

Youth-Informed Multimedia Innovation to Strengthen Parent-Adolescent Sexual Health Communication

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Introduction

Early adolescence (ages 10-13) is a critical developmental period marked by puberty, identity formation, and increasing curiosity about relationships. Parent-adolescent sexual health communication is associated with delayed sexual initiation and improved protective behaviors (Widman et al., 2018). However, many parents report discomfort initiating conversations, while adolescents describe embarrassment and stigma surrounding these topics (Brasileiro et al., 2021). Although digital interventions improve accessibility, few programs meaningfully integrate youth voice or model real-life communication (Lester & Allan, 2006). *Let's Talk* was developed to address this gap through structured activities and youth-informed multimedia components. Further enhancements are needed that use video-based modeling to normalize curiosity, reduce stigma, and demonstrate how conversations can unfold within families.

Purpose

- Identify communication barriers using Youth Advisory Board-developed interviews
- Translate qualitative findings into the development of *Birds & the Bees with Bereline*, a youth-centered video series
- Enhance adolescent comfort and communication self-efficacy within a digital family intervention

Research Question

How can youth-informed qualitative feedback guide multimedia content development to create a video resource that strengthens youth and family sexual health communication?

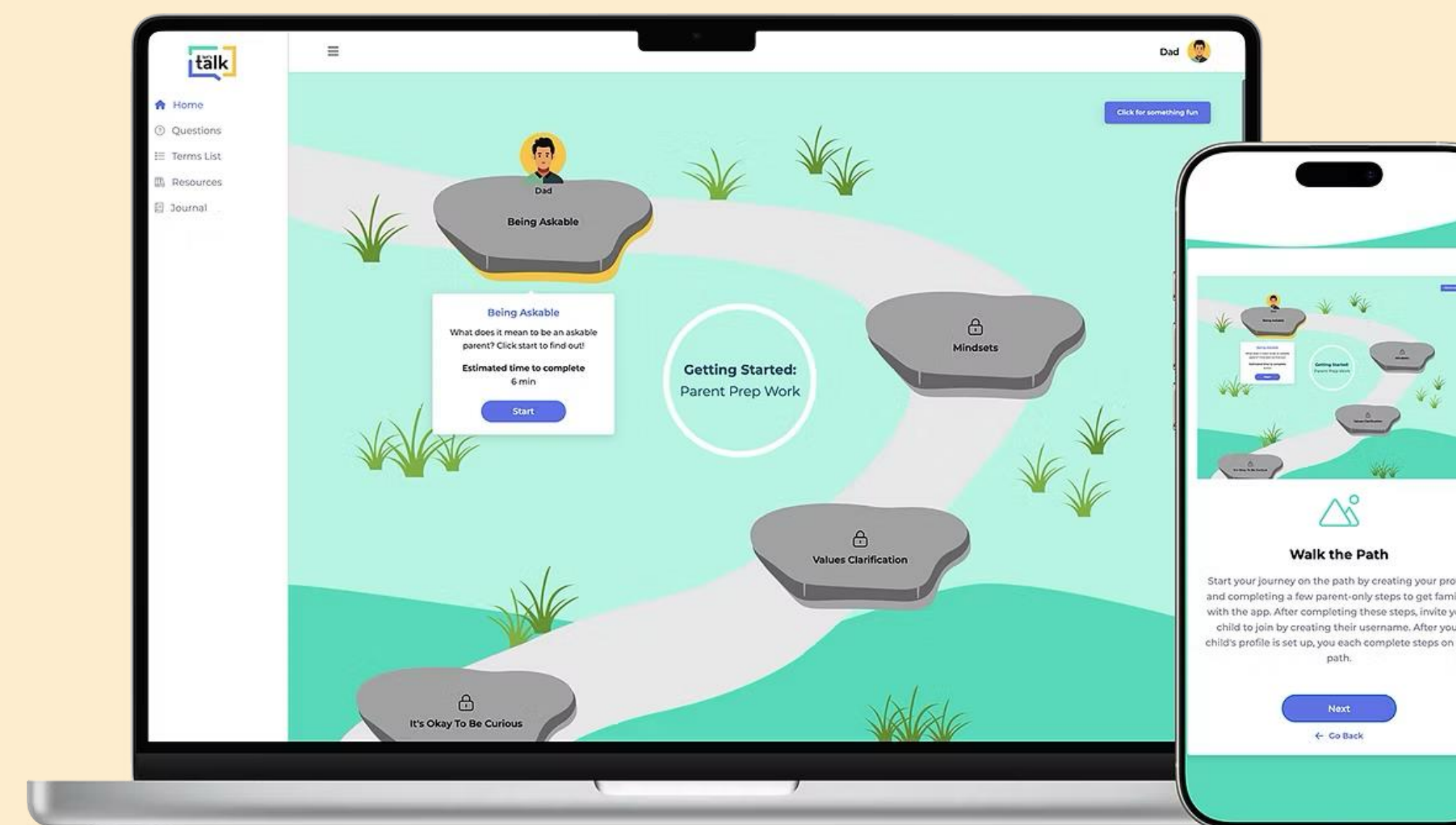


Figure 1. Let's Talk digital platform home interface.

