A GUIDE FOR CO-CREATION

Fostering Community Engagement in Health Communications

September 2023

Produced for the **Health Communication Research Lab** (HCRL) and the **Health Communication Design Studio** (HCDS)

With support from **Community Engagement Alliance** (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This report documents opportunities for the **Health Communication Research Lab** (HCRL) and the **Health Communication Design Studio** (HCDS) to incorporate co-creation into their work in creating, disseminating, and evaluating health communication tools across the St. Louis region.

Components

+ Collective creativity in health communications
+ What is co-creation?
+ The Planning Team
+ The Pilot Project
+ Visual overview of process
+ Co-creation for HCRL & HCDS: summary

COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY IN HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS

This project, funded by the Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), builds on HCRL and HCDS's prior rapid response efforts. It was conceived as "a direct response to the call for establishing sustainable and effective infrastructure to build capacity for engaging community members and implementing solutions," (CEAL Continuation, 2022). The team sought to establish a "co-creation system to engage community members in rapid-cycle, iterative development and testing, with a goal of more quickly creating...communication materials that are more relevant and effective for African Americans in St. Louis."

The goals of this project were:

+ Understand the feasibility of co-creation as an approach and the value it provides to health communication messages,
+ Pilot a co-creation process using a topic and team that is relevant to people in the St. Louis region, and
+ Develop infrastructure and tools that can support the future use of co-creation at HCRL and HCDS.

As framed by Health Communication Research Lab Director Matt Krueter, this project was intended to develop "co-creation infrastructure and processes that the team could create locally as lasting support for this type of work, while at the same time producing tangible products facilitating hard conversations around health."

For many years, HCRL has worked directly with community members and partners to identify opportunities, create communication tools, and test those communication tools in robust and validated ways. Engagement with the people who use health communication tools has included a wide range of methods of connecting with community members, from focus groups to participation at events to surveys to virtual panels.

In many past projects, that engagement was focused on the prototype testing and evaluation phases of the project, whereas engagement earlier in the idea formation process has focused heavily on the organizational partners and leaders across the region who may later be part of distribution.

This project sought to extend the expertise of people with lived experience of the topic area earlier in the creative process. As Krueter said, "We try to create tools, resources, and solutions for organizations that already exist to reach people who they already reach. We don't want to create new distribution channels, but we want to give things to partners. We do need the input of organizational leaders...but at the same time, we want to have community members, the end users. It's not an either-or." In addition, the HCRL and HCDS team wanted more rapid methods to engage community members, accelerating the development process, and ensuring input from people in all phases of a project.

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WHAT IS CO-CREATION?

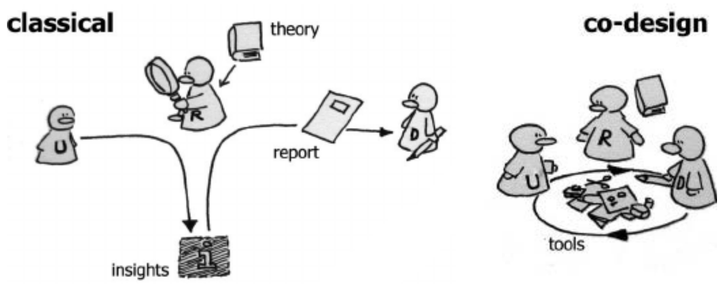


Figure from Sanders & Stappers (2007) illustrating the clear and distinct roles of users, researchers, and designers in classical processes of design versus co-design processes.

Co-creation refers to a broad set of activities that are forms of collective creativity — any creativity that is shared by two or more people (Sanders & Stappers, 2007). Co-design refers to the specific form of collective creativity that applies across the whole span of the design process, where designers with formal training and people not trained in the design process work together to develop a new idea. Colloquially, co-creation is a process in which the end-user or beneficiary of a product or service is directly involved in designing it, to best meet their needs. Co-creation as an approach offers value in a variety of ways, including increased connection from participants in the final product and increased trust in the organization(s) that involved them in the process (Jaworski, 2006).

Co-creation processes differ greatly from traditional commercial design processes, where the designer/researcher has a role as a translator between the end users of the design and the person doing the design. In "co-designing, the researcher (who may be a designer) takes on the role of a facilitator." This facilitation role creates experiences that "lead, guide, and provide scaffolds, as well as clean slates to encourage people at all levels of creativity" (Sanders & Stappers, 2007).

Designing a co-creation process requires careful attention to facilitating these experiences and cultivating creativity, and this project sought to understand the feasibility of this approach and the value it provides to health communication messages.

Similarly, co-creation has a close relationship with Participatory Action Research (PAR), a research process with the purpose of enabling action, while paying close attention to relationships and power sharing between researcher and researched (Baum, et. al 2006).

Co-Creation is sharing decision-making

Successful co-creation requires a careful, thoughtful, and transparent approach to power and decision-making. The process must be designed to recognize and work with the capacity, skills and knowledge, and practical reality of both panelists and the planning team.

Because co-creation is a participatory process, there can be a desire to have a purely shared process, where panelists have equal or majority-control of every decision. While this is an ideal that can be appropriate in some contexts, for many efforts limitations of time, skills, and awareness of constraints make it a difficult baseline to meet. It's also not a responsibility that all panelists desire.

Throughout a co-creation process, documentation of input, reflecting back feedback, and providing clear and transparent opportunities for prioritization of next steps can support a balance of power between the panelists and the planning team. Prioritization in particular provides panelists the opportunity to weigh in considering different critical factors, while leaving space for the planning team to synthesize that feedback with additional feasibility or viability constraints that are outside of the panelists' knowledge. For more about prioritization, see the chapter on Ideation.

In addition, co-creation panelists cannot represent the full range of perspectives needed to develop a robust product. A co-creation process would bring in other perspectives, including through directly engaging with individuals and groups, reviewing literature, and incorporating secondary research about the experiences of others. This additional knowledge will likely be synthesized by the planning team, adding to the need for some decision making to be led by the planning team rather than the panel.

VALUES OF CO-CREATION

Relevant Resources
[Printable Co-Creation Values]

These values were developed by the planning team and guided all decisions made about interactions with the co-creation team, including decisions about methods, communication approaches, and tones. While these values were developed specifically for this project, they may serve as a basis for future co-creation efforts. The values are grouped into two categories, and include examples how they are manifested within the co-creation process.

We Support Relationships

Enjoyable and Joyful
Create an enjoyable experience that people want to participate in. This looks like:
+ Using accessible methods to activate the creativity of participants
+ Fostering authentic relationship building
+ Things should be easy for participants to do

Welcoming and Appreciated
Support participants to feel their time and effort are appreciated and needed. They are welcome in this group. This looks like:
+ Physical and virtual locations are welcoming and accessible
+ Expressing gratitude throughout the process.
+ Prioritizing the voice and experience of the intended users
+ Minimize differences in education, language, status, etc
+ Flatten the power structure in sessions and interactions

We Take on Important Work

Mutual Exchange of Value
Create venues for exchange of value such as skills, learning, and relationships. There is a clear sense of purpose. This looks like:
+ Being clear about the expectations for roles in the co-creation team
+ Having a group that can share their lived experiences without the burden of representing everyone

Realistic to Constraints
Be realistic and honest about working constraints, and design the process to fit those constraints. This looks like:
+ Prepare to engage folks who can't attend the group session
+ Understanding and acting on the constraints of partners
+ Creating processes for other people to do in the future with training
+ Having practical outputs that fit within partner capacity

Clear Decision Making
Be clear and transparent about decision-making processes, including which group will make what decisions, how and when. This looks like:
+ Creating feedback loops so participants see what decisions were made
+ Co-Creation Team participants give prioritization input whenever possible.
+ Process begins before the beginning in order to frame and shape focus

THE PLANNING TEAM

Throughout this document, the HCRL, HCDS, and the external consultant Public Design Bureau will be referred to as the planning team. This group met regularly beginning in Fall 2022 to design the process for the co-creation team. Members included:

Public Design Bureau

Liz Kramer
Principal

Annemarie Spitz
Principal

The Health Communication Design Studio

Penina Acayo Laker
Director

Christine Watridge
Program Coordinator

Alex Koehl
UI/UX Designer

Khadijah Kareem
Researcher

Talie Johnson
Graphic Designer

Izzy Williams
Graphic Designer

Health Communication Research Laboratory

Matt Krueter
Director

Jen Wolff
Research Director

J. Peter Siriprakorn (Pete)
Researcher

Charlene Caburnay
Co-Director

Alexis Marsh
Senior Research Manager

Relevant Resources
[Materials used for the pilot project]

THE PILOT PROJECT

In order to explore the opportunities for co-creation for HCRL and HCDS, the planning team took on a project, recruiting and charging the co-creation team members to “work together to create tools for conversations between teens and their support network.”

The pilot was envisioned to build off the success of the COVID-19 Conversation Cards, created to encourage people to speak with their vaccine-hesitant friends and family. The topic, focusing on teens, mental health, and identity (particularly gender and sexuality), emerged from conversations with HCRL’s partners across the St. Louis region.

The Co-Creation Team
The co-creation process involved the planning team members previously listed, as well as eight panelists recruited from across the St. Louis region. Throughout this document, “panelists” refers to the community participants, while “co-creation team members” refers to the whole team, including planning team members.

Members of the co-creation team in a workshop.

The panel included:
+ 5 adults who work closely with LGBTQIA+ teens through their professional practice or volunteer work, including a camp director for a teen camp, mental health professionals, and hotline volunteers
+ 3 recent high school graduates, some of whom identify as LGBTQIA+, some of whom have LGBTQIA+ teens in their community

The co-creation process began in mid-May 2023 and concluded in late July 2023. Team members participated in activities including live sessions, remote activities, and one-on-one conversations. The activities and lessons learned are documented throughout this report as pull-out explanations in green.

The co-creation process concluded with a robust concept for a conversation-prompting game in which teen and/or adult players take turns asking questions that encourage listening, sharing, and connection. The game theme is taking a hike in nature, and players progress as they climb towards the top of a mountain. Gameplay is flexible, allowing players to choose what type of questions, the level of vulnerability, and pacing.

Successes of the pilot project
Panelists who participated in evaluation reported that they really enjoyed the process, liked meeting others who cared about the

same issues they did, and felt heard. Some panelists reported that this experience was different from other community-based efforts they'd been involved in, which were marked by circular conversations and limited action. The process resulted in a different direction than where the planning team would have gone without the input of the panelists. There has already been one connection from a panelist to an organization that may be involved in distribution of the final product.

Challenges of the pilot project

The biggest challenges to the pilot project came from timelines and competing commitments. All of the panelists had disruptions that prevented them from fully participating during the 2.5 month process, ranging from vacations to moves to illnesses. The two panelists who moved in the middle of the process remained involved, and virtual options were important for them to be able to participate.

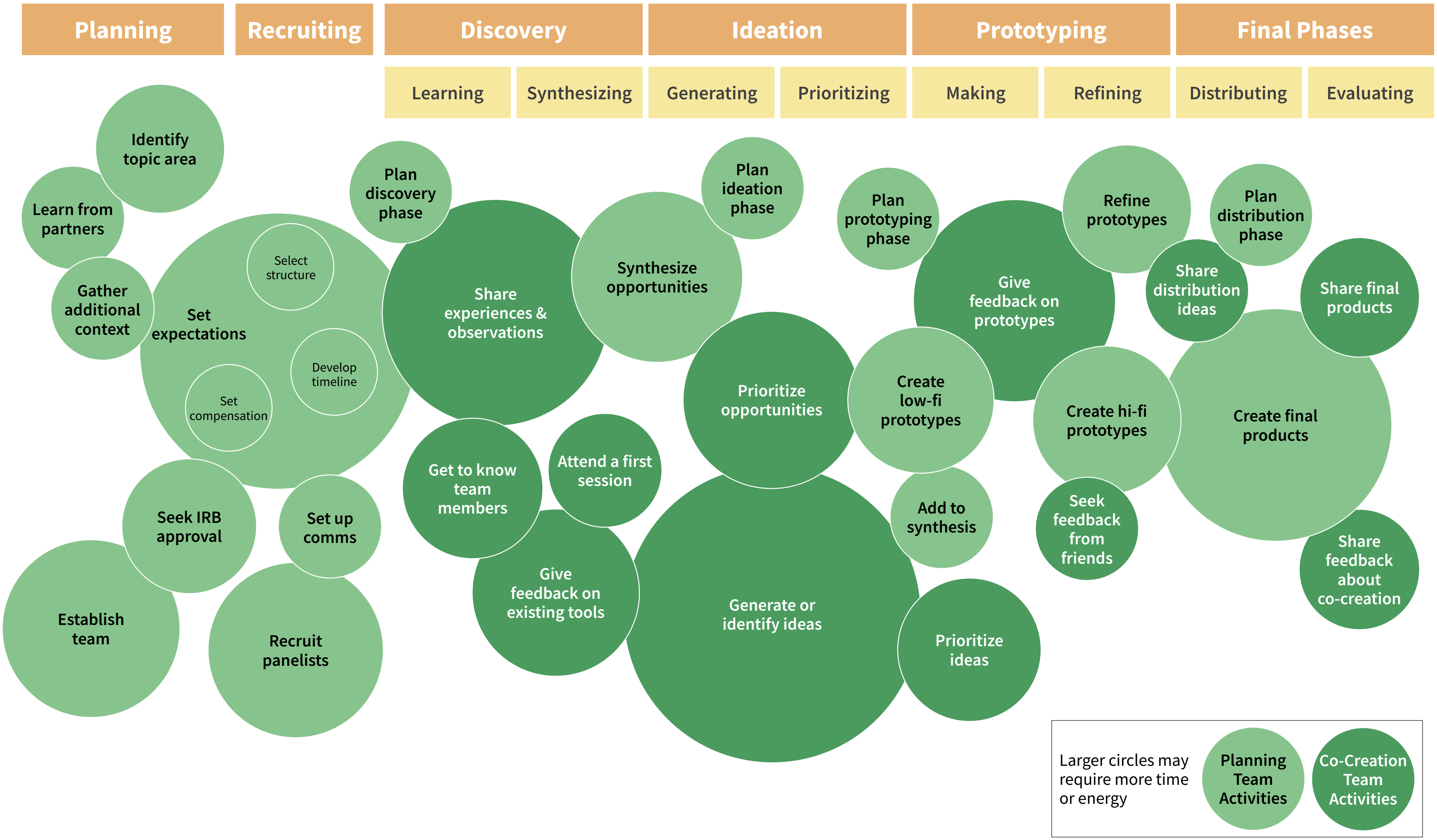
Two of the recent high school graduates were not able to consistently participate after the first session, meaning there was only one young person consistently involved in the process. Partially as a result of the two recent high school graduates not being able to participate, there was also less racial diversity than initially hoped for. The initial set of panelists included four people of color, three of whom were Black, but only two people of color continued through the whole process.

In addition, the timeline to get started was governed by required Institutional Review Board approvals and internal planning team alignment. The end of the project was constrained by grant funding, which meant some phases of the process were shorter than originally hoped for.

Members of the co-creation team in a workshop.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Relevant Resources
[Printable Project Overview]



CO-CREATION FOR HCRL & HCDS: SUMMARY

Some key lessons about co-creation include:

Co-creation can be exciting, valuable, and inspiring for both panelists and planning team members
Bringing others into the process of design and problem solving leads to new and interesting approaches and ideas, infusing energy and new possibilities into the planning team's approach. In addition, panelists appreciate being part of a creative activity that leads to real results, as well as meeting others who care about the things they care about.

A co-creation process involves trade-offs
Throughout the process, the co-creation team is balancing constraints, such as time and capacity, with opportunities, like exploring many possible directions or sharing power. These trade-offs give co-creation the potential to be a relatively flexible method, but the planning team needs to be aligned in advance so they can set accurate expectations with panelists about their participation.

Co-creation requires a dedicated team with project management skills and capacity
A co-creation process can bring additional nuance and creativity to a project, but sufficient capacity to manage, guide, and communicate with both the planning team and panelists is needed for the process to be successful.

Members of the co-creation team in a workshop.

Co-creation can deepen connection and buy-in to new people and groups
For organizations like HCRL that work closely with partners, participation in a co-creation process is an opportunity to genuinely welcome collaborators into the process, increasing their buy-in and interest, and potentially deepening the relationship for long-term impact.

Planning for effective co-creation processes requires time, even if the cycle moves quickly
Co-creation requires substantial time for planning, particularly when it comes to interacting with the IRB. Even if the time engaging panelists is relatively short, the planning team must make many decisions in advance.

CHAPTER 2

PLANNING PHASE

The planning phase is critical to setting up the co-creation process for success, giving the planning team focused time to align and set expectations for themselves and for co-creation panelists, as well as beginning to explore the selected theme.

Components

+ Preparing to begin
+ Establishing a topic and scope
+ Gathering context for selected themes
+ Setting co-creation team expectations
+ Planning the sessions
+ Interacting with the IRB
+ Collaboratively planning sessions

PREPARING TO BEGIN

Relevant Resources
[Printable spectrums for discussion when deciding if co-creation is a good fit]

Before starting a co-creation project, HCRL and HCDS should be tackling these steps.

Cultivating relationships with people connected to relevant issues and communities
For a co-creation team, having existing relationships with people who are connected to groups and communities is critical. Building trust involves following through on commitments, showing up regularly, and offering beneficial support.

