Partnering with Dating Apps to Promote Sexual Health
Yale, March 3, 2022
Jen Hecht
BHOC Goals

01 Build self-sustaining features into apps that promote both healthy and informed choices, and reduce stigma

02 Coordinate and improve advertising and messaging

03 Coordinate interactions between public health and dating apps

BHOCpartners.org
BHOC Public Health Partners
Stakeholder input & feedback
Users support sexual health strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURE</th>
<th>% of Users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alerts about disease outbreaks in your area</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order a free home HIV test to be mailed to you</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep track of/take notes about your partners on the app</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order free condoms to be mailed to you</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation that a user tested for HIV recently</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to local PrEP providers</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to nearby HIV/STD testing centers</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A way to inform sex partners of HIV/STD diagnosis</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A way to find free condoms near you</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/STD testing reminders at an interval you choose</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live chat function with a sexual health counselor</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily reminders to take HIV medications</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Initiatives

- Working with apps on new features
- Sending free HIV & STI home tests
- Supporting online anti-stigma efforts
- Providing anonymous partner notification services
App owners have incorporated many structural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>CONDOMS</th>
<th>PrEP USE</th>
<th>UNDETECTABLE</th>
<th>HIV STATUS</th>
<th>TEST REMINDERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam4Adam</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daddyhunt</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grindr</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROWLr</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornet</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scruff</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16.1 million unique users visited Grindr’s Sexual Health Resource Center since it launched in November, 2016.

What should I ask for to make sure I’m getting the most complete STD test?

The answer to this question depends on the kind of sex you’re having. A doctor will usually test you for HIV, do a blood test for syphilis, and a urine test for STDs in your genitals. If you have oral sex, you should make sure your doctor swabs your mouth to check for STDs there, and if you bottom, you should make sure they swab your butt too.
Takemehome
Building a Home Testing Platform
Background: Why build this platform?

22% of MSM who use dating apps reported that they had NEVER tested for HIV.

77% of app users reported that they wanted to be able to order a home HIV test through a dating app.
TAKEMEHOME
Testing that meets you where you are. Literally.

1. PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERS PURCHASE KITS THROUGH NASTAD
2. TAKEMEHOME TEAM ADDS STOCK IN YOUR ZIP CODES
3. OUR DATING APP PARTNERS ADVERTISE THE SERVICE
4. USERS ORDER A TEST AT NO COST
5. OUR LAB PARTNER SHIPS KITS DIRECTLY TO USERS

TAKEMEHOME.ORG
Watch: How to order a test
Highlights from HIV oral kit program

- Over 12,000 kits mailed to date
- Within two years increased from 4 to 24 health jurisdictions
- ⅓ of users had never tested before
- Positive user feedback
- New cases identified through surveillance matches
Stigma research
Testing stigma interventions with Yale

- **Code of ethics**: Requires users to read and agree to rules before they can join.

- **Flagging and Educational Video**: Uses a system to identify when people are rude, abusive, or engage in otherwise unacceptable behavior towards other users on the app.

- **Badge/Rating System**: Rewards users who are respectful and polite towards other app users.

- **Pre-Generated Messages**: Provides the user an option to send a pre-generated "No Thank You" message to other users who contact them.
How much would you like to have this feature on this app?

- Very much like
- Moderately like

![Bar chart showing ratings for different features: Daddy Hunt Code, Flag & Video, Badge/Rating, Pre-Generated Message. Ratings range from 1 to 5, with Daddy Hunt Code having the highest score.]
Giving dating app users a more positive experience

**NiceAF** is a first-ever team effort of dating apps and sites working with [Building Healthy Online Communities](#), a consortium of HIV and STD organizations. Together, we’re all committed to making our online communities more welcoming with the NiceAF.org campaign.

**Participating Apps**

- ADAM4ADAM
- DADDYHUNT
- dudesnude
- Grindr
- GROWL
- JACK
- MANHUNT
- POZ personal
- SCRUFF
Overview

- **5,500 APP USERS**
  - shared their stories about using dating apps & sites

- **20 ANTI-STIGMA FEATURES**
  - were ranked by dating app & site users

- **9 DATING PLATFORMS**
  - signed on to the campaign to improve for their users
Methodology

Scenario Survey
Participants were asked how they would react to 6 hypothetical situations about facing stigma or bad interactions on dating apps.

n = 2,951

Focus Groups
NiceAF team hosted 3 groups to discuss ideas that came up in the scenario survey results.

n = 22

Selecting Ideas for Rating Survey
NiceAF team pulled feedback from the scenario survey and focus groups to compile a final list for rating ideas.

Rating Survey
Participants were asked to rate a total of 20 ideas.

n = 2,537
Results: Major themes from users

Center insights and needs of historically-marginalized users

- Give users more **customization**
- Expand **filtering** functionality
- Facilitate clear **communication** between users
- Support emotional and physical **safety**
### Results: Overall [by rank]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Feature Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unlimited blocks</td>
<td>8.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reason for Reporting: Choose a reason that you are reporting someone</td>
<td>8.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mute conversation: Don’t receive notifications from a chat</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hide user</td>
<td>8.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Keyword Filters: Use keyword searches from profile fields to exclude users in your grid</td>
<td>7.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Verification process for new users</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reported Users Notification: Reported users receive a message with the reason they were reported</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>