

Keeping Youth Engaged: Retention Techniques for a Digital APP Intervention

Marisa V. Cervantes, PhD

She/her/ella

Project Director, MyHealthEd, Inc.

Emma Pliskin, MPH

she/her

Research Scientist, Child Trends

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Independent research to help children & youth thrive.

Co-authors

Maeve Day, BS

she/her

Senior Research Assistant, Child Trends

Zabryna Balén, MPH

she/her

Research Analyst, Child Trends

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real
talk

Child Trends.

Independent research to help children & youth thrive.

Our Goals for Today

01

Identify at least three key challenges in retaining participants in a digital intervention.

02

Utilize two engagement strategies to retain participants in digital interventions.

03

Describe at least two benefits of collecting multiple forms of contact information from participants.

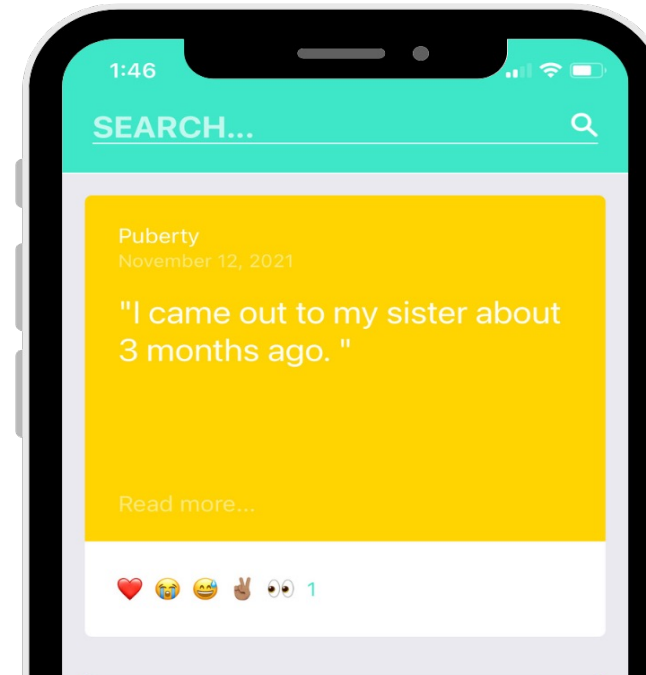
real
talk

SafeSpace: An Adaptation of the *Real Talk* app

Real Talk provides a safe space for youth to share their stories, access trusted resources, & helps teens know they are not alone in their experiences growing up

As a complement to in-person curricula, *Real Talk* can be implemented completely virtually & utilized by hard-to-reach populations

SafeSpace uses *Real Talk*'s youth generated stories & resources as two components of the SRH curriculum



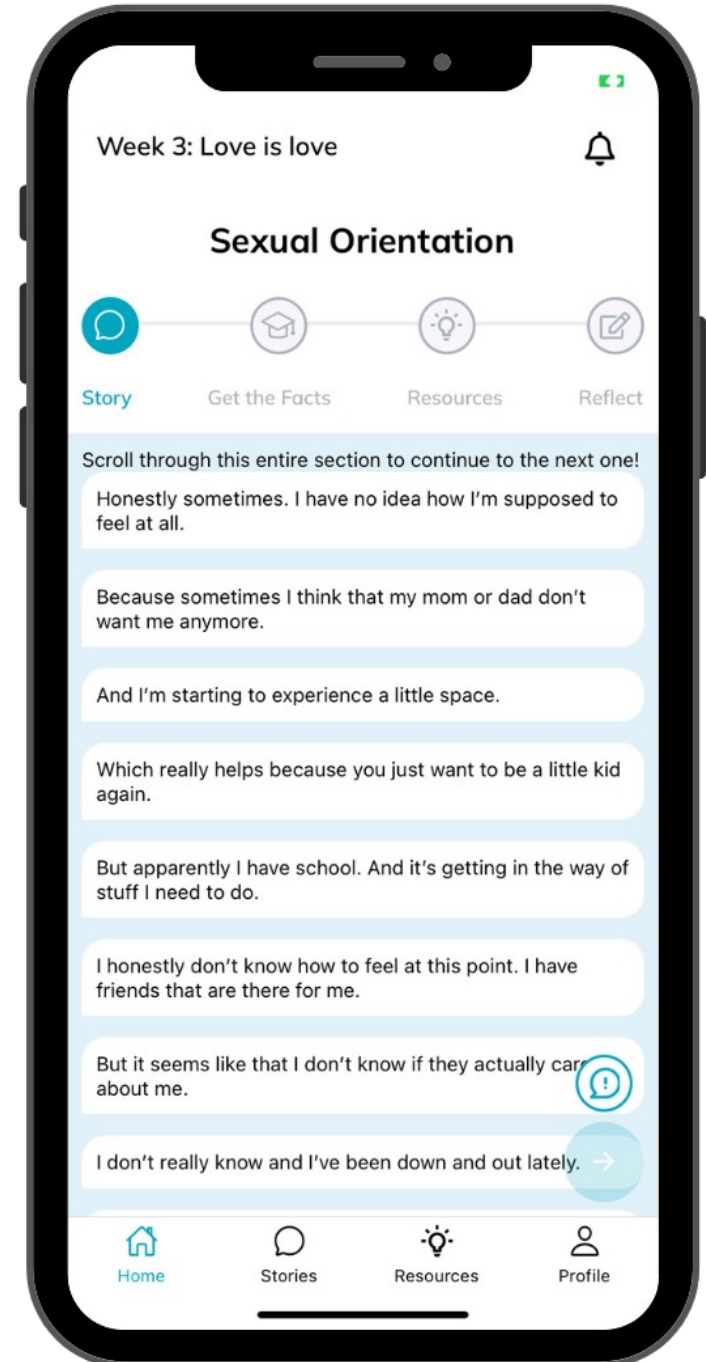
Evaluating Storytelling as a Teaching Tool through *SafeSpace*