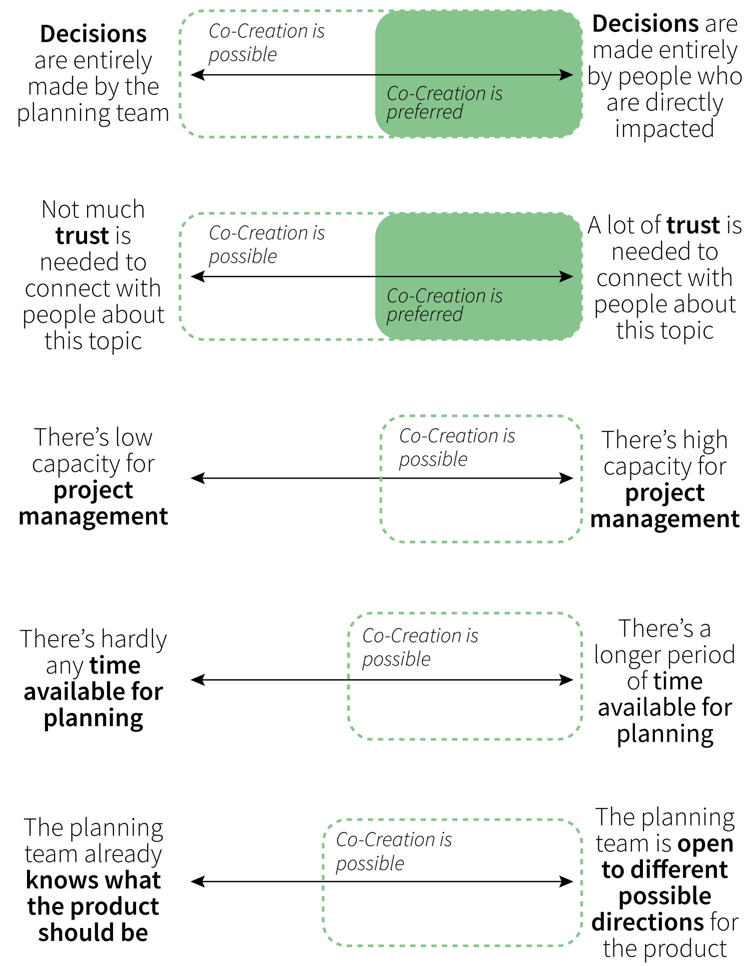
Understanding community needs and priorities
Listening to community leaders and experts in the St. Louis region is a critical step to understanding the needs, priorities, and alignments across the region. Conversations with leaders should address what topics are most pressing, where they are focusing their attention, and what gaps currently exist.

> HCRL team members completed interviews with community-based partners, particularly high-level leaders. The HCRL team asked broadly about the leader's priorities for the next 2 years, looking for potential overlap in the work of HCRL and the needs of the partners.

Reviewing and tracking research and trends
Ongoing research and trends can also provide context to the needs within the community. These might include national trends, as well as emerging practices that may be effective when utilized in the St. Louis region.

> Studies such as the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC) and the Surgeon General's warning on Social Media and Youth Mental Health both informed the timeliness and relevance of the selected topic.

Exploring if co-creation is a good fit
Not every topic, timeline, or collaboration context is a good fit for co-creation. The spectrums to the right help assess some of the contexts that can be ripe for co-creation. For example, topics that are easy to learn from people about or for which there is already a clear product idea may not benefit as much from co-creation, whereas topics that are emerging, have many possible interventions, or may be difficult to learn about without time and trust building may be better fits. Other factors may include the expectations of funders and partners, the desire or need to have buy-in or validation from a core group of community participants, and team capacity constraints.



Spectrums to consider when deciding if co-creation is a good fit.

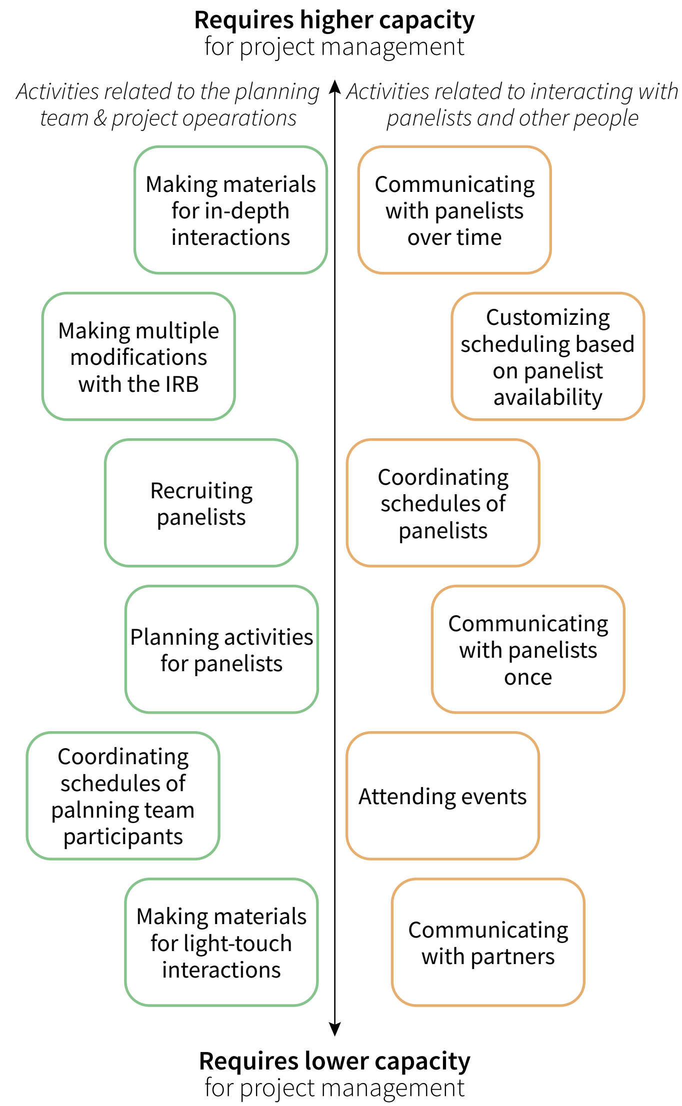
Confirming capacity to support co-creation
Co-creation requires project management capacity to engage directly with panelists, to clearly communicate project process and expectations, and to support the creation of clear tools and scaffolding to enable the process. The diagram to the right shows a selection of tasks that are impacted by capacity for project management. The scope and structure of the co-creation project should be shaped by how much project management capacity is available.

Planning team members at a session.

During this project, HCRL and HCDS contracted with Public Design Bureau to provide added capacity to manage the co-creation process.

It's also valuable to have a team member who is familiar with working with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and has the capacity to interact regularly with IRB staff during the process, especially if the selected topic deals with a vulnerable population (such as minors) or a sensitive and potentially risky topic.

Putting together and on-boarding a planning team to design and lead co-creation
The planning team is responsible for developing the methods, tools, and materials that the co-creation team engages with. The planning team likely includes at least a member from HCDS and a member from HCRL. Create and implement a process for on-boarding planning team members so they understand their role, the purpose of the project, and how they can integrate. On-boarding is particularly important for projects where team members may enter and exit as availability changes.



Tasks organized by project management capacity needed.

Relevant Resources
[Planning Task Assignments Worksheet]

Planning team roles may overlap, and there may be advisory members of the co-creation team, or members who join later during prototyping to help create specific visuals or messages. Determine who is the core group and will participate throughout the process, and who will be included at other points. Throughout the process, check in with planning team members about their roles and capacity, supporting where they may be learning new skills.

The planning team will have to work collaboratively to determine what the co-creation process should be like, from establishing a topic and a schedule to designing and executing specific methods. Throughout this document, there are linked agendas and materials that guide the planning team through making decisions about the co-creation process.

> The planning team had a number of members who were involved in the early planning phases, but had only a limited advisory role later on. A few planning team members from HCDS joined the group very shortly before the co-creation team's start, and became more involved during prototyping and testing. More clarity about who needed to be consulted versus who needed to be involved may have led to faster decision-making in early phases of the project.

Planning tasks can be distributed across different members, but will include:

Tasks Led by HCRL or Research Team

Facilitating planning team meetings to help the planning team come to decisions about what actions to take

Interfacing with the IRB by **submitting**, revising, and maintaining compliance with IRB expectations

Creating content including messages based on input from the co-creation team and learnings from research

Leading distribution of final materials, working with partners to ensure the tools, communications, or interactions created get to the people who will use them and that their use is evaluated

Tasks Led by HCDS or Design Team

Creating visuals or artifacts to prototype and represent the intended outcomes

Creating final materials including content, visuals, and artifacts, and physical materials as needed

Tasks Led by HCRL, HCDS, or shared

Managing the project timing by creating calendars, keeping everyone on track, and communicating project status

Coordinating planning team roles, including managing capacity and availability

Communicating with co-creation team members about meetings, task expectations, compensation, and other questions

Documenting the process including keeping photos, notes, agendas, tools, and drafts

Synthesizing input from co-creation team members and other learnings to direct messaging, format, and design decisions

Creating co-creation team tools such as discussion guides, surveys, digital boards, and other prompts that step the co-creation panelists through the questions

Facilitating co-creation team meetings to use those tools to prompt and document reactions and discussion

ESTABLISHING A TOPIC & SCOPE

Relevant Resources
[Topic Setting & Recruitment Meeting Agenda & Print Materials]

Synthesizing learnings from partners
The process of understanding community needs and priorities may leave the planning team with both many potential topics and topics at varying levels of detail. This funnel diagram is a guide for the planning team to sort and level the emerging opportunities, addressing what themes have come up at the broadest level, at narrower topical levels, and by what people or kinds of people are impacted by those topics.

The Topic Setting & Recruitment Meeting is a 1.5-hour meeting that guides the planning team through identifying, leveling, and prioritizing themes and topics that came up from partners, as well as beginning to discuss appropriate formats and timelines for co-creation based on constraints. A detailed agenda is available in the appendix.

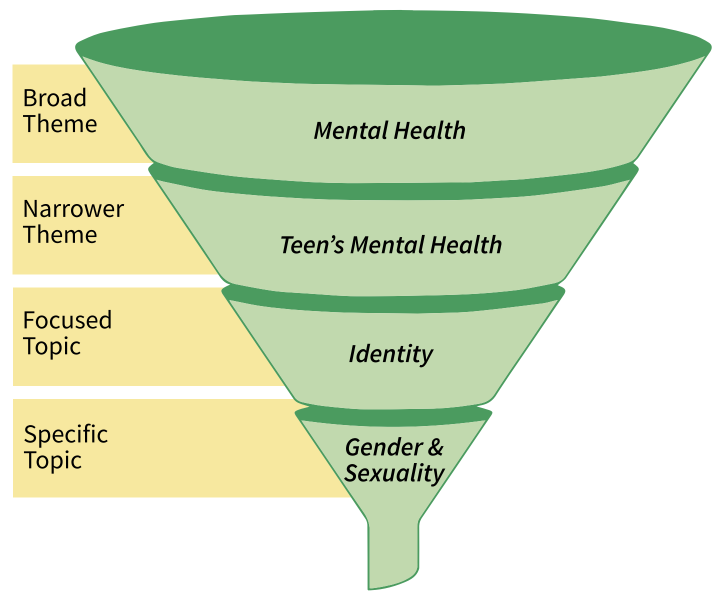
> From conversations that HCRL had with partners, the mental health of young people and supporting conversations about gender and sexual identity emerged as points of overlap and concern.

This meeting is a preliminary opportunity to understand possible panelists, exploring the pros and cons of their involvement. Some groups or demographics may be particularly difficult to recruit for participation, while others may have limitations on their time that would impact the potential structure and activities. There may be specific groups of people who are easier to interact with, having greater availability or flexibility.

> The planning team chose to focus on panelists over the age of 18, aiming for a balance of adults and teens over 18. However, of the 3 teens recruited to participate in the panel, only 1 was able to be actively involved. The teens had less stable lives than many of the adult members. A shorter time commitment could have better fit their contexts.

Summarizing potential topics
Following the Topic Setting & Recruitment meeting, the planning team should briefly summarize the topic or topics they discussed as possibilities and prioritized to continue considering. For each, use one straightforward sentence that points towards the area of opportunity or the goal. This document is a draft "brief" that will be updated several times as the planning team makes decisions, but must be finalized before the project is submitted to the IRB so that the project can be clearly communicated. For each topic still being considered, this statement should outline:
+ What is the area or topic being considered?
+ Who is impacted by this topic?
+ What is the goal of this effort?

> In the early days of planning, the planning team knew they wanted to start with prompting conversations to support mental health. Through synthesis of conversations with partners, the team added the importance of identity, especially gender identity, to the discussion. Through several meetings, the refined focus was: "To develop tools to prompt supportive conversations with teens in the St. Louis region about gender & sexual identity and mental health."



Funnel from broad theme to specific topic.

GATHERING CONTEXT FOR SELECTED THEME

Relevant Resources
[Template for Visual Landscape Examples & Landscape Scan 2x2]

After learning from partners and selecting a topic, it is valuable to do a landscape scan and review relevant literature to further understand the need, gap in existing resources, and challenges to distribution and use. While the panel can provide valuable context, additional research helps the planning team acclimate to the topic area before interacting with the panel and expands beyond what the panel may have personal experience with or knowledge of. Completing this review in advance of beginning recruitment for the co-creation panel can help further explore the selected topic, clarify the appropriate participants, as well as inform later parts of the process. These steps may be concurrent to Setting Co-Creation Team Expectations and Interacting with the IRB.

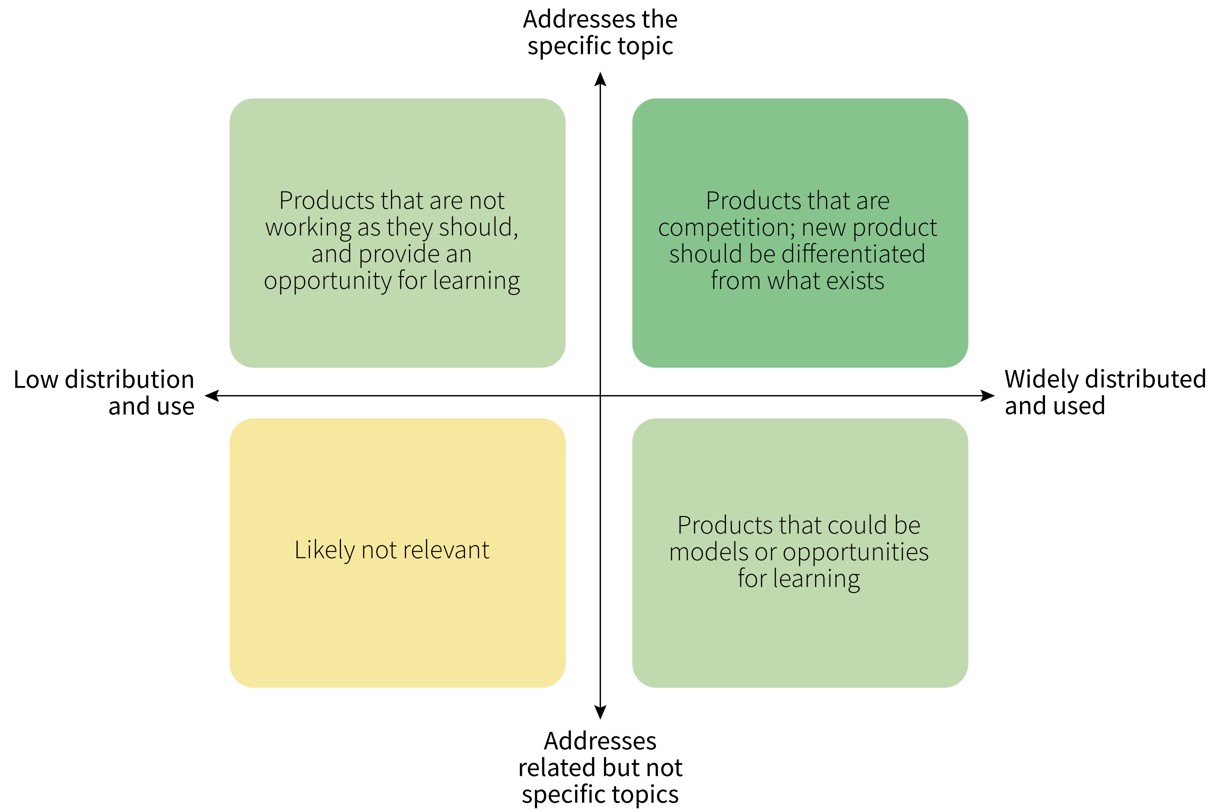
Landscape scan: learning from existing resources

A landscape scan collects available tools and resources, in both similar and analogous situations and contexts. It seeks to answer the questions:

+ What already exists? What themes and topics are addressed?
+ What is targeted to this audience? What other audiences is it targeted to?
+ What is widely distributed?

