

Development of a Mobile Messaging Intervention for Men who have Sex with Men:
Formative Study

2c. Focus Group Guide

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(Following consent for participants) Welcome and thank you for being here today. My name is (name), and I am a researcher at (organization name). Today, we're going to have a discussion about informational public health messages that might be used to encourage people to take part in HIV prevention or HIV care. This focus group discussion should take about an hour and a half. Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answers. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can choose not to answer a question or leave the focus group. Everything that you say in here will be kept private. The information may be shared with other members of the research staff, but the information that you share with me today will only be used for this research project. We cannot control what other participants say to others once they leave the focus group discussion; however, we really stress the importance that everyone participating in this group keeps this discussion private. If it's all right with you, I would like to audio-record our focus group. This is so that I can remember everything that you say to me here today without having to write it all down. This recording will be transcribed, so we will be putting all of the words that you say here onto paper, but there will be no identifying information for yourself or others in the transcriptions. The recording will be destroyed once it is transcribed. Since we are transcribing it, please try to refrain from using anyone's full names. You can use first names or nicknames instead. If a name (or any other identifying information) gets recorded, we won't include it when we transcribe it. Is it okay with you if I record the discussion?

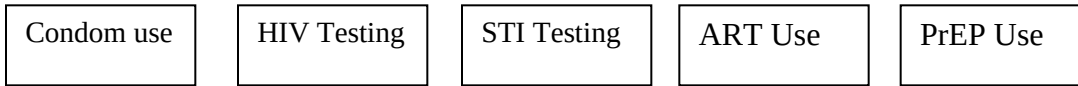
1. To start with, I want us to think about some of the HIV prevention messages we might have heard of. When I say "HIV prevention message" I am talking about messages that may either encourage you to take steps prevent HIV or messages that may encourage you to get care if you are living with HIV. Can you remember any messages that you may have heard or seen recently?

*** Listen for messages provided by the group: allow time for group to recall several messages***

2. Are there any messages that really stand out to you as *being better* than others? Probe for: why did that particular message stand out? Language, tone, format, visual image.
3. Are there any messages that really stand out to you as **being worse** than others? Probe for: why did that particular message stand out? Language, tone, format, visual image.
4. Now I want us to talk about messages around five different topic areas. The topic areas are: Condom use, HIV testing, STI testing, ART use and PrEP use (confirm knowledge of each of these subject areas and fill in any knowledge gaps as appropriate).

Here I have cards with each of the topics written individually one per card. I am going to lay the cards out in a row. I also have cards each with a different characteristic of a message, and by that I mean the different ways in which messages can be presented. I have multiple copies of each card. For each of the five topics shown on the cards here, I want us to think about how we might want to receive those messages.

*** Lay the cards out as shown below***



The first card we have is “informal/ fun language” [FUN] – which of these topics would you be willing to hear a message about in a more informal or fun language style? And remember, you can put this in more than one pile if you want.

*** Put the “informal/ fun language” card next to each of the topics that are mentioned***

For each of the topics at which the card was placed ask – *why would this topic be suitable for a more informal or fun language style?*

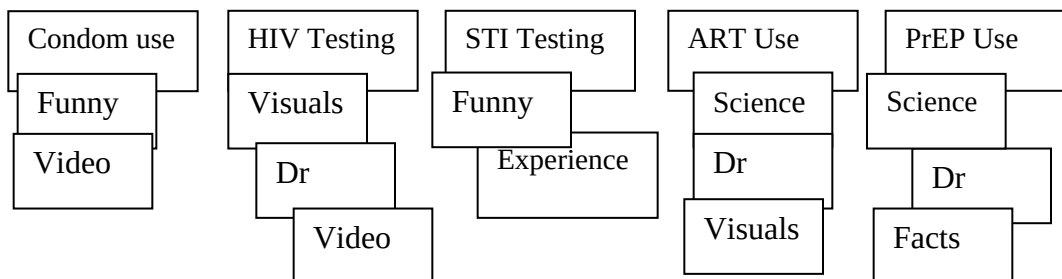
For each of the topics at which the card was not placed – *why would you not want to hear about this topic in a more informal or fun language style?*

*** Repeat this process and line of questioning for each of the following characteristics***

- Would want to see the message in a video format [VIDEO]
- Would want to get the message as SMS messages [SMS]
- Would want to get the message an email [EMAIL]
- Would want to get the message as an infographic [INFOGRAPHIC]
- Would want to get the message as an audio recording [AUDIO]
- Would want to get the message as an in-app notification [APP NOTIFICATION]
- Would prefer the message to be text only – no visuals [TEXT]
- The message would need to include scientific facts [SCIENCE]
- The message would be presented from the voice of a medical provider [MEDICAL]
- The message would be presented as originating from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]
- The message would be presented as originating from Emory University [EMORY]
- The message would be presented as originating from state or local health departments [HEALTH DEPARTMENT]
- The message would be presented from the voice of a community member [COMMUNITY]
- The message would be presented from someone who has experienced using this [USER]

IF participants think that a card does not belong on any of the piles, then place that card off to the side, to illustrate that participants felt that none of the messages should have that attribute.

*** Once complete, it may look like this***



Now looking at the piles we have made, we have started to think about how we want different types of messages to be presented. But what about frequency of the messages?

Which one of these types of messages do you think would need to be more frequent? For example, would you want to hear condom messages more often than messages about HIV testing?

I have some blank cards – for each domain lets write on how often we want to hear that type of message and we will place it on the pile. Probe around the suggestion frequency of messages.

Now let's take a look at the piles we created. Are there any patterns you notice? For example – are there any topics that you think are more suited to humor than others? Are there any changes or additions you would make to the piles?

I want us to think about **where** we would like to see the messages. For each domain where would you like to see that type of message? Some examples might be in magazines, in bars, on billboards. Probe for why those locations were suggested.

How about receiving messages on an app on your smartphone? Do you have any concerns about this? (Probe: privacy, data use)

Ok, this was a lot of work, but you have each given us some incredibly important information today! I really appreciate all of your participation. What questions do you have for me before we finish?