



The G.I.S.T (Gender Identity and Sex Talks) Program

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GIST
The Gender-Inclusive
Sexuality Talks Program

Title: The G.I.S.T. (Gender Inclusive Sex Talks) Program: Parents as HIV/STI Prevention Agents for Transgender and Gender Nonbinary Adolescents Through Inclusive Parent-Child Sexuality Communication

We collected qualitative data from transgender and gender nonbinary youth (12-21 years old) and their parents regarding sex communication. We had two main aims for this study:

Aim 1: To understand perceptions of transgender and gender nonbinary youth and their parents regarding communication about sex and sexual health

Aim 2: To obtain intervention ideas to overcome barriers to communication between transgender and gender nonbinary youth and their parents.

Findings: Gaps have been identified in the basic HIV/STI prevention knowledge, availability of gender-inclusive resources and access to services deemed crucial by TGNB youth.

Health care providers were chosen as the most preferred source of vetted sexual health information.



Introduction

Parents are underutilized HIV/STI prevention agents for sexual and gender minority adolescents. Dominant hetero- and cis-normative structures do not encourage the sexual socialization of transgender and gender nonbinary (TGNB) adolescents. Thus, negative health outcomes (e.g. HIV/STI infections) continue to disproportionately impact this population despite targeted public health efforts. With children disclosing their gender identity to parents at younger ages it is important to explore the potential of gender-focused parent-child sex communication as a proximal HIV/STI prevention intervention.

Background Information

Transgender and gender nonbinary individuals are at an increased risk of HIV; with an overall estimate of 9.2% prevalence of an HIV diagnosis in the transgender population, compared to the overall US adult prevalence which is less than 0.5%.¹

In 2017, there was an estimated 1 million adults who identify as Transgender in the US.²

Parents' support and education has shown a strong correlation with positive health outcomes for transgender and nonbinary youth, but little work has been done to incorporate parents as their child's sexual health educator.



Methods

We used a multi-method, qualitative design (in-depth interviews, card sorting) with 12-21-year-old TGNB adolescents and parents recruited through social media and outreach by study staff.

After the first participants complete their interviews, snowball sampling was used.

Participants were asked a series of questions about their own personal experiences with parent-child sex communication and their recommendations for future interventions.

Results

Twelve TGNB youth and 12 parents have been interviewed to date. Participants identified multiple sexual health topics that were either not discussed by teens and parents or inadequately explained by providers.

Quality of Information

"if you're leaving it up to parent or teachers who don't really have that experience... you're potentially opening it up to misinformation or like shaming parts of information"

A.M. (19 years old, Agender)

Youth as Experts

"It's just like... my parents have questions they have for me cause they don't completely understand you know the whole experience of being transgender."

Z (16 years old, trans male)

Inclusivity

"If you only teach them one side of the story...or not one side of the story, like one piece of the puzzle, then that's going to be confusing when they're like, 'Wait, but I don't fit into that puzzle umm so like, where does that leave me?'"

G (19 years old, trans male)

Conclusions

- Participants underscored the centrality of parent-child sex talks to navigate issues around gender identity, sexual orientation and sexual health.
- Strong recommendations were made about how these talks can be supported and improved both in the home and while interfacing with providers.
- Going beyond heteronormative content and cisgender-oriented models of care is necessary to ensure TGNB youth's health as they come of age.
- In the future, we look to creating and piloting an intervention created using recommendations and suggestions from this population.



References

Becasen, Jeffrey S., et al. "Estimating the Prevalence of HIV and Sexual Behaviors among the US Transgender Population: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, 2006-2017." *Am J Public Health*, vol. 109, no. 1, 2019, pp. e1- e8, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304727>, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2018.304727.

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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the youth and parents who shared their experiences with us. We would like to thank the research team members for their tireless efforts - Frances Agudo, Jamie Chung, Clara Cho, Hannah Gu, Xuan Nguyen, Isabele Ramirez