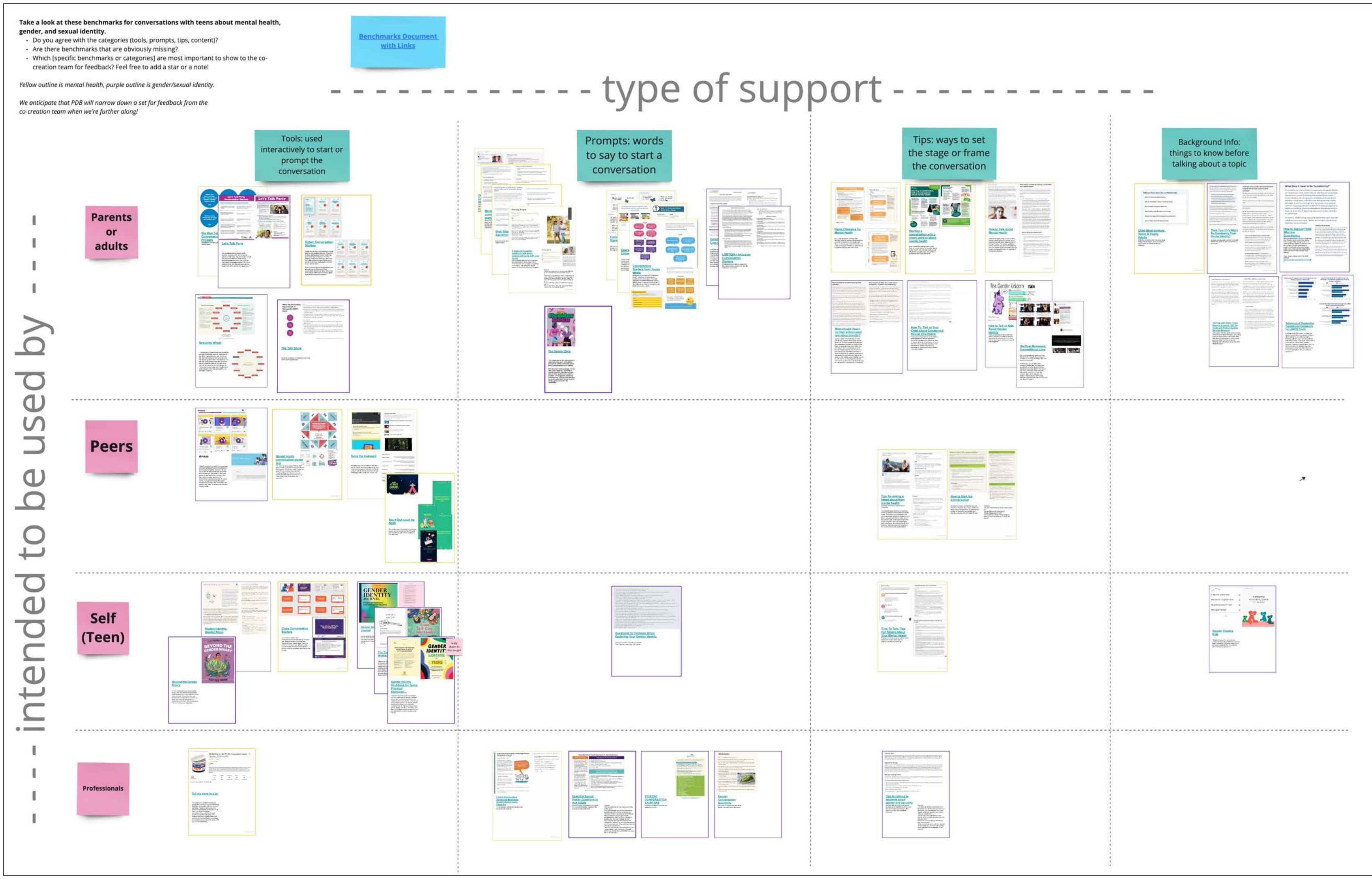
Examples that are found should be carefully collected for later use. A spreadsheet documenting sources, themes, observations, and original content can be helpful for understanding the breadth of what is available, but gathering examples in a visual format is also valuable for understanding where there are gaps in the current landscape related to audience, function, form, messaging, and other characteristics.

Plotting the examples from a landscape scan on a 2x2 such as this one can help to expose where there are gaps in the current suite of materials. Other spectrums that may be valuable to explore include density of information, visual character of materials, etc.



Organizing landscape examples on a 2x2 can help identify where there are gaps, where a new project could contribute, or where needs are already being served

An HCRL team member documented dozens of examples of tools and resources for teens, both specifically for gender and sexual identity and for more general mental health topics. These examples were translated to a visual summary format, and used to assess the intended audiences and types of support offered.



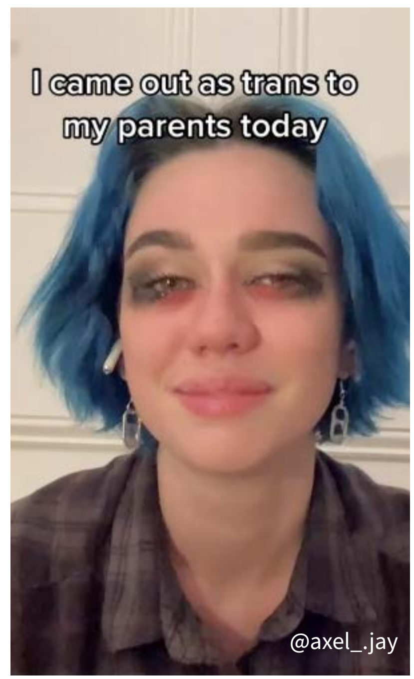
Visual summary of tools and resources for teens compiled in a Miro board.

Literature review: learning from research
A review of existing research can expose existing frameworks, approaches, and additional data. A literature review may also expose effective or emerging practices that are relevant to the topic. For example, existing research can provide background information for the planning team as well as inform topic framing or refinement, specific areas of exploration, or later decision-making within the process.

The planning team reviewed literature looking for frameworks for conversations about topics related to gender and sexuality. For example, the article “Communicating Sexual Identities: A Typology of Coming Out,” provided some relevant framing to the context of conversations related to sexuality. In addition, the team reviewed narratives about conversations between teens and adults on related topics, including popular press books and ethnographies.

Narrative review: observing people’s language and behavior
For some topics, it may also be relevant to review social media or other publicly available self-documented tools to hear about the context for people who are directly impacted. This could include a systematic review of posts or could be a more casual review to understand some of the surrounding context and language.

A member of the planning team asked friends and family to recommend social media accounts addressing LGBTQIA+ topics, particularly those focused on teens. In addition, the planning team member reviewed social media posts directly related to conversations about gender and sexual identity. These examples helped clarify initial categories and opportunities presented to the co-creation participants.



Stills from TikTok videos sharing experiences talking with their parents about their gender.

SETTING CO-CREATION TEAM EXPECTATIONS

Relevant Resources
[Structure, Timeline, and Expectations Meeting Agenda & Materials]
[Recruitment Worksheet]

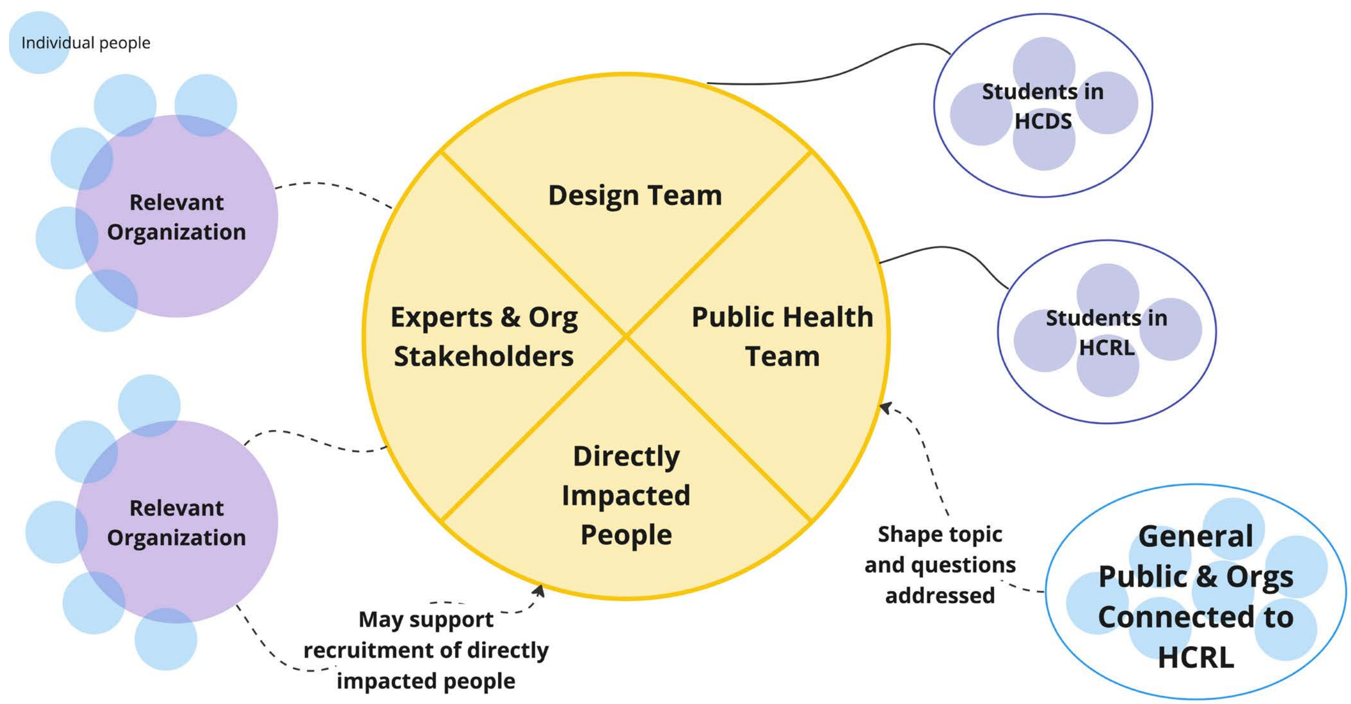
The planning team must establish a timeline, with a clear structure and set of expectations, for the co-creation process. The Structure, Timeline, and Expectations planning meeting is a 1.5 hour meeting that guides the planning team through selecting these elements based on the selected topic and the constraints of the project. Before IRB review and panel recruitment can begin, the planning team will need enough information solidified to create materials that will inform potential panelists about the expected commitment, including timing, compensation, types of engagements, and topic. Following this meeting, the team may revise the topic summary.

Timelines drive many of the decisions about expectations and are shaped by:

+ Grants and funding, such as start/end dates
+ Planning team availability, including scheduling for student members
+ Anticipated panelist availability, including common holidays and likely travel times
+ Urgency of the topic and product
+ Number of activities needed to gather the level of contribution from panelists that's desired by the planning team
+ Flexibility to accommodate potential delays

Prior to the Structure, Timeline, and Expectations meeting, the planning team should collect as many of these timeline constraints as possible. Interactions with the IRB may also shape timeline expectations, as discussed in the next section. A pre-conversation with the IRB may help clarify timeline considerations before setting expectations in this session.

The planning team initially proposed a March to June co-creation timeline, but delays with the IRB submission and review delayed participant recruitment, pushing the start of co-creation back until late May, with participation ending in July. All of the initially scheduled sessions were held and additional sessions were scheduled to accommodate the changing schedules of co-creation panelists. Since the majority of the co-creation cycle happened over the summer, HCDS students had greater flexibility, but more of the co-creation panelists had gaps in availability due to vacations and other commitments.

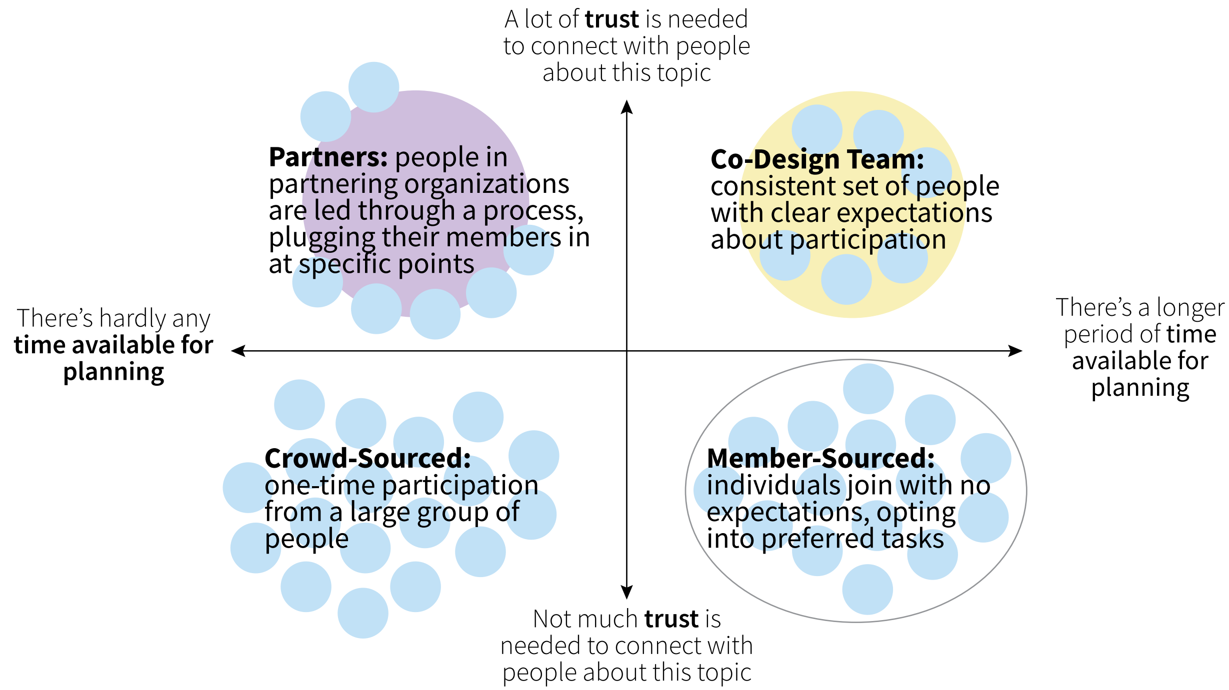


Co-creation team model used for the pilot project.

Relevant Resources
[Co-Creation Structure Examples]

Co-creation structures
Co-creation teams can come together in a variety of structures, from forming a team with steady members to individual activities to connecting with panelists through an established organization. The appropriate structure depends on timing, topic, and details. The framework below shows ideal uses for different co-creation structures. With more time, structures may be combined. The diagram on the previous page shows the combination of structures for the pilot project.

Since high trust was needed for the selected topic and planning time was available, this project used a co-creation team structure anchored by a series of team workshops, along with individual and asynchronous activities. The team included members from organizations relevant to the topic, as well as adults and teens (over the age of 18) who had personal experience with challenging conversations. Following the close of the pilot, additional anonymous feedback was also crowd-sourced at events.



Framework depicting the best uses for different co-creation structures.

Panelist motivations
Different co-creation panelists may have different motivations and benefits for participating in the process. Understanding potential motivations of potential panelists can help set expectations, prioritizing aspects that will be of value to them.

Several panelists said that they were motivated to join because the issue was relevant to them or their professional or volunteer work. However, a high value for panelists was getting to meet other people who are interested in supporting queer youth: "It was really nice to connect with other queer people and people who care about queer people. That in itself was a really great community to have, during this particular time in Missouri. There are still people who are going to be here fighting the fight and wanting good happy lives for queer people. That filled my cup."

Many panelists who participated identified learning new tools, including digital platforms and facilitation techniques, as well as exposure to an iterative approach, as being valuable to their professional work. Finally, panelists were excited about creating something that would actually become real. As one panelist said, "In other processes, we just come back to the same thing over and over again [without the discussions becoming something]".

Establishing a timeline

Once the timeline constraints are established, the planning team can decide on a rough outline of what major activities might happen. If the team structure includes live sessions where multiple team members come together, these group moments can serve as anchors for the rest of the process by defining how many there will be and when they may happen. For more information about group sessions, see the next section. Other activities, such as digital response boards, worksheets, surveys, one-on-one conversations, or drop-in office hours can be listed as possible types of engagement, but can be scheduled later.

The planning team decided on four synchronous sessions, with a mix of virtual and in-person sessions. The exact dates for the sessions were established after the availability of panelists was confirmed, so the planning team initially laid out pacing and ranges of possible dates for sessions. As the sessions happened, various schedule conflicts prompted the team to add some duplicate workshops in an effort to provide more options for panelists.

Scheduled workshops + Added Workshops

Discovery Workshop
May 24 (in-person) or May 31 (virtual)

Ideation Workshop
June 7 (in-person) or June 7 (virtual)

Feedback Workshop #1
June 17 (in-person) or June 21 (virtual)

Drop-in Office Hours
July 1 or July 5

Feedback Workshop #2 & Celebration
July 12 (virtual)

Compensating Panelists

Expectation setting should also include discussing and confirming compensation for panelists. The amount and format may be dictated by grant terms, internal or external-partner policies, community norms, or other factors. Preferably, panelists would be compensated for each activity they participate in, but alternative systems can allow some activities to be anonymous while still compensating panelists for their time. While gift cards (i.e. to specific stores) may be the most expedient payment, some people contacted during recruitment preferred stipends as it allowed panelists to apply the funds to whatever they most needed.

Co-creation panelists received a $60 gift card to a location of their choice (Schnucks, Target, Walmart, or Amazon) for participating in a live session (including a one-on-one interview). This gift card was intended to also compensate for participation in individual activities between sessions, though those were often anonymous. Panelists reported that the gift card was an appreciated benefit and beyond what is typically provided for these types of community efforts.

In addition, transportation support was offered for in-person sessions, although no panelists took advantage of it.

Due to funding constraints, it was not possible to provide meals at the sessions, but snacks were available for the co-creation team at each in-person session.

Planning team members reviewing structures.

PLANNING THE SESSIONS

Relevant Resources
[Pilot Project Session Agendas and Materials]

Not every co-creation project will have group sessions or workshops, but if they are part of the process, they may define the flow and experience for both panelists and planning team members.

Establishing Group Norms
Group norms are critical to setting the tone for workshops and how co-creation team members will interact with each other. The planning team should establish, review, and refine group norms before planning sessions, to ensure the sessions are aligned with the goals for the process. The group norms used in the pilot process can be found on page 36.

In addition, consider these trade-offs when planning sessions.

In-person versus virtual sessions
In-person sessions are exciting and allow different types of interactions, particularly allowing for deeper emotions and trust with challenging topics, while virtual sessions are much easier for many team members to join due to the scheduling realities of their lives. It is also harder to host a virtual session for more than 1.5 hours due to screen fatigue, so longer sessions are best in-person. Certain types of feedback, such as considering physicality of items, is also challenging virtually.

> While most panelists said in-person sessions were important for building connections with others and addressing challenging, sensitive topics, they also acknowledged that virtual sessions made their participation easier amid moves, jobs, and travel.

One session gathering the co-creation team together versus multiple methods that accommodate various needs
Having the full group together (or as many as possible) can lead to high energy and enthusiasm. However, creating methods for those who can't attend team sessions to participate individually helps reinforce the value of their expertise, and can add to the wisdom incorporated in the project. Assess the trade-offs for incentivizing participation in one session, including the additional labor that may be required to create alternative methods for engagement.