Goals of the ACF-funded rigorous evaluation:

- Reducing sexual risk factors
- Increasing sexual agency among youth of target demographics

Implement the APP program entirely virtually & asynchronously

Additional opportunity for youth to access SRH education



A brief look at *SafeSpace*

- 10 weeks of content
- Each lesson contains:



1 authentic youth story on aligned topics



3 key facts written by sexual health experts

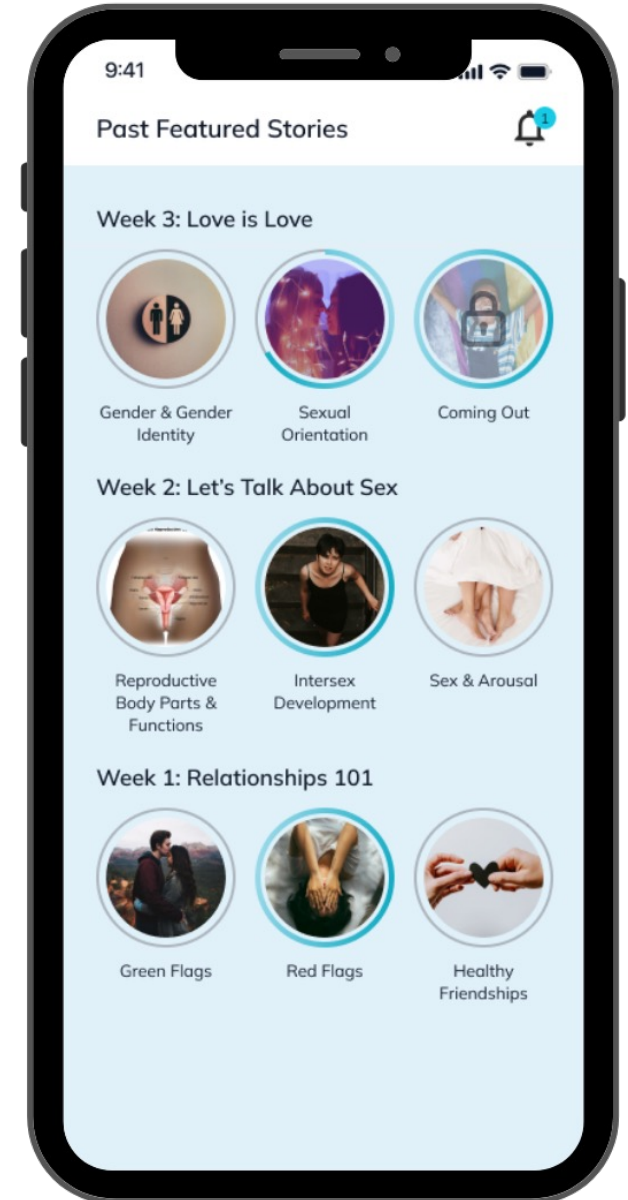


3 high quality online resources to learn more

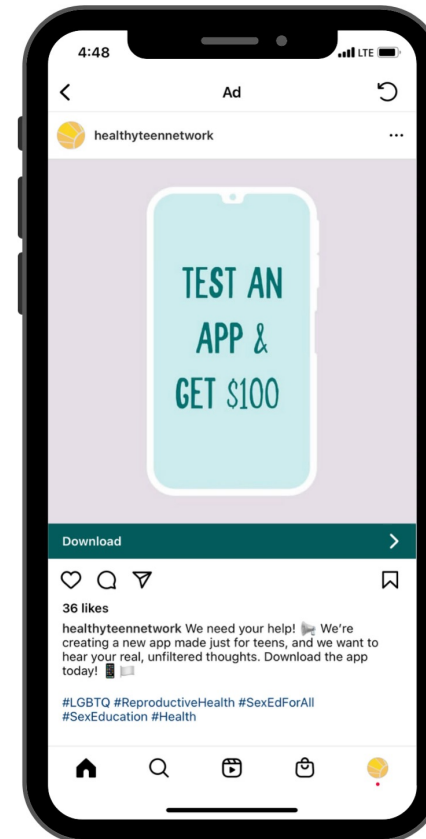
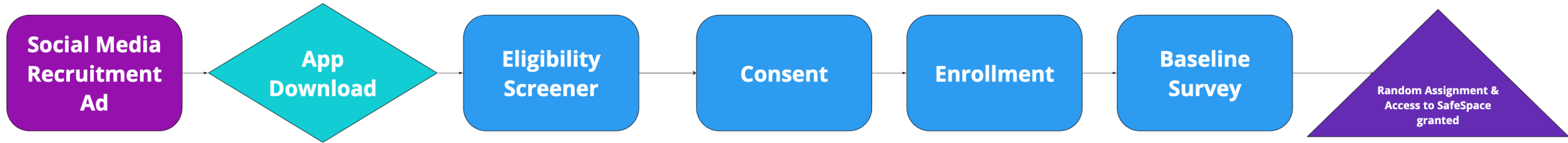


