

Girl2Girl: Harnessing Text Messaging to Reduce Teen Pregnancy Among LGB+ Girls

The Office of Population Affairs (OPA) funded the development and rigorous evaluation of the Girl2Girl program to determine if it is an effective approach for preventing teen pregnancy, promoting abstinence, and improving condom or other birth control use during sexual activity. This program joins the ranks of Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) programs that have experienced positive outcomes when evaluated for effectiveness. OPA's TPP Tier 2 grantees develop, replicate, refine, and rigorously evaluate additional models and innovative strategies to reduce teen pregnancy. The TPP programs that experience favorable impacts are then considered evidence-based and become eligible to replicate in communities across the country.

Program Overview

Girl2Girl is a 20-week teen pregnancy prevention program delivered daily via text messaging to cisgender female youth ages 14 to 18, who self-identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, or other non-heterosexual sexual identity (i.e., do not exclusively identify as heterosexual) and who own a cell phone with unlimited texting. In addition to receiving program content, Girl2Girl participants are paired with another participant (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 the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer/questioning (LGB+) community.

Girl2Girl content 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 seven weeks in length and delivers four to 12 messages per day to study participants. This is followed by a 12-week latent period in which participants receive two to three messages two days per week. A weeklong booster is delivered 12-weeks after core content ends 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.

Program/Intervention Name

Girl2Girl

Program Overview

Harnessing text messaging to reduce teen pregnancy for LGB+ teen girls.

Setting

National (via text messaging)

Population

Sexual minority girls ages 14 to 18, English speaking

Type/Mode

Text messaging

Length/Duration

Five months: seven weeks "core" messaging where teens get 4-12 messages per day; three months "latent period" where teens get two to three messages two days per week; one week booster/review where teens get 8-15 messages.



Evaluation Study Design and Results

The evaluation design was an individual randomized controlled trial. Youth were randomly assigned to the Girl2Girl intervention group or the attention-matched comparison group at a one-to-one randomization allocation ratio. The control arm was attention-matched (that is, they received similar intensity and duration of text messages as the intervention, but with content not focused on pregnancy prevention). The comparison group received two days of pregnancy prevention content; this was markedly less than what the intervention group received. Otherwise, they received no portion of the treatment program. Additionally, the Text Buddy and G2Genie intervention program components were not available to the comparison group. The online survey assessed outcomes on the following schedule: baseline, post-“core” intervention end (about 7 weeks into the program), post-intervention (about 20 weeks after random assignment), three months post-intervention, six months post-intervention, nine months post-intervention, and 12 months post-intervention end. An implementation evaluation was also conducted to assess fidelity and quality of the program.

Girl2Girl was found to be an effective program to improve LBG+ women’s condom protected sex acts, use of birth control, and intentions to use birth control. Compared to youth in the comparison group, all youth in the Girl2Girl intervention and youth in the intervention who reported having sex in the past 90 days at baseline reported more condom-protected sex acts. All youth in the intervention were more likely to use birth control and youth who were not on birth control at follow-up were more likely to intend to use birth control than comparison group youth.

Grantee and Evaluation Contact Information

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