> Some panelists saw the group sessions, particularly those with smaller groups, as incredibly valuable for having the opportunity to share feedback. Panelists also responded that they appreciated having the opportunity to engage even if they couldn't attend group sessions.

Fewer, longer sessions versus more, shorter sessions
Longer sessions, such as a half-day or a full-day workshop, may allow the co-creation process to play out with the whole team in place, rapidly iterating and growing in collaboration together. Shorter sessions may feel less daunting to commit to, and allow time to build trust over time and process information between sessions.

> Some panelists felt that the 1-hour sessions were a bit rushed, and that there could have been slightly more frequent meetings. Some panelists used some of the session time to complete individual activities, which could be consistently built into sessions with additional time. Given work and family commitments of the panelists, the planning team did not attempt substantially longer sessions. In addition, allowing some time between sessions was valuable for the planning team to synthesize the input and create new materials to share.

More planning team members participating versus maintaining a balance of panelists and planning team members
Having more members of the planning team participate in sessions helps to spread the learnings and ability to synthesize what happened in the sessions. However, there is a risk that more planning team members will overwhelm the voices of panelists. Consider the power and positionality dynamics of the planning team and the panelists. This distinction may be less prominent in virtual sessions than in-person sessions.

INTERACTING WITH THE IRB

Relevant Resources
IRB Submission Templates
IRB Translation Glossary

In general, efforts that involve people in providing feedback such as through co-creation can be considered exempt by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This designation applies to projects that have minimal risk and fit into specific categories. Some topics or co-creation panelists might change this designation; for example, if the team were made up of minors. Understanding if a project can receive exempt status is an important first step, and will set the path for future IRB interaction needs, including timeline. Any decisions that could impact the status should be made by the planning team prior to initial IRB submission.

> The planning team prioritized speed over recruiting minors to participate, focusing on panelists who were over the age of 18, simplifying the consent and approval process.

The non-linear, emergent format of co-creation is challenging to communicate to the IRB, and the language of the design process requires translation to the language of research. This section outlines some of the lessons learned about interacting with the IRB for co-creation, and the appendix contains a full suite of general questions that might be utilized in future co-creation projects, organized by phase, as well as template descriptions of the co-creation process and methods that could be adopted into future IRB submissions.

Begin seeking approval for phases early
IRB review can take a long time, and if materials are not reviewed in a sufficiently timely fashion it can delay co-creation pacing and scheduling. In general, exempt projects will not need to submit detailed materials (such as prototypes or specific content), and can submit questions that will be utilized with materials created at a later point. Initial submissions may take days to weeks for review, while later modifications may be reviewed more quickly. The materials in the appendix are designed to facilitate the planning team submitting questions for the entire scope of the co-creation project very early on. This leaves room to request modifications while ensuring that the project can stay on track.

The initial submission should include as much information as is available, including:
+ Types of participants anticipated
+ Recruitment materials (in draft form) and the proposed process of recruitment
+ General questions that will be posed to panelists in each phase of the process
+ Description of the project purpose
+ Overview of methods to be utilized
+ Informed consent or information sheet

Include the universe of questions that might be posed to panelists
The submission to IRB can include more questions and methods than are actually ultimately used, giving the planning team the opportunity to narrow down at a later point or modify the order at a later point.

Utilize IRB language to frame methods
Many of the design research methods utilized in co-creation are similar in structure to methods the IRB is familiar with from academic research, though known by different names. The Translation Glossary includes language that is more familiar to IRB, helping to clarify what's coming.

Be clear about and minimize the risks to panelists
The role of the IRB is to minimize the potential risks to panelists. Pre-empting the concerns can mean minimizing the potential harm to panelists, and lead to quicker review times. Minimizing risk might include designing methods to give panelists options on what to share, how they can share, and emphasizing the voluntary nature of sharing.

> An early ice breaker proposal was to ask participants to bring in a found image to the first session that reflected how they felt when they were supported. The IRB reviewer was concerned about this prompt, as it violated federally-funded study rules. The team instead created an activity where panelists could choose from existing images provided in the workshop, and share what they felt comfortable to share to the group.

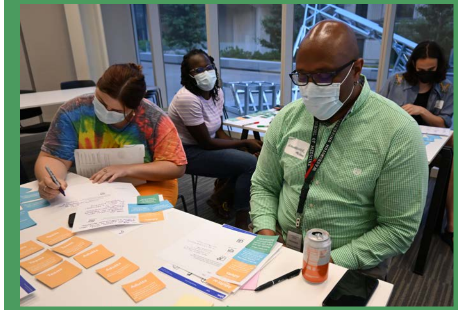
Making modifications to IRB submissions and learning as you go
Once the project has been approved, modifications provide an opportunity to add or adjust to the outlined plan. IRB may require modifications for specific activities. In your schedule planning anticipate that time will be needed to create, submit, and await approval for modifications.

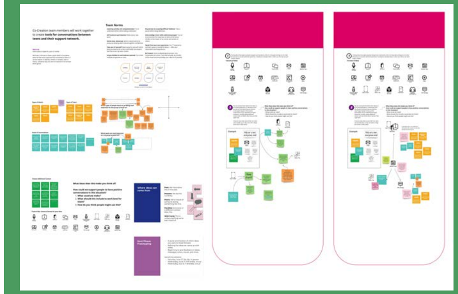
Separating other feedback from the co-creation team process
The project may need feedback from other people who are not part of the co-creation team process. It may be possible for these feedback methods to be non-human subjects research, if the questions being asked are only evaluative, the research is not primarily for publication, respondents are deidentified or anonymous, and sensitive information is not being collected. This approval process may be different and more straightforward.

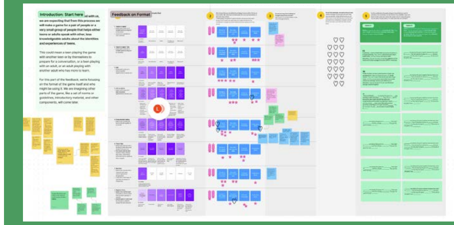
The planning team created materials for use at events where youth and parents would be attending, which could be approved by IRB as non-human subjects research as the feedback was entirely to evaluate messages, would only inform the development of the product, and was not collecting sensitive information.

Different types of activities might be part of the co-creation process.

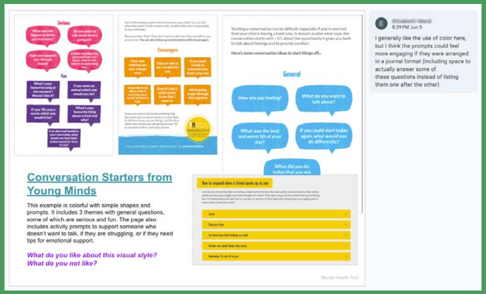
Activities done together (synchronous)

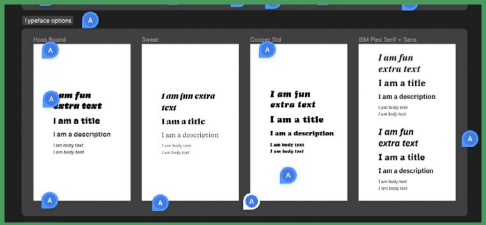

In-person sessions

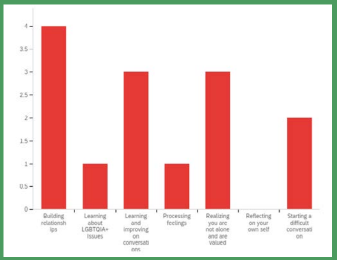

Virtual group sessions


Drop-in office hours

Activities done separately (asynchronous)


Personal responses on digital boards or paper worksheets


One-on-one conversations


Surveys

COLLABORATIVELY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Relevant Resources
[Phase Planning Meeting Agendas, Materials & Template]
[Pilot Phase Examples]

The planning team (or subsets of the planning team) develops, plans, and facilitates the activities of co-creation. As the panel is identified, the planning team will meet regularly to collaboratively decide where to go next. The planning team member who is facilitating planning team meetings will call and run these meetings, with support from the other members who are involved at that stage. While the first of these planning sessions might happen before the full panel is recruited, knowing about the preferences and behaviors of the panel can be helpful to select activities that make sense for their contexts. It's likely the planning team will hold these meetings at regular intervals to plan for the next phase of the process.

Aligning on outcomes for the phase
For each phase of the co-creation process, the planning team should clarify what the team will accomplish through the activities in the phase.

Generating activities and methods
Once the goals are clarified, the planning team will think about how they will accomplish these goals. The types of activities shared in the previous section provide a starting point, and the planning team should add their own detail and creativity, adding nuance that is specific to the project and the panelists.

Prioritizing activities and developing an order of operations
It's likely the planning team will generate more activities than will be possible to use. Either through discussion or voting, prioritize the activities to use, and discuss what the order of activities should be (if it matters). Developing a clear plan can help guide the production of materials as well as IRB modification needs.

Preparing materials
For each activity or method, assign a member of the planning team to take the lead on creating the needed materials, which might include agendas, prototypes, discussion guides, or note-taking documents. Be clear about the needed review and revisions, and what materials will need to be reviewed by the IRB and in what timeline.

Outcomes by Phase

Discovery Outcomes

+ Learn about current conversations. Who is involved? Where and when do they happen? What topics are addressed?
+ Learn about current conversation tools. What tools are people familiar with? How do people react to these tools? What works about them?
+ Establish group norms, relationships, and trust. Set expectations for interaction.
+ Understand group logistics. Seek and confirm additional input about meetings and communication.

Ideation Outcomes

+ Generate tangible ideas that can be incorporated into prototypes.
+ Inspire co-creation team members to activate their own creativity.
+ Respond to the lived experiences of the people these tools are for.

Prototyping & Prototype Testing Outcomes

+ Create and seek feedback on tangible components of tools from co-creation team members and other important stakeholders.
+ Understand opportunities for distribution and use of potential tools.
+ Respond to the lived experiences of the people these tools are for.

CHAPTER 3

RECRUITMENT PHASE

Co-creation requires an enthusiastic, creative panel that is willing to participate and has the experience and expertise to help shape the design decisions. Recruitment is the process of finding and on-boarding that team.

Components

+ Developing a recruitment plan
+ Screening and on-boarding
+ Setting up communications
+ Scheduling and session logistics
+ Engaging people beyond the co-creation team

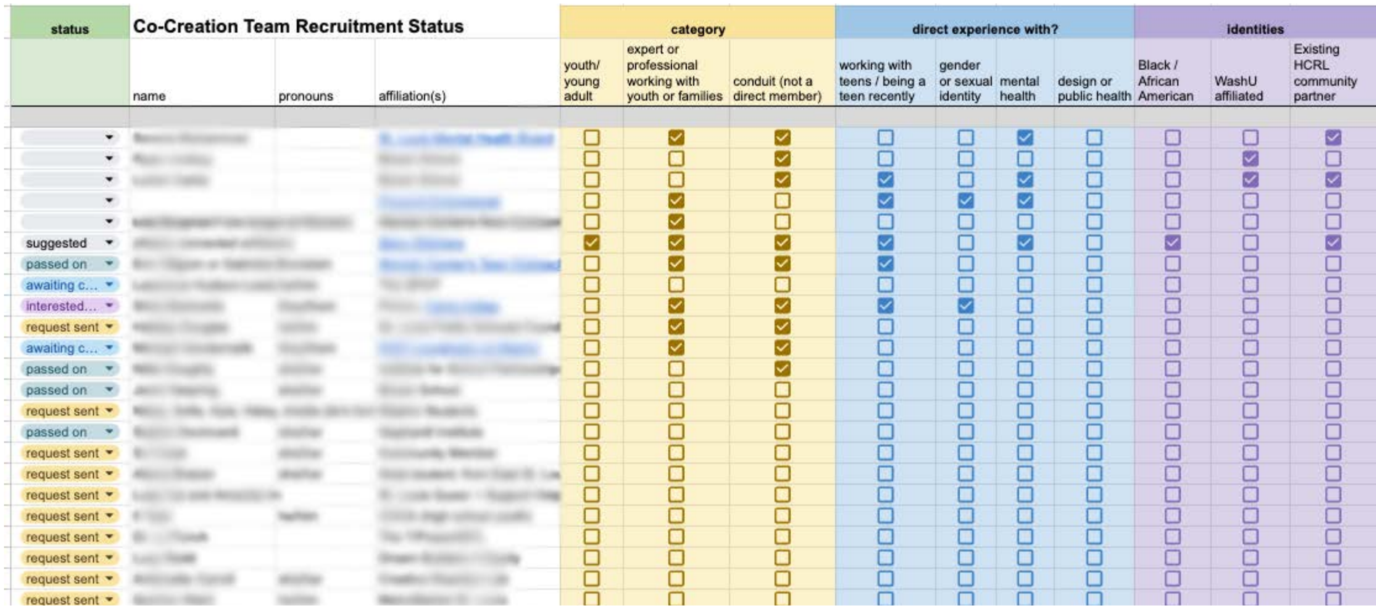
DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT PLAN

Relevant Resources
[Pilot Project One-Pager]
[Recruitment Brainstorming & Alignment Meeting Agenda & Materials]

Creating recruitment materials
Recruitment materials outline the ask and expectations for potential panelists and others who may be able to make connections to them. These materials should be clear, visually appealing, and convey the basic facts at a glance. They should use plain language that is easy for the intended audience to both understand and connect with. There should be a clear next step, potentially with options to ask more questions. Potential materials to create include:

+ A one-pager that can be emailed, texted, or printed to outline the project expectations.
+ Email, text, or phone scripts for making asks either to people who could be part of the panel or those who could make connections.
+ Posters or flyers for hanging up in common locations where potential panelists may be, such as libraries or coffee shops.
+ Graphic tiles that would be appropriate for texting or posting on social media.

The selected topic or theme will heavily influence who is the appropriate set of people to recruit to be part of the panel, as well as the timeline to find these individuals. Building off existing relationships in the community, including connections to organizations, is a valuable place to start.



Recruitment Matrix.

Recruitment Brainstorming and Alignment Meeting
The Recruitment Brainstorming and Alignment meeting (planned for 1.5 hours) guides the planning team through identifying who to contact to find potential panelists and where to distribute recruitment information. This meeting should end with a clear set of next steps, identifying who is best to make contact with potential panelists and connectors and the timeline for making asks. The team should also discuss how much to stay within existing networks versus reaching out to wider contacts who may be able to connect with other potential panelists.

The planning team identified a number of connectors in the St. Louis and WashU community who would be able to share the opportunity. The information was also shared with networks like the St. Louis Queer+ Support Helpline (SQSH) and Creative Reaction Lab. These organizations shared the one-pager with their contact lists, bringing in several interested panelists.

Relevant Resources
Recruitment Matrix

Documenting recruitment contacts
The Recruitment Matrix is a document for tracking the different contacts so information is shared across the planning team. It can also be used to track the responses of potential team members, including their demographic information or other important characteristics.

Utilizing trusted connections
Recruitment using a snowball process, where people reach out to their colleagues and family, is an effective way to get connected to others through a trusted contact. This process requires time, particularly when the trusted contacts are busy working professionals or the recruitment period falls over a holiday. At a minimum, the recruitment timeline should allow for several weeks and some flexibility to get the full co-creation team formed and aligned.

Depending on the topic, members of the planning team may have connections within their immediate networks. These connections can help build immediate trust.

> Two members of the co-creation team are friends or acquaintances of planning team members, and one member of the team is a relative of a friend of a member of the planning team. Sharing the information widely through networks allowed the opportunity to percolate into different spaces through chains of connection. As one said, "I didn't know what I was getting into, but I trusted the referral from my family friend."

Connecting with an existing group
As an alternative to recruiting an entirely new team, a co-creation process could also work with an existing group that has the experience and expertise that's relevant to the topic. Examples could include working with an existing support group for parents, or partnering with a residents' advocacy group.

Planning team members preparing for recruitment.

SCREENING AND ON-BOARDING

Relevant Resources
[Screening Survey & Script]
[Pilot Project Welcome Materials]

As the recruitment information is shared with a wider audience, there should be a clear path for potential panelists to express interest, and to collect some information about them. This might be a conversation with a specific planning team member, completing a survey, or both.

Screener survey
A screener survey collects basic information like contact information, demographics, and interest in the co-creation team. Asking questions about availability can also help simplify the process of scheduling sessions.

Screening script
A phone or video call conversation helps build trust and connection between a potential panelist and a planning team member, and to understand more about the interest of a potential panelist. This is a valuable opportunity to probe more for ways to help support the engagement of a potential panelist, such as meeting accommodations or styles of working together. It can also be an opportunity to clarify more about the process, answering questions and ensuring they feel comfortable with what they may be involved in.

Due to timing constraints, most potential panelists participated in a call that combined screening and on-boarding. The planning team members completing the call first asked basic questions about interest and availability, and assuming they heard alignment from the potential panelist, they followed-up with more detailed questions about creating an engaging and meaningful experience. Most of those interested in joining the team were confirmed as panelists following their phone calls.

Welcome materials
Having a specific way to welcome panelists to the team can help signify the start point of the process. This might include a welcome email or text, additional information or forms, or an invitation to a platform like Slack. The welcome packets should help set expectations for team participation while being manageable for planning team members to execute.

The planning team created and distributed small welcome bags that included Post-its, markers, pens, snacks, a small folded calendar of the process, and information sheets such as the photo release, the information sheet from the IRB, and an introduction to the planning team members. The distribution of the physical welcome bags was challenging and required coordination with the team members. One team member was not able to receive their bag, while many others picked them up at the first in-person workshop.

Creating opportunities to learn more about the project going in
While potential panel members may be willing to join due to interest in the topic, an existing relationship, or curiosity about the process, having more information can help set expectations. More information could be shared with prospective panelists via a short video, an information session, or a more robust written description.