Reflection activity to apply knowledge and skills

- State and national resources
- Bedsider.org clinic finder



Digital Recruitment & Enrollment



Retention Protocol

There are several important aspects of our retention protocol that have allowed for success in retention efforts:

Collect numerous contact methods from participants when surveying them in Qualtrics

Maintain consistent points of contact with participants throughout the program implementation and afterwards

Contact tracing individuals early when text messages are unsuccessful

Collect multiple forms of contact information

12:29

Safe Space

What is your email address?

We'll never sell or share your email address, and we will only email you if we can't get through to you by text first.

What is your cell phone number?

This is where we'll send your \$25 gift cards and let you know about additional surveys. We'll never sell or share your phone number.

12:29

Safe Space

By participating in this study, you're agreeing to allow us to call your phone number in case we need to remind you to fill out a survey. Do you agree to allow us to call you at number?

Yes, I agree to allow SafeSpace team members call me.

No, I **don't** agree to allow SafeSpace team members to call me. **I know this means I will not be able to participate in the study.**

Powered by Qualtrics

12:29

Safe Space

Can we leave a voicemail for you at 6095756676?

Yes

No

Do you have a second phone number we could use if the first number is not working?

Yes

No

12:29

Safe Space

There may come a time during this study when we can't reach you in the ways you've said are ok. In that case, we would like to be able to contact you privately via social media.

Which social media sites can we use to send you a direct message (DM) if we can't reach you?

Twitter

Instagram

Facebook

None

Maintain consistent points of contact with participants throughout the study period

Contact regularly during the intervention

- Push notifications 3x per week
- Text all participants during week 1 and 6
- Text inactive participants at weeks 3 and 8

Contact participants between the short- and long-term follow-ups

- Text participants once every 3 months
- Proactively contact trace participants if contact is lost

Text participants from a consistent phone number

Project team uses YakChat to contact participants:

All team members can see participant message history, allowing for numerous people to track participation.

When possible, project teams can automate this process. For example, using Microsoft Power Automate.

Contact tracing individuals early when text messages are unsuccessful



Sometimes, texting a primary phone number is unsuccessful. Follow up numerous times with a couple of days in between for each contact method.



Texting, emailing, and calling the participant were the most effective methods of outreach. Messaging a social media handle was slightly effective. Messaging a trusted person was the least useful.

Successes

- Survey response rates of 79.5%
- Re-engagement data
 - 146 treatment participants received at least one re-engagement text. Of these, 36% returned to the app.
 - 70.5% of participants received midpoint incentive; 8% re-engaged after initial ineligibility & text receipt
- Updated phone numbers were acquired during fielding and contact tracing outreach, at different points of outreach
- We learned of new reasons for participant disengagement, such as getting new phones, or having push notifications disabled
- Participants appreciated quick response time over text, and knowing that they were communicating with a human (as opposed to an automated robot)

Challenges of Retention in a Digital Intervention



Lack of personal connection (compared to school-based or other in-person interventions)



Youth change their phone numbers, block us, get new phones, etc., which creates challenges for us contacting them



Automated processes save time but are imperfect. Technological glitches do occur

Suggestions for Other Research Studies

Automate communication from the start

Capture a variety of contact methods and regularly update

Approach outreach with flexibility and open-mindedness

- Participants enrolled because they wanted to, and they want to be engaged, they may just need some encouragement
- It can be helpful to pair messages with incentive links or reminders about upcoming potential incentives

Suggestions for Other Research Studies

Be consistent and reliable

- Texting participants from the same phone number (as is possible through YakChat) so that participants recognize the number
- Consider setting up a study email and sharing the login with team members so numerous people can communicate

Use technology for in person programs as well as digital ones

- Technology may make reaching hard to reach populations more effective
- Youth may feel more comfortable communicating about difficult topics over their phone/in private

Helpful Resources

- [YakChat](#)
- [Power Automate](#)

Thank you!

Marisa V. Cervantes, PhD

Project Director, MyHealthEd, Inc.

marisa@myhealthed.org

Emma Pliskin, MPH

Research Scientist, Child Trends

epliskin@childtrends.org

Session Evaluation

Please complete a brief evaluation form for all workshop, forum and networking sessions by scanning the following QR code or visiting the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2024Evaluations>

