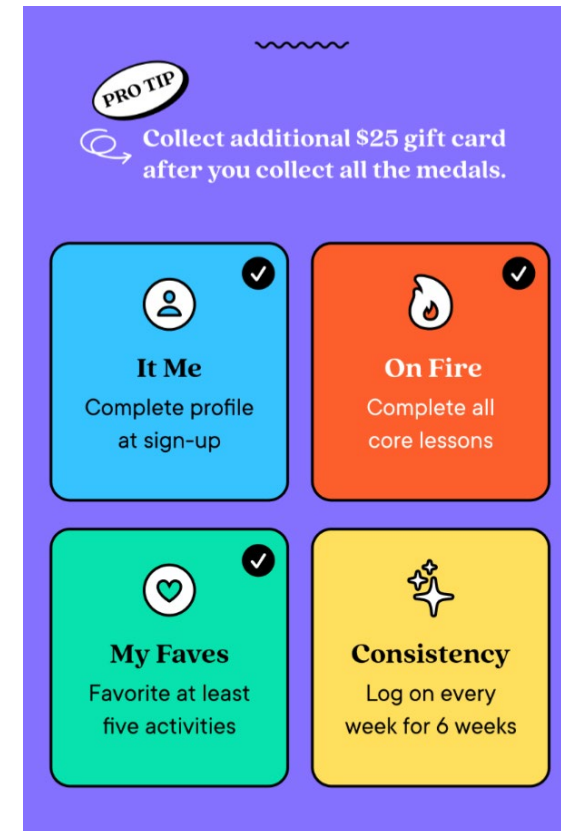
Functions

Microlessons

- Video content (e.g., OneLove)
- Fun, personality quizzes
- “How to” content (e.g., WikiHow)

Gamification

- Points/awards system that convert to cash or discounts
- Visual progress tracker (e.g., growing a plant, taking care of a pet)



Mock-up of gamification option



Best Practices & Lessons Learned



Virtually engaging youth in an iterative design process

Mentimeter Activity

Go to menti.com and
use the code 2815 3446



I was today years old when I learned...

- “Love bombing is actually a manipulative tactic.”
- “Kids can get sexually transmitted infections [from abusive situations].”
- “While you’re pregnant, you can get gestational diabetes.”
- “Our female bodies change drastically as we get older. Kind of like everyday, in a sense.”
- “Plan B doesn’t work for anybody over 30 BMI.”
- “Part of having a healthy relationship is learning how to love in someone else’s language.”
- “Sexual manipulation in a long-term relationship is real.”
- “I wish I had learned about the whole concept of pornography and how it affects people, and commercial sexual exploitation.”
- “I wasn’t taught that if someone ever touches you down there, it’s important to know the actual body parts of your body. They’ll use pet names for their body parts but it’s important that they know the real names because if you don’t and something was to happen, how could you explain what happened?”
- “Another thing that’s often not taught about in mainstream foster care is self-harm and suicide.”

Make space and meet youth where they're at

- Be proactive in finding ways for participation to take place in differing capacities.
- Lead with check-ins/icebreakers that are fun energy boosters and/or relevant to the material that will be covered during that session.
- Inform as necessary but be balanced in time spent educating and creating opportunities for the youth to engage in the conversation.
- Create additional means of communication, such as a group chat, to continue building upon a sense of community outside of the standard meeting times.