While many panel members were excited to participate, they wanted to know a bit more, including what might be made and the background of other people participating in the process.

Panelists with their welcome bags.

Relevant Resources
[Communications Templates]
[Photo Release]

SETTING UP COMMUNICATIONS

As panel members are welcomed to the team, having clear and efficient methods of communication is critical to both informing panel members of what's happening and creating a welcoming environment. Communication is a balance between sharing enough information that people know what they're supposed to do, not overwhelming them, and making it manageable for the planning team.

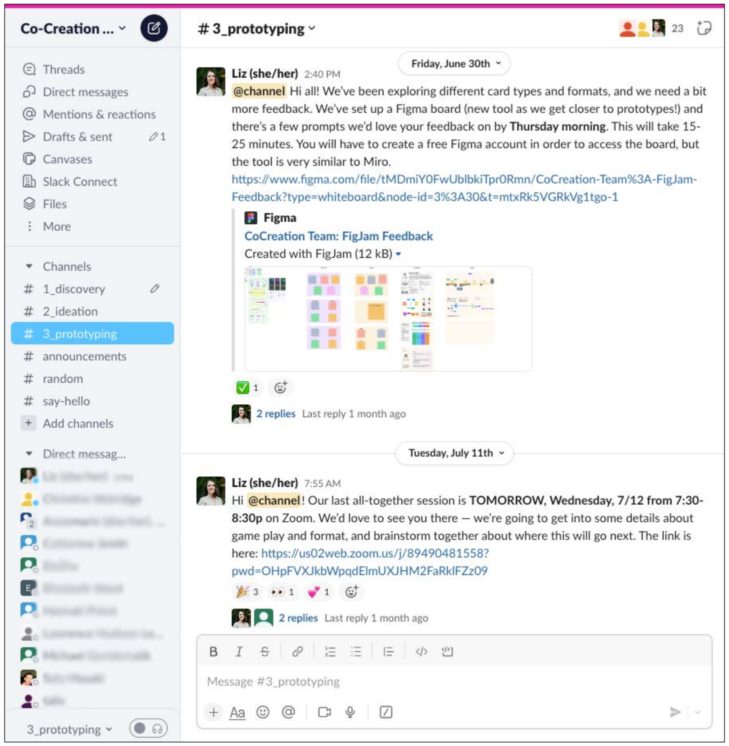
For longer-term teams: consider a communal platform
Co-creation projects that involve the same group of people working over a longer period of time on many activities may require multiple communication methods. A communal platform, such as Slack, can streamline communications, put materials together in one place, and help panelists manage notifications that may get lost in text or email. However, a single platform may need to be supplemented with emails or text messages to ensure notices are getting through. When using a central platform, be sure to clarify when the platform will no longer be used, and how the panelists can continue to contact the planning team.

> While the team had a central Slack, follow-ups and reminders were also sent via email or text, depending on the preference of the panelists. For some panelists, the Slack was helpful to keep their assignments top-of-mind.

For shorter-term teams: keep track to ensure everyone is able to access messages
Projects completed during a shorter period of time may not need their own standalone platform. Instead, the planning team should keep careful track to be sure that everyone is receiving communications in the format they prefer (e.g. email, text, call, in person) and is able to act on them.

Calendar invitations
When there are group sessions, providing a calendar invitation can be helpful to some team members. These invitations should include the location (and if virtual or hybrid, the link), clear information about the agenda, and other key details. Assign one planning team member for in-person sessions to be the contact, and provide their phone number in case another co-creation team member needs directions or help.

Principles of communications to the panel
Any communications with the panel should be friendly, clear, and as straightforward as possible. Make it clear what the ask is, how that ask connects to where you are in the design process, what the timeline for action is, where or how to ask questions, and that all participation is voluntary. When possible, include directions multiple times — for example, if using a digital feedback board, include the instructions in the original email as well as on the board with an example.



Co-creation Slack page.

SCHEDULING AND SESSION LOGISTICS

Once decisions have been made about how to structure sessions, plan the logistics.

Session timing
Timing of sessions could be scheduled based on the availability of the panelists or full co-creation team, or could be scheduled before the panel is recruited, ensuring that panelists who opt-in are available for specific meetings. Considerations for timing include: avoiding major holidays, understanding work or school schedules of potential panelists, and recognition of time needed by the planning team for preparing and debriefing sessions.

Accessible locations for active collaboration
Any in-person sessions should be held in places that allow for creative collaboration, relative privacy, and comfortable activities. They should also be relatively easy to find and to access via driving, walking, and transit. Locations should be selected based on the size of the group. Having a slightly larger space allows multiple activities or stations to be set up, with people able to move around.

Other space considerations that may be important include: access to gender neutral bathrooms, air circulation or access to outdoor spaces for air quality considerations, ability to serve food, and cost of space rental. Depending on the project, it may not be ideal to host sessions in a Washington University space; these spaces can be difficult to access during the school day or academic year, and may create emotional barriers for panelists due to perceptions of access and welcome.

No-cost spaces that could be used in the future include:
+ Stix House conference room, which has rolling tables and chairs and a projector
+ Weil Hall seminar rooms, including 121, which have stationary tables and chairs, a screen, and large windows

Other spaces to potentially consider could include:
+ TRex Downtown
+ Cortex, particularly CIC or Office of Technology Management (OTM) spaces
+ Lewis Collaborative spaces supported by TechArtista

Accommodations to create a comfortable environment
Find out from co-creation team members what accommodations would help them be most actively engaged, welcomed, and comfortable. This might include physical accommodations, such as masking, specific chairs, or light levels, or accessibility considerations like alt text on images, an ASL interpreter, language translation, or low or high tables. Team members may also want a positive affirmation that it's OK for them to stand up, move around, or take other actions that would make them comfortable. Asking co-creation team members about their needs and desires, as well as giving a variety of options in sessions, helps everyone feel welcome.

> The snacks provided for in-person sessions included a range of sweet, salty, savory, gluten-free, and vegan options, and all team members were asked to mask (when not taking a bite or drink) to increase comfort for COVID-cautious participants.

Easy information and reminders
For virtual or in-person sessions, use a variety of tools to help team members be reminded of the agenda, each other's names and pronouns, group norms, and other key information. In person, printing and posting on the walls can help engage people without distracting technology or screens. Fun name tags can set a welcoming, positive tone.

Engaging virtual sessions
Virtual sessions should be an appropriate length (ideally less than 2 hours, with a break) to hold people's attention, and should include interactive components that can be accessed on a phone or a computer. Accommodations could include things like closed captioning or providing materials via PDF.

A note on hybrid sessions
Hybrid sessions, where some team members are virtual and others are in-person, can be particularly difficult to manage and can leave some participants having a less than satisfactory experience. If hybrid sessions are necessary, ensure that specific planning team members are assigned to manage the experience of the virtual participants.

Blending discussion, sharing, and hands-on activities
Sessions, regardless of the format, should include a mix of types of activities. While people often like to discuss, it's critical to make the conversation tangible and active, keeping people engaged and getting into the detail of what they are imagining. Offering an option for people to share their thoughts in other ways, such as writing, allows each team member to pick the format that is most engaging for them.

Providing food and beverages
If budgets allow, providing food and drinks can help create a welcoming environment for team members. For longer sessions that extend over meals, budget for meals at $8-12/person. For shorter sessions, individually wrapped snacks like cookies, fruit, and chips can help people stay engaged and focused. Find out dietary restrictions from co-creation team members, and provide food that meets their needs.

Co-creation ideation session in Weil Hall 121.

ENGAGING PEOPLE BEYOND THE CO-CREATION TEAM

Once the planning team has established the characteristics of ideal panelists, there may be types of people who would provide valuable perspective or input in the process, but won't necessarily be part of the team. For example, a short timeline may make it too difficult to include minors as part of the co-creation team, but if they'll be using the outputs from the project, their evaluation of prototypes is critical. It's also meaningful for panelists to hear from and see the feedback from other parts of the audience for the design output.

Panelists really wanted to hear from other people as part of the process. As one panelist said, "I wanted to observe both demographics (parents/educators/adults and teens) answer questions and talk with each other about what they want. Then I would want to start thinking about 'what does it look like and feel like?' I don't have educated opinions that don't come from my own experience."

Expanding the co-creation team's network

Co-creation panelists are likely to be connected to groups, individuals, and organizations that have a stake in the effort. Creating materials that they can share with their colleagues, friends, and family can help widen participation, but requires approval by the IRB and a careful process to provide materials, support panelists in posing questions, and collect the information back anonymously.

Towards the end of the panel participation, the team created a short document that summarized the concept of the game and raised questions about preferences. If panelists would like, they can share this with their friends, family, and colleagues, and share any reactions they gather via email to the contact person on the planning team.

Working with partner groups

Partner groups and stakeholders that were part of earlier components of the process may be able to help make connections to people who can provide valuable perspectives. Depending on the context, this could include a variety of methods, such as focus groups, distributing anonymous surveys, or participating in events. Engaging partners requires input from the IRB, so planning should start early, even if engagement doesn't happen until later in the process.

Testing at events

Existing events can be opportunities to quickly seek feedback from a large number of people. Events are limiting though because unless people are a captive audience, they are unlikely to spend much time with any single activity. Carefully design event activities to address topics that can be quickly considered and responded to by the likely attendees.

During the testing of the COVID vaccine conversation cards, card messages were tested with people who were waiting for the required 15-minute observation period after receiving their vaccination.

The planning team designed message testing tools to be used at Marquette Park during events that would attract families and teens. While a variety of messages were included, the interactions were simple enough that people could quickly respond as they passed by.

Community feedback at Marquette Park.

CHAPTER 4

DISCOVERY PHASE

The discovery phase is when the co-creation team begins to narrow the topic and focus of the project through sharing their own experiences and observations, assessing what already exists, and prioritizing areas to focus on. This phase can be relatively abstract, but is also an opportunity to learn directly from panelists.

Components

+ Learning from the co-creation team
+ Setting the tone with a first session
+ Seeking visual preferences
+ Synthesizing discovery

LEARNING FROM THE CO-CREATION TEAM

Relevant Resources
[Pilot Project Pre-Workshop Reflection Survey]

Panelists are recruited and selected because of their particular backgrounds and experiences. The planning team also may have their own relevant experiences to draw from. Early in the process, find ways to learn from the team's collective experience and expertise. This phase may include asking about what they've noticed about the topic, who they've seen as involved in that topic, what tools and resources they've seen utilized, and where they see the opportunities for change. These questions might be asked before a first session, or could come up throughout the discovery phase through a variety of activities.

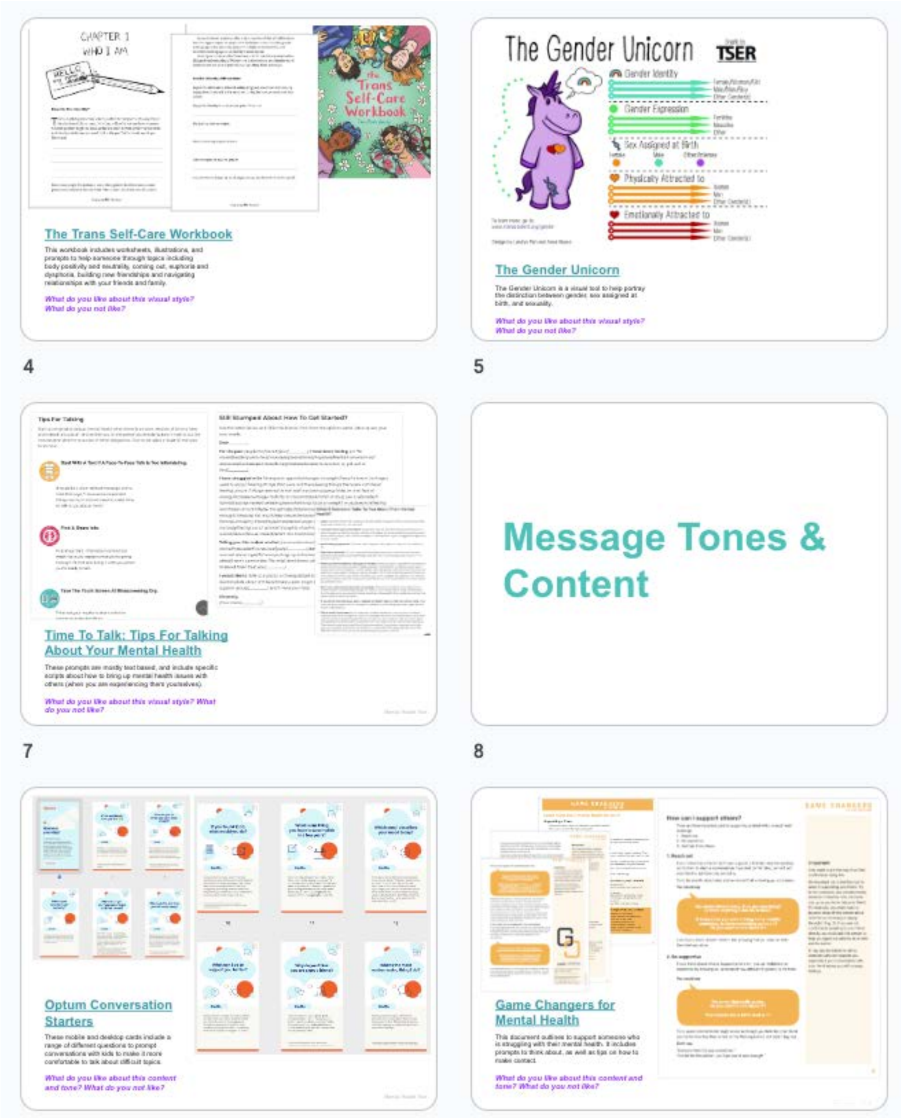
Using one-on-one conversations to build rapport and learn more
One-on-one conversations, such as during on-boarding interviews, can be a great way to hear more about panelists' experiences while building a connection with them. As trust is being built, you may want to start with questions that are more about general observations than their own personal experience.

Using anonymous surveys
A survey can help increase comfort with sharing more specific stories related to the topic, asking the participant to remove identifying context. Surveys can also ask quantitative questions that inform later prioritization.

An introductory survey prompted panelists to share examples of conversations that had gone well and ones that had gone poorly, as well as identifying what kinds of people most needed support in conversations about gender and sexual identity. This input was used in the first discovery session and to frame later priorities.

Prompting with lessons already learned and existing resources
Sharing existing tools or ideas can be a way to prompt for discussion, and can also help panelists respond to where they see gaps and opportunities.

Co-creation team members reviewed a document with 15 examples of conversation tools, grouped into three categories. They responded to what they liked, what they didn't like, and which they would use. Many team members continued to refer back to these tools as examples throughout the process.



Portion of the conversation tools review activity.

SETTING THE TONE WITH A FIRST SESSION

If the full co-creation team will be working together and interacting as a group, the first session sets the tone and helps establish relationships between panel members and planning team members, as well as setting expectations for the remainder of the project. Regardless of the length of the session, consider these ways to establish a baseline.

Supporting clear facilitation and roles
In all sessions, the facilitator guides the process, keeping the team engaged, managing time, and setting expectations. The planning team should develop clear agendas, instructions, and roles to make facilitation easy. In addition, visibly and clearly documenting input that the team provides in the session helps to validate that what is being shared will be seriously considered and incorporated into the process. Facilitation and documentation both support team members in feeling that their time is well used.

Some panelists commented on the organization and preparation of each session and activity as one of the points that stood out most to them.

Including introductions, icebreakers, and name tags
If the team members are going to get to know each other, make it comfortable and easy for them. Introductions should be structured so as not to exacerbate unequal power dynamics; for example, don't include titles or educational background, but ask people to share something about themselves with a prompt that is easily answerable by everyone present. While ice breakers have a reputation of being awkward and silly, they can also help inspire creativity.

The group workshops used these warm-ups:

+ Choose two visual images from a curated pile: 1) one that represents how you feel when you are supported and cared for by the people around you and 2) one that represents how you feel when you are supported and caring for someone else.
+ We'll take 3 minutes to draw a quick sketch of ourselves when we feel most supported and connected to others. It can be realistic or abstract, simple or complex, clear or messy – whatever way you want to respond!
+ Alternate writing a sentence and drawing a picture as the paper is passed around, creating a telephone game style story.
+ Share a favorite stretch (and everyone does the stretch with you).

Introducing and confirming team norms
While team norms may be shared earlier, such as during on-boarding, the first session is an opportunity to review and confirm the norms with the full group. This might include giving everyone a chance to read them on their own, raise questions, add additional norms, or make changes. It can be helpful to give examples of how the norms might work in practice.

Initial Group Norms

Listening actively and compassionately: Try to understand others before being understood

Self-moderate participation: Make space, take space.

Stories stay, lessons go: Seek to respect personal privacy by keeping what's shared together confidential.

Take care of yourself: Make space for yourself and do what you need to do to feel comfortable and present. Feel free to eat, lay down, stretch.

Let go of either/or and embrace yes/and: Try to hold multiple perspectives at once.

Be gracious in accepting difficult feedback: Take a pause before being defensive.

Acknowledge intent while addressing impact: Try not to personalize the responses of others while being mindful of the impact of our words and actions on others.

Speak from your own experience: Use "I" statements and don't speak on behalf of others — offer your observations and experiences.

Be Present: Avoid multitasking and phones. One conversation at a time. If we meet virtually, be mindful of the mute function and keep your video on if possible.

Relevant Resources
Example Expectation-Setting Slides

Reviewing expectations and answering questions
Ideally, expectations will have been clearly set during on-boarding, but it can be helpful to reinforce the expected flow of the project, the role that panel members will play, how the planning team will be involved, and give space for people to raise questions that they may have. If meeting in a larger group, consider having some time in smaller groups as panelists may feel more comfortable speaking up with questions. The first session can also be a great time to give additional, more visual background about the project, including details of why the project topic was selected, how the design process will work, and what the expected outcomes are.