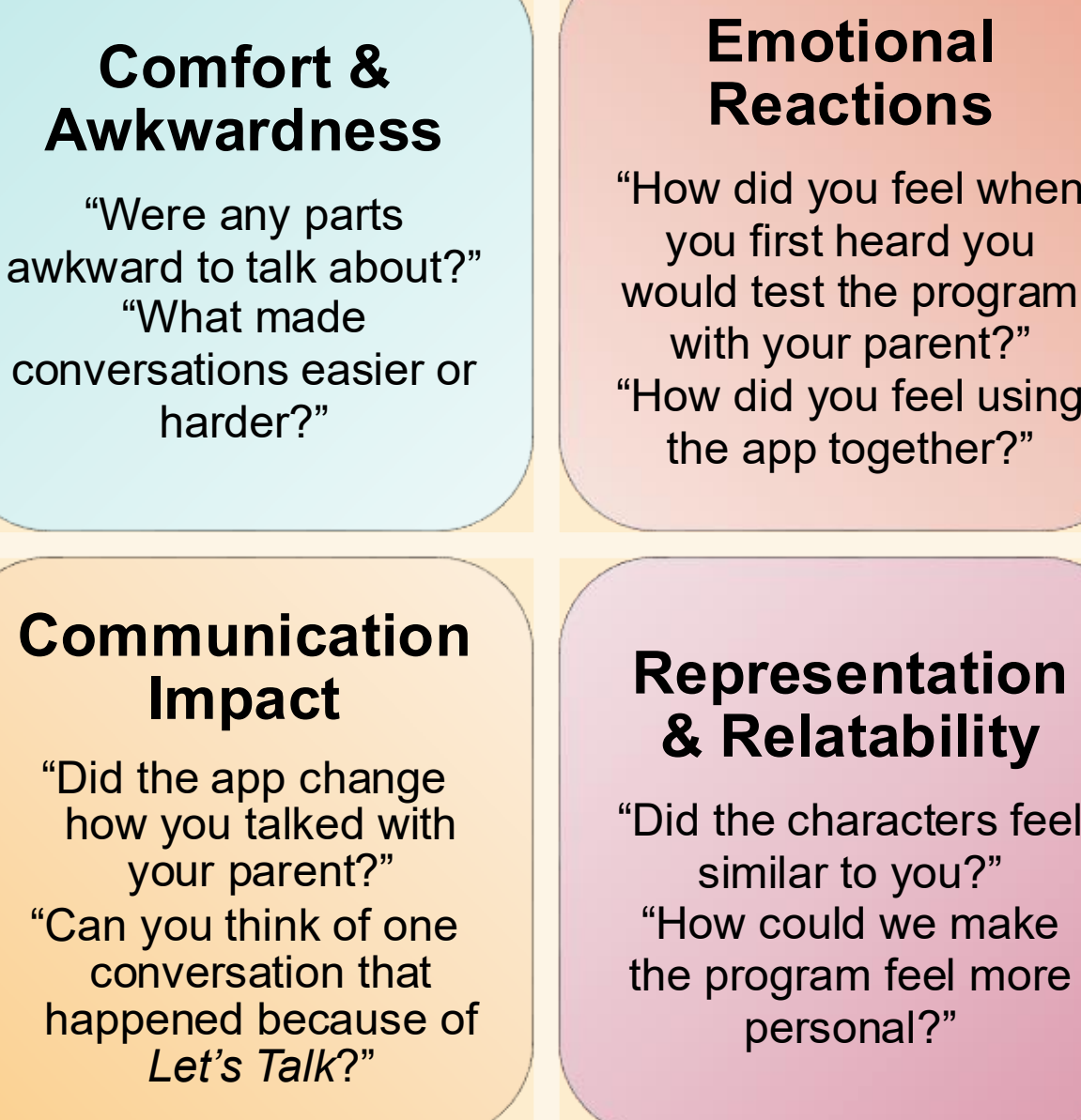


Figure 2. Youth-informed interview domains informing multimedia development.