Incorporating Youth Voice & Perspective



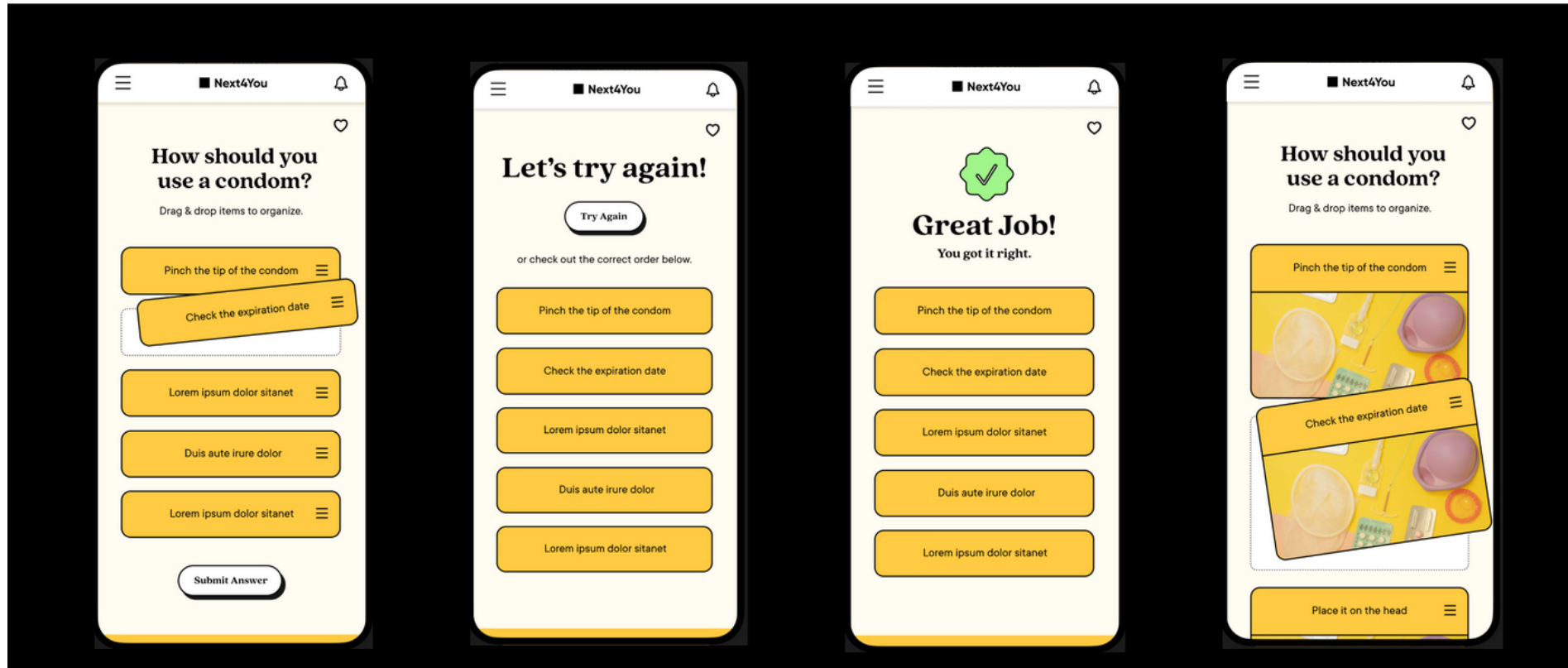
Gathering youth perspectives and implementing their
feedback into program and platform design

Tools & Process

- Present drafts of developed content
 - Obtain direct feedback from youth on what's missing
 - Participants check for tone, relevancy, and use of youth-friendly language
- Be proactive in identifying areas where youth voice is necessary
 - Capture personal narratives to add to the content and aid in the authentic inclusion of youth voice – record sessions as necessary
 - Be intentional about leaving open spaces in the content that are best informed by and developed in collaboration with the co-designers.
- Assign compensated out-of-session tasks
 - Enable co-designers to engage asynchronously
- Make it visual
 - Simple mockups of potential design features and content make the process more engaging and feedback more targeted

Here's a mock-up of how the condom activity will look in the Next4You app!

Would it help to have pictures?



Is this a realistic text message conversation?



Lol just saw a tweet saying that pulling out, or withdrawal, I guess, is one of the oldest methods of birth control and the Latin term for it was “coitus interruptus”

Omg that sounds like a spell from Harry Potter.



🪄 COITUS INTERRUPTUS!!!!!!



What other questions about Emergency Contraception should we include in this FAQ?

What is Emergency Contraception?

How does the copper IUD work as Emergency Contraception?

Does emergency contraception protect against STIs?

How effective is emergency contraception?

Do I need to be 18 to buy it?

What is PEP?

How can someone get emergency contraception?

How much does it usually cost?

How does an emergency contraception pill work?

Is there a weight limit for Emergency Contraception (EC)?

What else do you want to know about EC?

Helpful Tech Tools

Mentimeter

Padlet (vs. MURAL)

GroupMe

Canva

Ultimately, it just needs to meet youth where they're at.



Successes

- Effective rapport building through online versions of various games and community-building activities.
- Maintained a safe, trauma-informed dialogue with co-designers while supporting them through vulnerable or difficult conversations.

Challenges

- Maintaining meaningful engagement individually outside of the sessions.
- Managing participant availabilities and individuals' differing capacities to engage in a virtual session.
- Incentivizing/encouraging on-camera participation.

Discussion



What are your thoughts?

Thinking about youth engagement in your own work...

- 1) How are you meeting youth where they are?
- 2) What kind of tools are you using for virtual participation?
- 3) What challenges do you face equitably and meaningfully engaging youth in your work?



What's Next



Thank you



an **etr.** project



Contact Us



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Session Evaluation

Please complete a brief evaluation form for all workshops and panels on Tuesday, May 23 and Wednesday, May 24 by scanning the QR code below or visiting the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/SessEval232323>