If possible, offering food and social time
While not all funded projects will have the budget to provide food, the first session may benefit from more casual social time for team members to get to know each other over a meal. Consider offering some conversation prompts to help break the ice, or intentionally mixing planning team and panel members so they can intermingle.

Co-Creation team members interacting during the first session.

SEEKING VISUAL PREFERENCES

While feedback on visual preferences can happen at any point during the process, looking at color palettes, patterns, images, and even word choices can be a comfortable, low-risk place to start early, and then save the feedback for later rounds of prototyping.

Finding samples

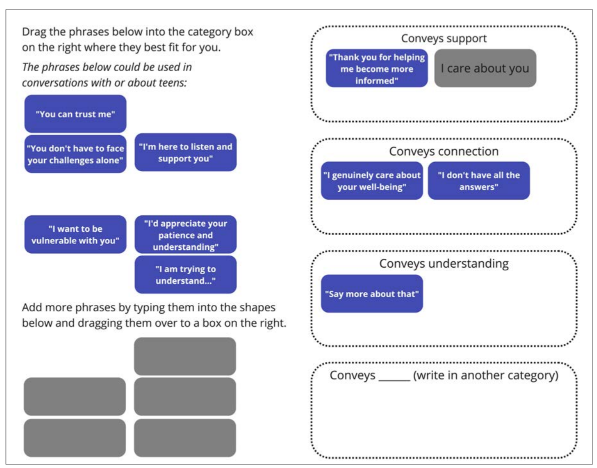
Using a set of very different prompts supports gathering the co-creation team's responses to a wide range of visual possibilities— there will be time later to explore some in more detail. Using AI to generate examples can speed things up, such as Midjourney for visuals, Colormagic for palettes, or ChatGPT for phrases or messages in different tones.

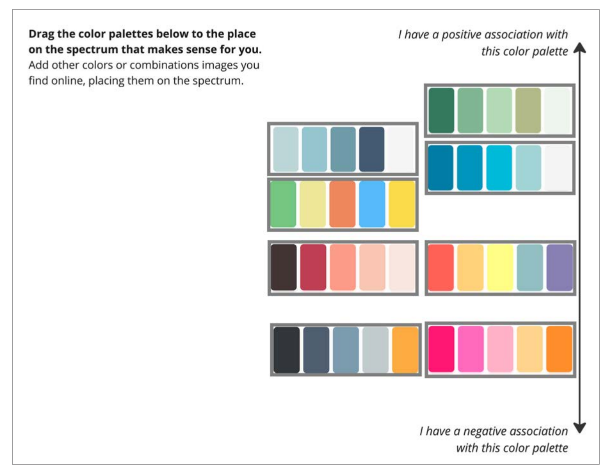
Making simple instructions

Give the team simple instructions, such as aligning options along a spectrum or grouping them into categories. If possible, also prompt for explanations on why people have made specific selections. This activity may use tools that some panelists are unfamiliar with, such as Miro or Figma, so ensure instructions support everyone to participate using whatever device is most accessible to them.

The co-creation team accessed a shared Miro board and reviewed words, phrases, images, patterns, and colors, either grouping them or putting them on spectrums. This was used as inspiration for later design and messaging.

Team members organized their preferences for visuals, words, and colors or a Miro board.





SYNTHESIZING DISCOVERY

Throughout the co-creation process, reflecting back what has been learned and documenting those lessons for later reference in decisions is important. This synthesis process might happen several times during the discovery phase, including an initial synthesis that can be reflected back to team members, and later synthesis to identify opportunities and document details for later.

Using a structured format for documenting
The structure may vary depending on the timing and process of the project. A list of emerging themes, written as actions and including specific data, can be a simple way to show what's beginning to emerge. Visual frameworks can also help make complex, messy information more digestible. Both formats of information can be useful for reflecting back, validating, and prompting for more information from panelists.

> Survey results from co-creation team members were synthesized with findings from the earlier literature review and benchmarking to create a Venn diagram and a set of spectrums. These frameworks were used to prompt conversation during the first session, drawing out more stories.

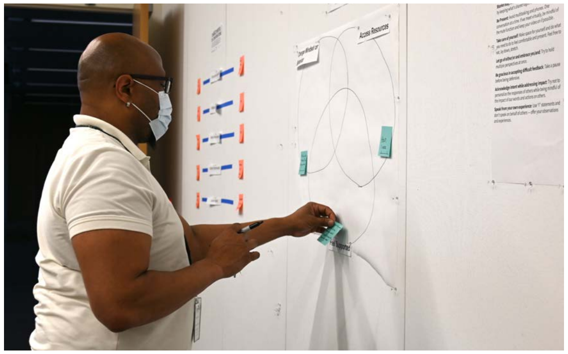
Documenting insights for later reference
Early in discovery, the panel may identify important learnings that won't become relevant until later in the process. Throughout this phase, document not only the raw data, but also emerging insights that could inform later discussion or decision making. Set a process for reviewing those earlier learnings at points later in the process, to revisit those that are now relevant.

> Early feedback from co-creation team members emphasized the tension between the value of peer-to-peer relationships for both teens and adults, as well as the value of teen-adult relationships. As the process continued, the team struggled to prioritize one set of relationships over the other as the primary audience. Early learnings included detail about each type of relationship that would have supported later discussions if they had been revisited.

Identifying opportunities for creation
The discovery phase should end with opportunities that the team can generate ideas in response to. These opportunities may be documented as directive statements, collections of goals, audiences, and contexts, and 'how might we' questions. The synthesis of the discovery phase should end with a wide selection of opportunities that will need to be prioritized. Since the IRB will likely have already reviewed materials for the next phase, the prompting material from discovery synthesis could be used with generic questions such as "what ideas does this prompt?"

> The planning team identified a number of different audiences, goals, and contexts that were important for conversations about gender and sexual identity, based on the input from the panel. Rather than narrowing down before ideation, the co-creation team members each selected the combinations of audiences, goals, and contexts that they felt were most important to address. For more information about this style of brainstorming, see the ideation section.

Reflecting lessons learned back to panelists
Sharing the documentation of synthesis back to the co-creation team, and panelists in particular, helps demonstrate how their voices are being heard and incorporated into the project direction. Beginning sessions by reflecting back "We heard..." or including clear descriptions of where decisions came from help reinforce the value of their input and experience and build trust.



Panelist adding stories and needs to a framework.

CHAPTER 5

IDEATION PHASE

Involving co-creation team members in coming up with and prioritizing potential ideas can be the most engaging and creative part of a process. Ideation includes coming up with novel ideas and pulling from other inspiration, but also must involve prioritization to decide what ideas should move forward.

Components

+ Generating ideas
+ Prioritizing ideas
+ Creating concept pages
+ Adding to synthesis

GENERATING IDEAS

Relevant Resources
[Mix-and-Match Activity & Sticker Template]
[Pilot Mix-and-Match Activity]

While the generation of ideas sometimes prioritizes the novel ideas that come from traditional 'brainstorming' processes, ideas can also come from things that have happened in the **past**, things that are currently happening in the **present**, things that other groups (**peers**) are doing that could be improved upon, and **parallels** that are happening in a different context. The ideation phase of the process involves creating the conditions for team members to share possible ideas and build off the things that they each see as opportunities.

For ideation to be successful, it must be clear what the opportunities are — including who the audience is for the idea, what some of the constraints are, and what the outcomes are. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there may need to be a prioritization step to narrow down the focus for idea generation to several opportunities that are relevant to explore.

Coming out of the discovery phase, the planning team identified a range of audiences, goals, and contexts that had come up as relevant to the topic of conversations with teens about mental health and gender or sexual identity. To encourage the co-creation team to prioritize, ideation sessions included a card-based mix-and-match brainstorm activity, where participants selected the audience(s), goal, and context, and then created ideas that responded to their selected combination. This step was part of prioritizing the combinations that were most interesting, relevant, and potentially impactful.

Generating ideas in a session
Whether in an in-person or virtual session, live ideation sessions can be particularly exciting, as team members are able to hear and build on each other's ideas. An ideation session should begin with clearly explaining the opportunities identified and setting expectations for the process. The following brainstorming rules can be helpful to add during this process:

Brainstorming Rules
+ Defer judgment
+ Encourage far-out ideas
+ Build on the ideas of others
+ Stay focused on the topic
+ Be visual
+ Go for quantity and diversity

To encourage a diversity of types of ideas, the planning team created a set of stickers with different formats of ideas, such as postcards, wearables, posts, brochures, etc. During idea generation sessions, co-creation team members also selected a sticker or set of stickers for their idea, encouraging them to think beyond the immediate format that came to mind.

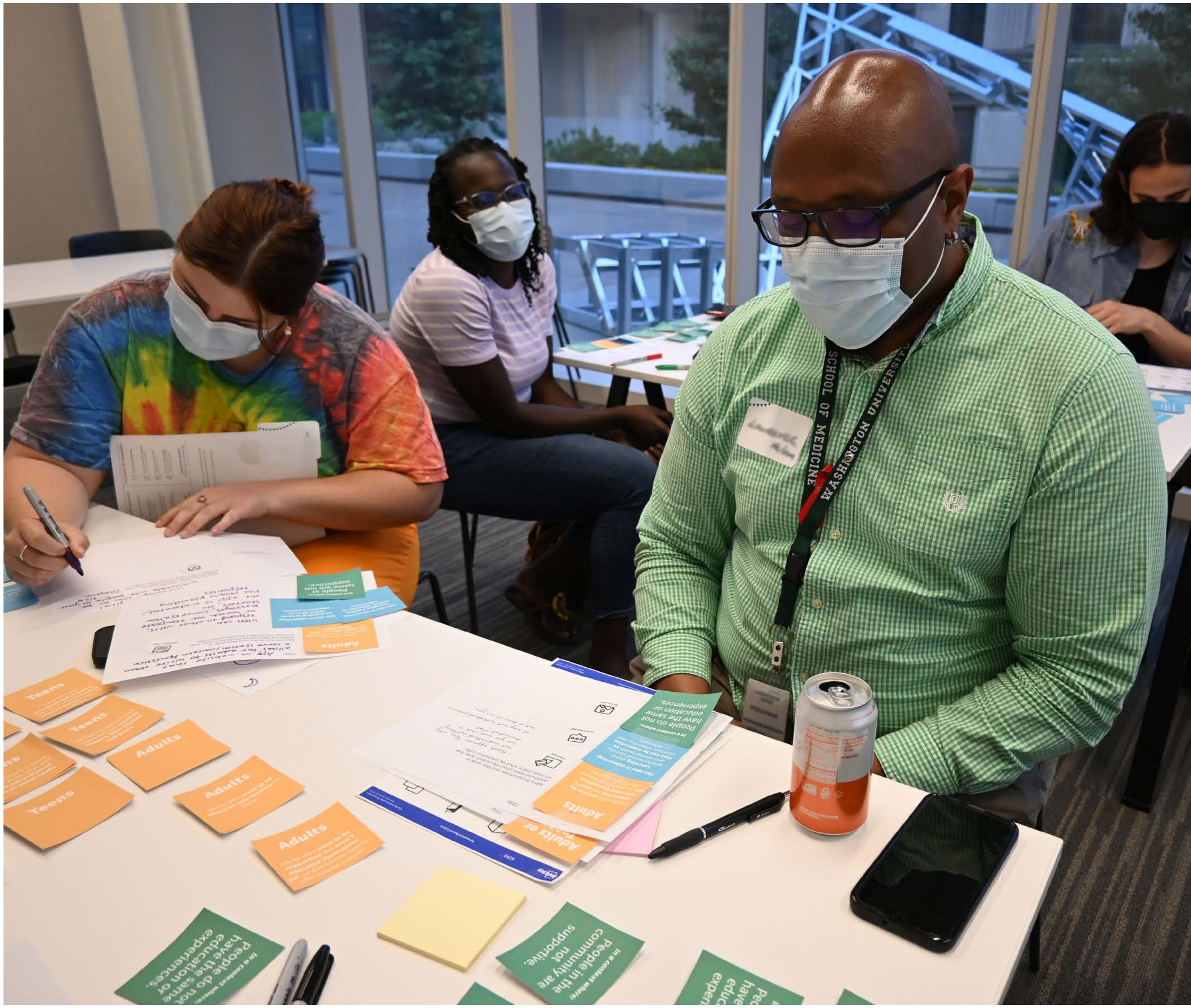
Using prompts to expand the diversity of ideas
Prompts can be particularly helpful in expanding the diversity of potential ideas on the table. For example, some people may be most drawn to communications methods, but encouraging them to think about interactions, services, or environments can bring a wider range of ideas. Not all of these ideas will be feasible within constraints, but they can help inspire important next steps.

Several ideas about training workshops arose during ideation. With more feedback from the co-creation team, it became clear that these were important because not everyone has the emotional and conversational skills to participate in the kinds of conversations the team wanted to support. While the training workshops were beyond what the team could feasibly produce, this idea was incorporated into the background materials and some of the prompts for the game.

Facilitating ideation
During a live session, a facilitator is particularly important to help encourage panelists to share. Creating a space where all team members can see each other's ideas, keeping the energy up, and paying attention to when it is time to transition to another opportunity or prompt are all particularly important in successful ideation.

Generating ideas asynchronously
When it's not possible to have the team together for live ideation, there are several methods to generate ideas asynchronously. If team members are willing and able to generate using drawing or images, take-home paper sheets or a digital board with clear prompts and direction can result in a set of ideas that are similar in depth to what happens in a live session. Participants could also generate ideas via survey or other written feedback. This method may not result in the same level of depth, and also limits the opportunity to build on others' ideas.

Utilizing AI to support idea generation
Tools like ChatGPT can be helpful assists for idea generation. Utilize the opportunities identified to write specific prompts, asking the AI to produce a set number of ideas that address that opportunity. These ideas can be used as starting points, which the co-creation team should use as inspiration and build upon with additional detail and nuance.



Co-creation team members participating in the mix-and-match brainstorming activity with stickers.

PRIORITIZING IDEAS

Relevant Resources
[Idea Prioritization Survey]

Ideally, idea generation will end with a big collection of diverse ideas. The panel and the planning team may play different roles in prioritization. It's critical to be clear about how decisions will be made. For example, the planning team may choose to remove ideas from consideration that won't be feasible to execute in the near-term given the constraints of the project.

Organizing a hierarchy for prioritization
It's likely that the ideas can be grouped together into similar categories, and which may also be grouped by audience or other key characteristics. This grouping helps make it easier for the co-creation team to review a large number of ideas, and may also provide several levels to prioritize across.

> Ideas generated by the co-creation team were grouped based on which audiences the ideas were intended for, and then were organized into specific idea clusters. Through a survey, team members were asked to prioritize ideas within categories like "for adults to interact with other adults" or "for teens, either to reflect themselves or to interact with other teens". They were also asked to prioritize the audience that they thought was most important, and up to two goals that they thought were most important for the project to address.

Selecting criteria for prioritization
Specifying what people should consider during prioritization is critical to ensure the team is aligned as they look across ideas. The criteria to the right could all be relevant, depending on the project. For many health communications projects, Impact and Accessibility are particularly relevant. For co-creation team projects, Excitement may be a relevant criteria. Not all of these criteria can be assessed by panel members; the planning team may need to assess things like Feasibility, and outside partners may need to assess Alignment or Viability.

> First, the planning team reviewed the ideas, removing those that weren't at all feasible and making adjustments to others to make them closer to feasibility. Panel members then evaluated ideas for both potential for impact and their excitement to continue to work on ideas. Panel members evaluated via a survey, and the results were used by the planning team to narrow the set of ideas being considered.

Setting expectations about how many ideas
Considering the project's constraints, set clear expectations about how many ideas will likely be able to be produced from this team's effort — from one idea to a small group. Reinforce this expected number at every point of narrowing and decision, so the team understands the importance and reasoning behind prioritizing.

Methods for prioritizing
Prioritization could happen in a session, with team members dot voting ideas or groups of ideas and discussing, or could happen asynchronously through a survey or digital feedback board.

Potential Prioritization Criteria

Desirability: Would the intended audience want it?

Feasibility: Is it possible to do?

Viability: Is it likely to sustain?

Accessibility: Is it inclusive of a wide range of people?

Distinction: Does it offer new and unique value?

Excitement: Are you motivated to work on it?

Impact: Would it make positive change? Does it have potential for harm?

Relevance: Does it connect to the specific challenge or opportunity you've defined?

Alignment: Does it support or tie into an existing priority or initiative?

CREATING CONCEPT PAGES

Relevant Resources
[Concept Page Templates]

Concept pages are a low-fidelity method of expressing an idea that shows only the basic, most important components of the idea. A concept page typically includes a simple illustration of the idea, a brief description, and some possible features or details. This tool (technically, an early-stage prototype!) serves to synthesize the outputs from ideation and raise questions about features, experience, and priorities to the co-creation team.