Figure 3. Concept development for the *Birds & the Bees with Bereline* video series.

Results

Interview Guide

- Interview questions were developed to build directly upon existing research demonstrating that adolescent sexual communication self-efficacy and perceived stigma influence communication behaviors (Brasileiro et al., 2021; Widman et al., 2014; Vickberg et al., 2003).
- Guided by this literature, the interview protocol focused on:
 - Emotional reactions to discussing sexual health with a parent
 - Sources of discomfort or awkwardness
 - Preferences for tone and language
 - Perceptions of representation and relatability

Anticipated Thematic Findings

- Relatable tone matters
- Modeling reduces anxiety
- Stigma persists

Application to Multimedia Design

- Themes inform the development of *Birds & the Bees with Bereline*, a youth-centered video series designed to:
 - Normalize common developmental questions
 - Reduce awkwardness through warmth and relatability
 - Provide practical language adolescents can adapt in real conversations

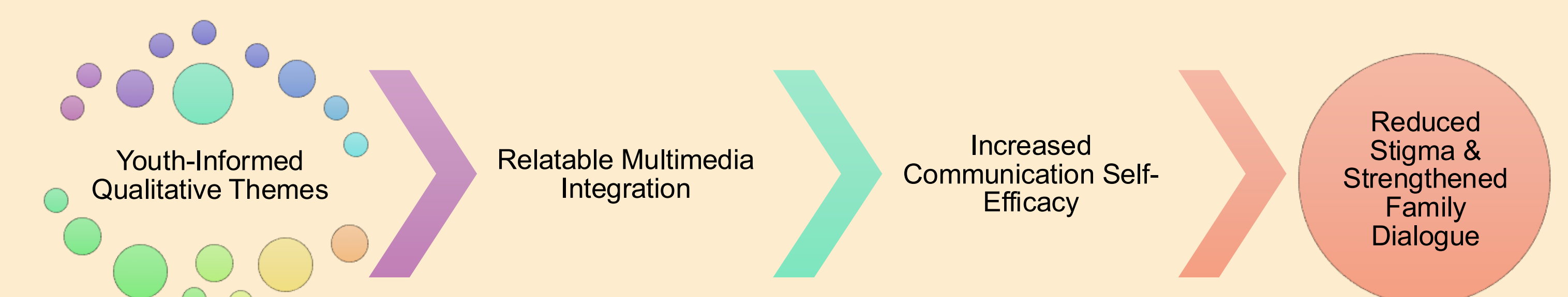


Figure 4. Conceptual model of youth-informed multimedia impact.

Methods

Youth-Informed Development

- Participated as a member of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) to ensure adolescent perspectives guided platform refinement.
- Collaboratively developed a semi-structured interview guide grounded in prior literature on sexual communication self-efficacy and stigma.
- Identified key domains for exploration, including emotional reactions, perceived awkwardness, tone preferences, and communication barriers.
- Conducted targeted review of research to inform multimedia strategy and video design.

Next Steps

- Semi-structured interviews will be conducted by YAB members with parent-adolescent dyads using the interview guide.
- We will use thematic analysis to identify patterns related to comfort, modeling needs, and stigma.
- Emergent themes will directly inform scripting, tone, and dialogue modeling within *Birds & the Bees with Bereline*.

Conclusion

- Translating these findings into multimedia represents an evidence-based strategy to reduce stigma.
- Based on evidence linking communication self-efficacy to improved outcomes, integration of youth-centered media is expected to strengthen adolescent comfort, reduce stigma, and increase communication confidence.
- Theory-driven multimedia design has the potential to transform how early adolescents experience sexual health education within the home.

Resources

Brasileiro, J., Widman, L., Evans, R., & Javidi, H. (2021). Social self-efficacy and sexual communication among adolescents in the United States: A cross-sectional study. *Sexual Health, 18*(2), 172–179.

Lester, C., & Allan, A. (2006). Teenage sexual health needs: Asking the consumers. *Health Education, 106*, 315–328.

Vickberg, S. M. J., Kohn, J., Franco, L., & Criniti, S. (2003). What teens want to know: Sexual health questions submitted to a teen web site. *American Journal of Health Education, 34*, 141–148.

Widman, L., Choukas-Bradley, S., Helms, S. W., Golin, C. E., & Prinstein, M. J. (2014). Sexual communication between early adolescents and their dating partners, parents, and best friends. *Journal of Sex Research, 51*(7), 731–741.

Widman, L., Nesi, J., Kamke, K., Choukas-Bradley, S., & Stewart, J. L. (2018). Technology-based interventions to reduce sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy among youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 62*(6), 651–660.