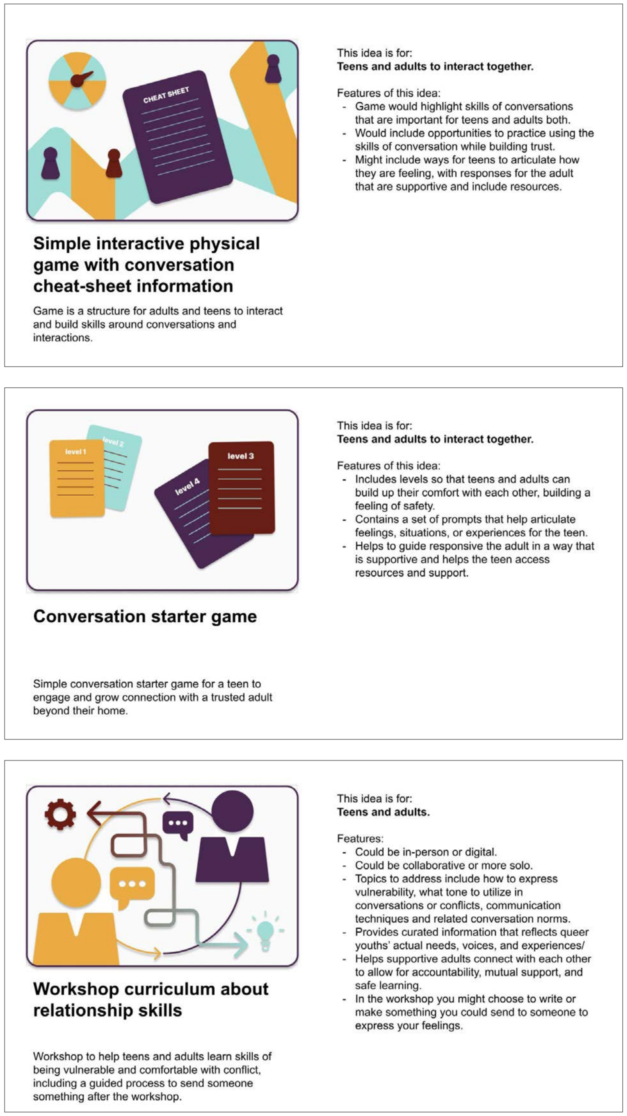
Producing concept pages
After a preliminary round of prioritization, the planning team should review the feedback, identifying larger ideas to move forward as well as clumping smaller ideas that are aligned together into a simple format. The number of concept pages produced depends on the scope of the project, but keep in mind that it should be realistic for the planning team to create and for the panelists to review and consider.

Seeking concept page feedback
This step can be an opportunity to seek feedback from participants outside of the co-creation team, or more in-depth feedback from the panel. This stage of feedback is particularly helpful for building on ideas and evaluating desirability. Questions might include "how would you use this idea?", "how would you change this idea to work better for you?", or "how would you imagine this specific thing working?".

Using concept pages to clarify audiences, goals, and priorities
These early, simple prototypes can also serve as prompts to ask the co-creation team to clarify and focus where the project should go, asking them to build on the initial ideas and draw connections across ideas. This is likely easiest to do via conversation in a live session.

In the concept feedback sessions on June 17 and June 21, co-creation team members reviewed concept pages that featured a range of types of tools, including games, curriculum, inspirational products, and other potential prompts. The team provided input through discussion and comment about how the ideas should evolve and which should be prioritized to continue into further prototyping. They addressed questions including "How would you use this?" "What do you think the message, format, and visuals should be for this idea?" Based on this discussion, the co-creation team aligned on moving forward with one primary idea (a game) and a few supporting ideas.

Some reasons that the team was motivated to focus on the game was because the teen team member expressed how that format was accessible and engaging for them and their peers, and because the game could be imagined as flexible for a variety of settings.



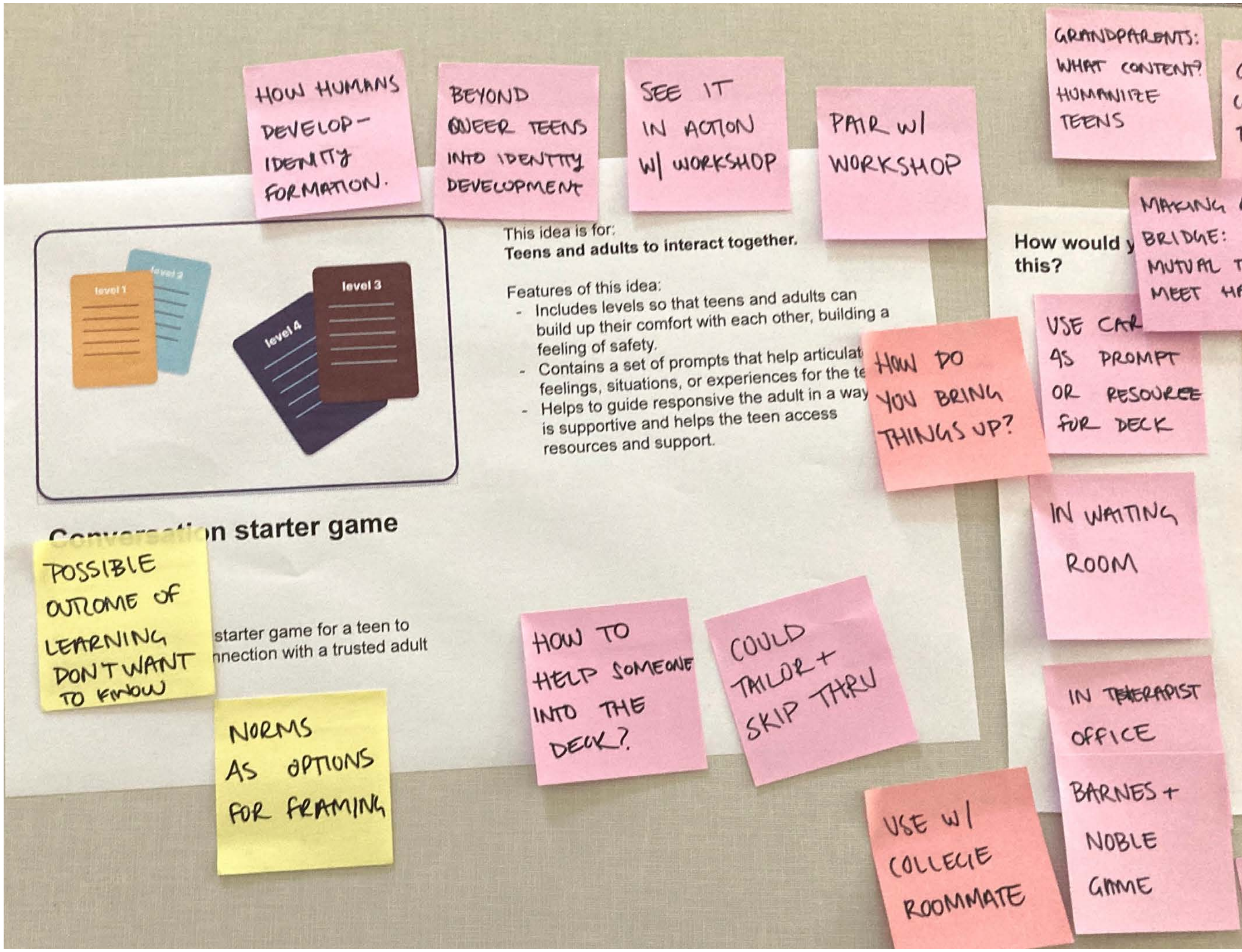
Selection of concept pages created for the co-creation team to consider.

ADDING TO SYNTHESIS

Ideation, prioritization, and the creation of concept pages will bring up new lessons learned and input that is critical to document. The planning team could add to the synthesis created in discovery, or create a new set of documentation.

Documenting refinements and idea details
Particularly important at this phase is capturing the details of ideas so they can be implemented in later, more refined prototyping. Detailed note taking, or expanding on concept pages to include the feedback received from panelists and others, can help ensure there's something to refer back to during later rounds of prototyping.

Co-creation team members in one session had an in-depth discussion about what information needed to be included in the game instructions for successful game play. While the game instructions were not part of the initial prototype, documenting that feedback was important to inform later prototypes.



Notes from co-creation feedback session on a concept page.

CHAPTER 6

PROTOTYPING PHASE

Prototyping is an iterative process of making tangible things in order to learn more about an idea. Creating and testing prototypes prompts for specific feedback from people who might be using, distributing, or interacting with the final product.

Components

+ Prototyping components
+ Testing prototypes
+ Refining prototypes

PROTOTYPING COMPONENTS

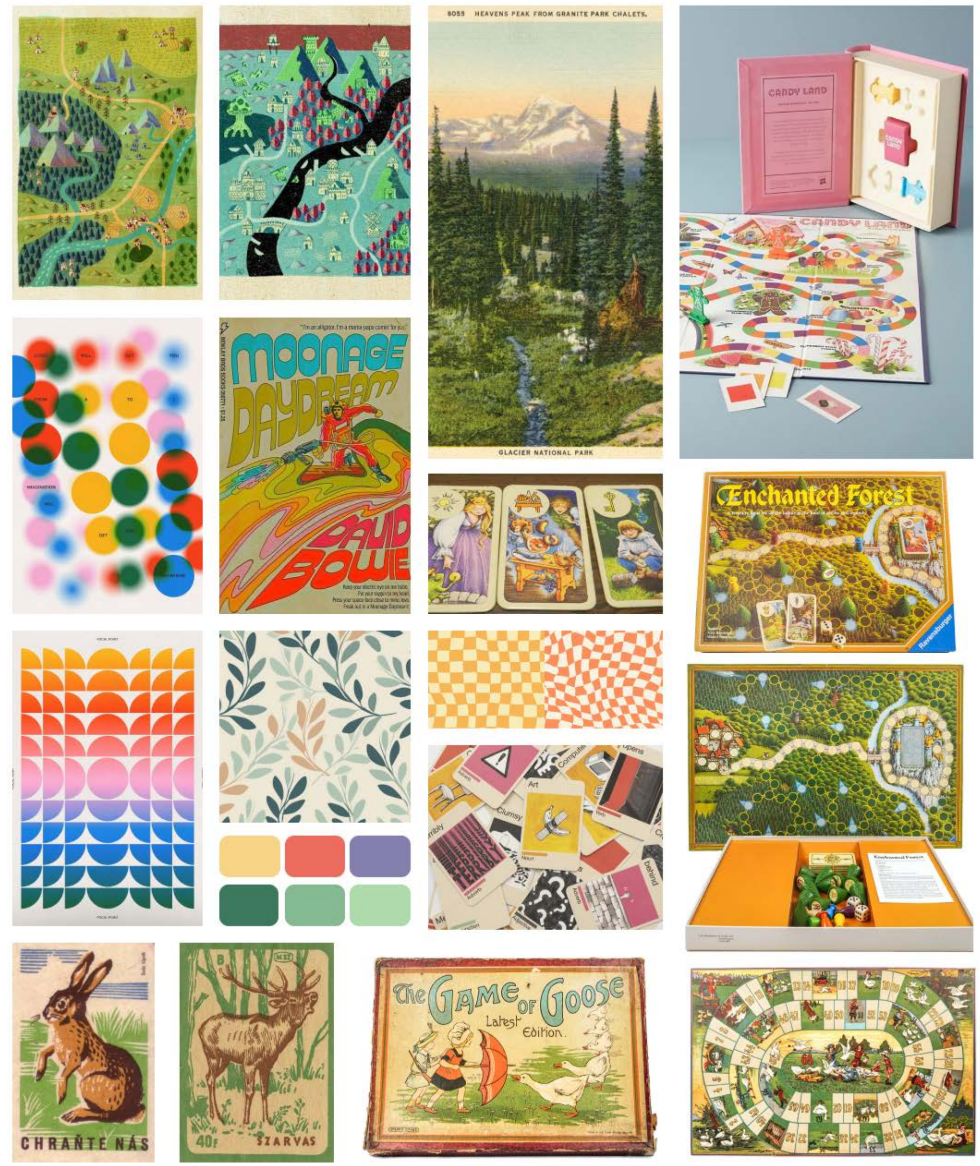
Every aspect of an idea can be prototyped and tested. Concept pages, described in the previous chapter, are prototypes of a broad idea. Visual mock-ups and moodboards can test the aesthetics of how things look. Physical prototypes can test form. Sets of words and phrases can test messages and tone. Each project will have a different combination of components that need to be tested, and the planning team will have to determine where they need to start, how much testing is needed, and with who.

Going from low-fidelity to higher-fidelity
A low-fidelity prototype has limited functionality and can be quickly produced, while a higher-fidelity prototype has more design quality and functionality, and appears more complete. It can be valuable to begin with low-fidelity and gradually progress to higher-fidelity for the full product as well as specific components, seeking feedback along the way.

Separating out components
While components like messaging, format, and visuals impact each other, it can be valuable to separate them for testing so that people providing feedback are able to focus on just the primary aspect you're asking for feedback on. Make this focus clear to feedback participants, so they understand that other components will be incorporated later. Different members of the team may produce different prototypes, as described on page 15.

The visuals included with the initial concept pages had a muted color palette, which some co-creation team members commented did not align with their ideas of what the game should be like. The concept pages were not meant to test visuals, just represent the idea, so the team members had to be reassured the colors would change going forward.

Iteratively generating ideas
There's also an opportunity to engage the co-creation team in a more iterative process of idea generation, focusing on specific components. For example, if there's a messaging component to a project, the co-creation team could specifically generate messages that would help meet the goal.



Visual moodboard used to test visual choices with the co-creation team.

TESTING PROTOTYPES

Relevant Resources
[IRB Submission Templates]

Getting feedback from the people who would be using, interacting with, and distributing tools is a way to learn about people's opinions and behaviors, and inform refinements. Testing should be iterative, gathering more feedback as the prototypes are refined.

Determining who to test with
For some projects, the panel may be the primary participants in testing, but for other projects outside voices may be necessary. The whole co-creation team can participate in determining who to seek feedback from, prompting for "Who else should we seek feedback from?" and "Who would use this?"

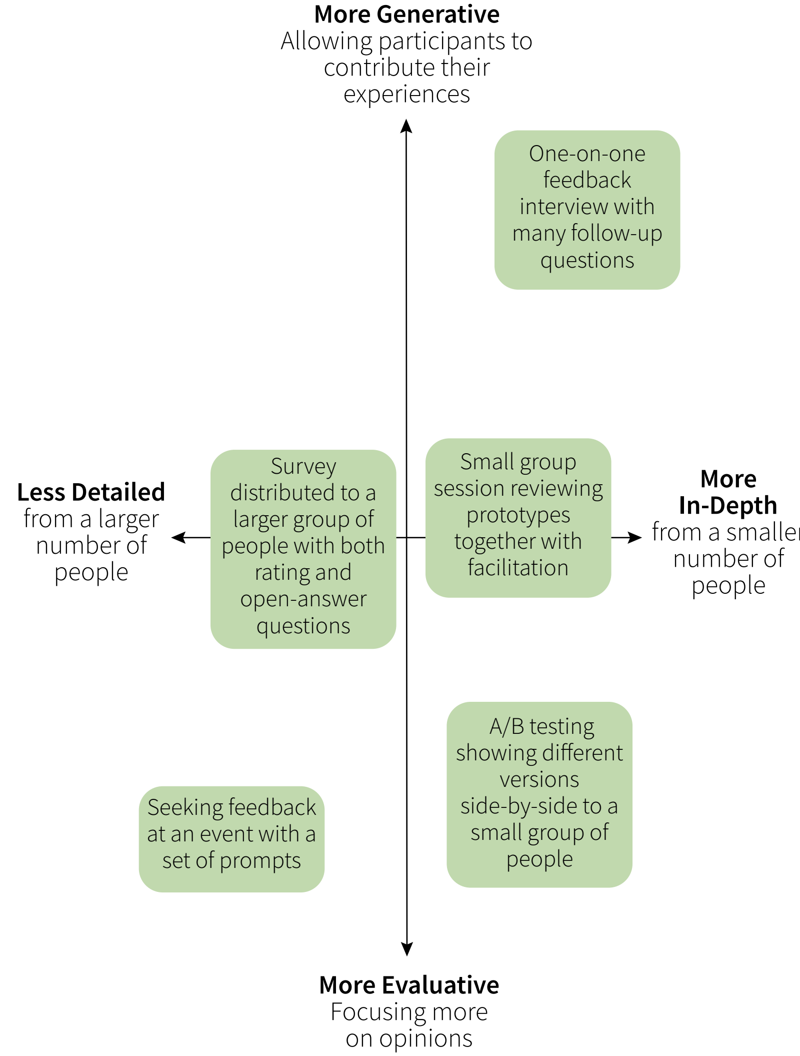
> Panelists provided feedback on prototypes via live sessions, beginning with concept pages and moving onto gameplay concepts. Some panelists provided feedback on higher fidelity visuals in one-on-one interviews. The planning team also sought feedback from parents and teens at a public event, focusing on message options by asking what phrases would support connection and relationships.

Designing testing materials and questions
Testing materials will consist of the prototypes, accompanied by a set of questions that probe for feedback. Given IRB considerations, creating a set of general questions (available in the IRB Submission Templates) that can be used across different categories of feedback (such as function, form, visuals, and messaging) and applied regardless of the prototype can simplify the process. Co-creation team members who are leading feedback efforts should also be prepared to pose follow-up questions that explore more of the why and ask for greater detail.

Testing methods and formats
Seeking feedback on prototypes can happen in a wide variety of settings, depending on the time available (to gather as well as synthesize the feedback) and the type of prototypes, including in group sessions, one-on-one conversations, surveys, and at events with brief interactions. See the framework at right for assessing method options.

Supporting panel members to test within their own communities
Panelists, selected for their experience and connections, may also want to seek feedback from their colleagues, friends, and family. The planning team and panelists can create simple tools to facilitate this process.

> At the end of the co-creation team process, the planning team produced a summary of the game concept that panelists could share with others for feedback.



Examples of testing methods.

REFINING PROTOTYPES

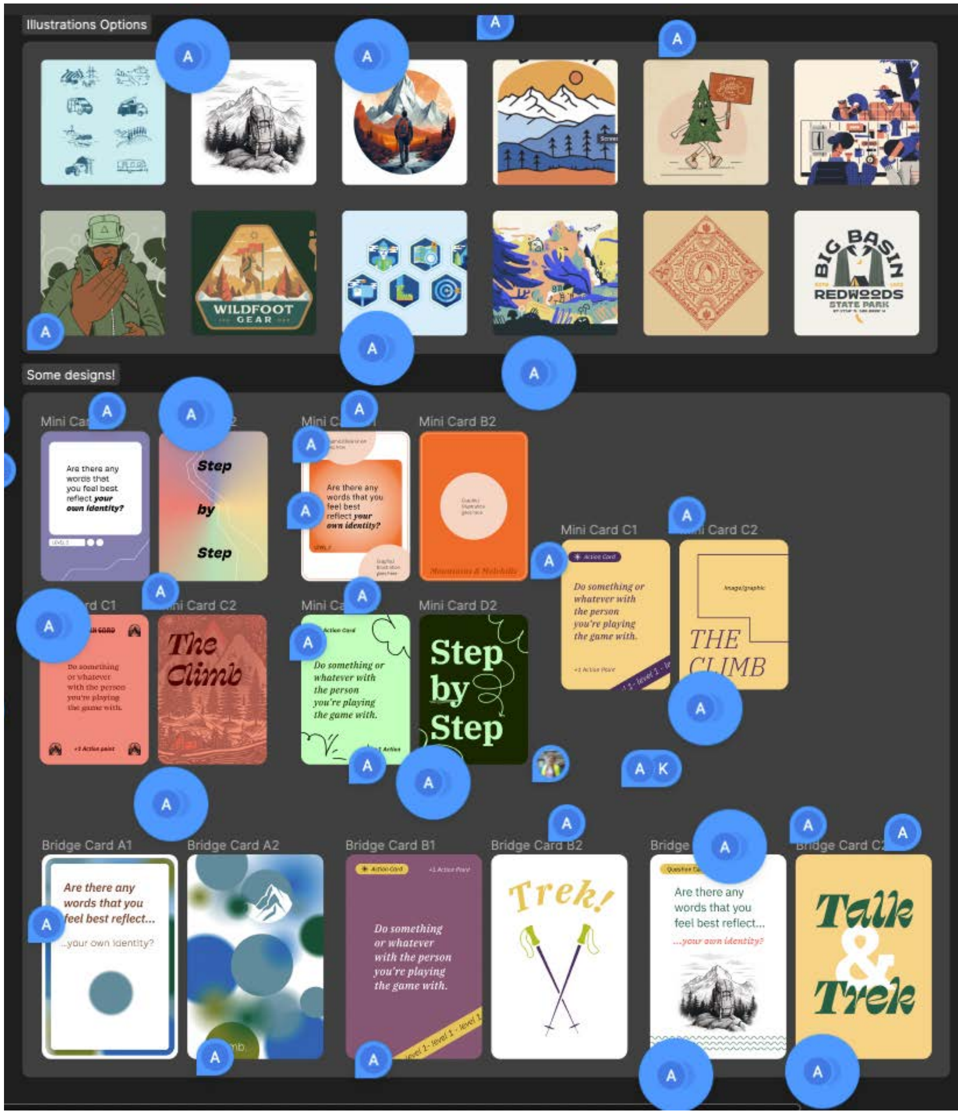
Once feedback has been collected, it must be synthesized and refinements and changes made. Creating refinements that reflect the input gathered is part of the process of building trust with the panel and demonstrating the importance and value of the experience and ideas of all the people participating.

Documenting feedback from testing
Throughout testing, feedback should be documented in detail, for future reference. Make it clear to panelists in testing how you are documenting — for example, if you are taking notes, asking for them to mark a prototype, or other formats. Testing feedback frequently results in additional feedback relevant to other parts of the project as well; document these changes and update prior summaries.

Engaging the co-creation team in refinement decisions
While timing and process constraints may limit the synthesis of testing feedback to being primarily the role of some members of the planning team, involving the full co-creation team adds additional nuance due to their perspectives or experience. Panelists might be part of assessing feedback for relevance, suggesting changes to the content at hand, or reviewing different refinement options. This can be particularly important if the planning team is evaluating feedback from groups of people outside of the co-creation team.

Showing tangible outcomes is valuable for co-creation panelists
A design-based process is different from other community-based processes because it results in tangible outcomes, rather than conversations about what could be. Showing refinements to panelists helps reinforce the coming outcomes of their work.

> Panelists really valued seeing their input and work reflected in prototypes. As one panelist said, "having a final product that looks like what we talked about for the last few months — that seems satisfying as a participant… communication and showing there's follow-through are key things."



Documented feedback from testing with panelists during one-on-one sessions.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL PHASES

As the term of the co-creation team winds down, concluding activities help make a meaningful transition for both the panelists and the planning team. This includes creating final, production-ready versions of the design, distributing the materials, maintaining contact with participants, and evaluating the process.

Components

+ Finalizing the product, distributing, and maintaining contact
+ Evaluating the co-creation experience

FINALIZING THE PRODUCT, DISTRIBUTING, AND MAINTAINING CONTACT

Relevant Resources
[Pilot Final Feedback & Evaluation Materials]

Getting the final product out in the world is the goal of the co-creation process, and requires a partnership between the planning team and panelists. Panelists will likely have perspectives on where and how the final product should be distributed, either through their own connections or what they've observed.

Finalizing designed materials
After multiple rounds of prototyping and testing, the planning team will need time to finalize the creation and production of the materials developed by the co-creation team. This part of the design process may include test printing, building interactive tools, or finalizing messaging. The planning team will need to take into account production considerations, like printing cost and timeline, ownership of domains, and who will do the labor to finalize the products.

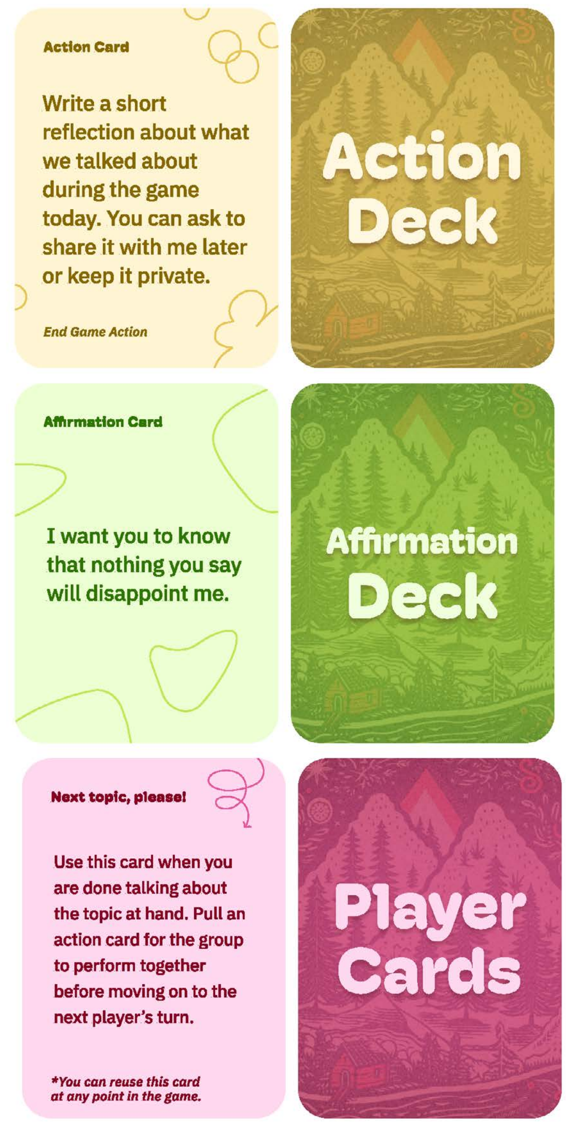
Exploring distribution ideas
Directly ask panel members to imagine where they would find the product, and who they would expect to be involved in distributing or sharing it. These questions can be posed at multiple points as the ideas are refined.

> During the final few touchpoints with panelists, they were asked to respond to questions like "Where would you expect to find something like this?" and "Who would be involved in using this?". Some offered stories about how they imagined the final game being used. This helped inform the contacts the planning team would make when they approach distribution.

Connecting with specific distribution resources
Towards the end of the process, make pathways for connecting with the planning team about distribution clear. Panelists may identify colleagues, friends, or family members who could benefit from the product, and it should be clear where they can connect with the team.

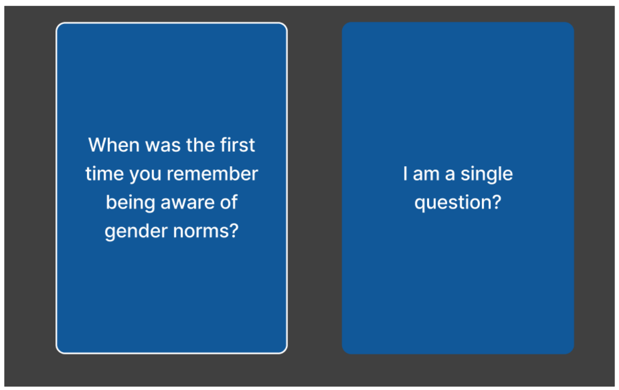
> A panelist shared what came out of the co-creation team with their colleagues at a non-profit organization. The organization had recently received a grant to engage directly with teens, and asked for a connection through the panelist to the planning team to find opportunities to collaborate.

Clarifying channels for future communication
The communication channel or lead for the co-creation team may change as the project moves into distribution phases. Be sure to communicate any changes to the panelists, particularly if a communication platform is shutting down or the contact person is changing.

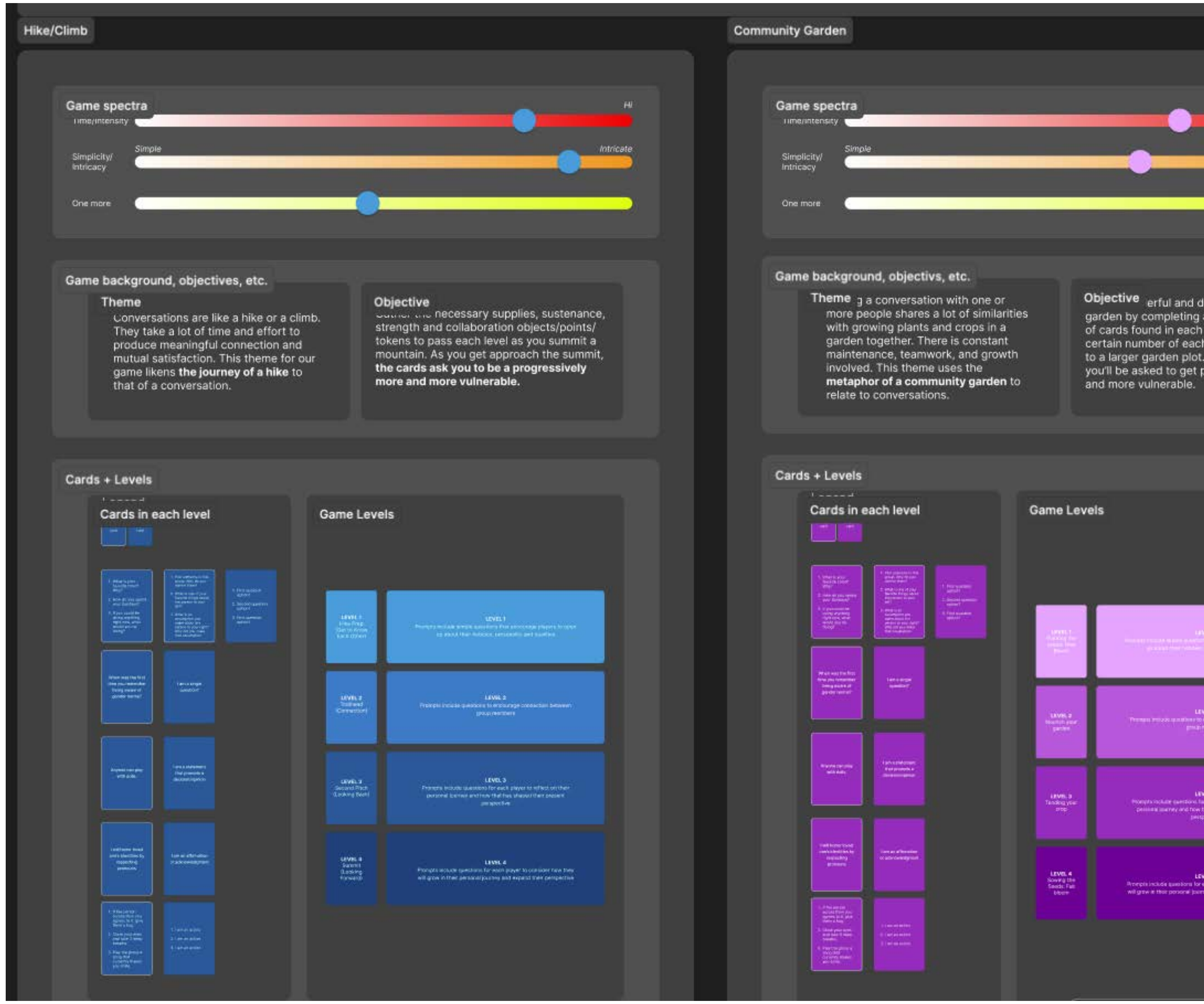


Game cards produced for pilot.

Communicating outcomes
No matter what happens with the final product, share outcomes back to the full co-creation team. Even if panelists have moved on, demonstrating the follow-up, successes, and failures continues to build trust and demonstrate the value of panelist's contributions.



Top: Detail of game mechanics mock-up
Bottom: Detail of visual design mock-up.



Mock-ups of game mechanics.

EVALUATING THE CO-CREATION EXPERIENCE

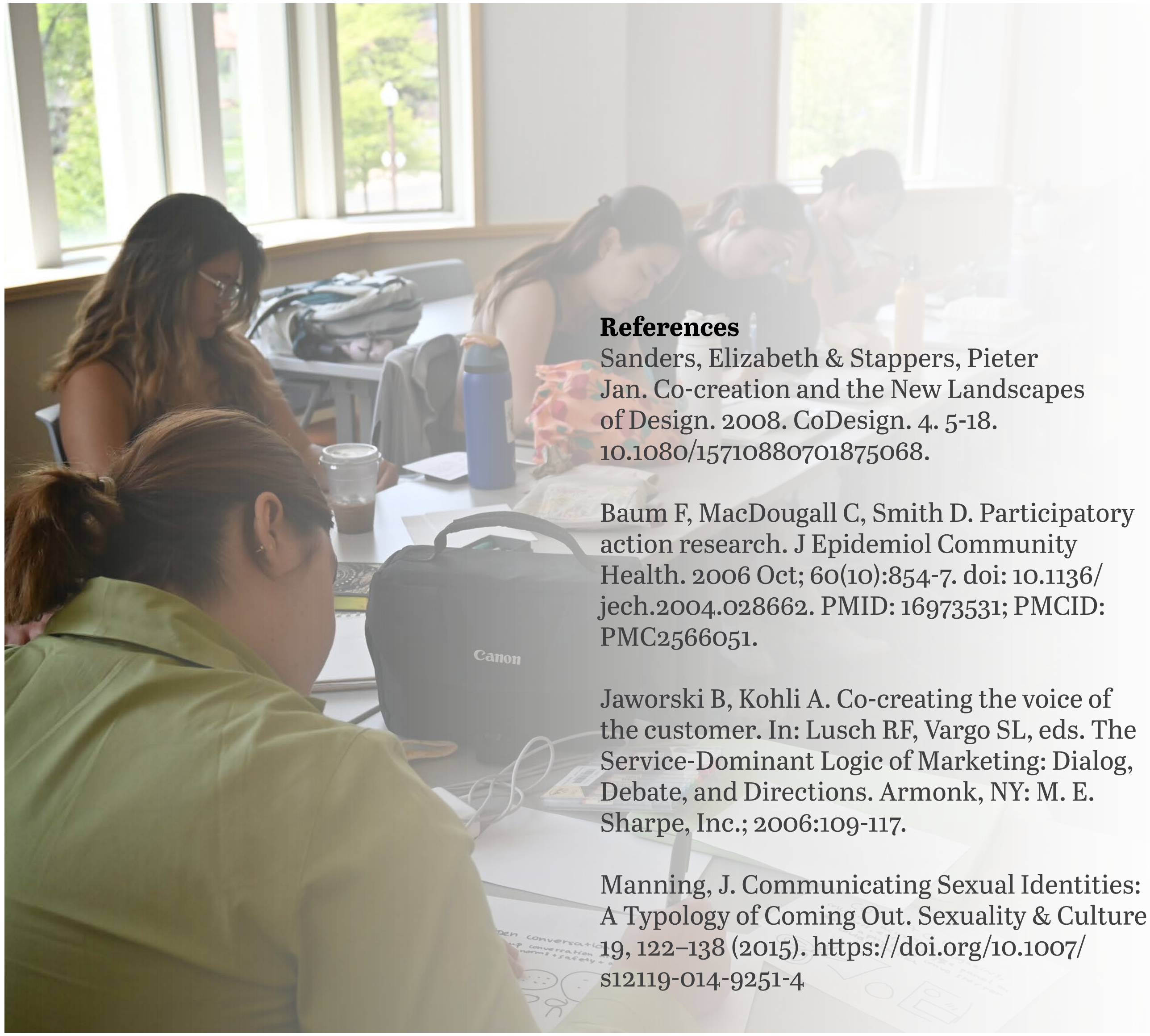
Beyond the evaluation of products that come out of co-creation projects, evaluation of the co-creation team's experience can help refine future co-creation experiences.

Offering multiple options for feedback
At the end of the co-creation process, team members may be moving on to other things in their lives. Offer a variety of ways to provide feedback that work with people's schedules.

Having anonymous options for feedback
If members of the planning team who have developed relationships with co-creation team members are leading evaluation, offer some options that are anonymous as panelist may find that more comfortable for sharing critical feedback without directly confronting people with whom they may feel close.

Reminding team members of the process
Thinking back over the course of several weeks or months, members of the co-creation team may not be able to recall every part of the process that they participated in. In the evaluation, clearly remind panelists of each step to help prompt their reflection.

Considering evaluation along the way
For longer co-creation processes, having smaller points of evaluation along the way, including after sessions or at key points in the process can help get quick feedback and adjust the process for the current team.



HCDS team members participating in an ideation planning session.

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