



*Applying design thinking to public health research:  
a Real Talk case study*

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# Who am I?

**TEACHFOR  
AMERICA**

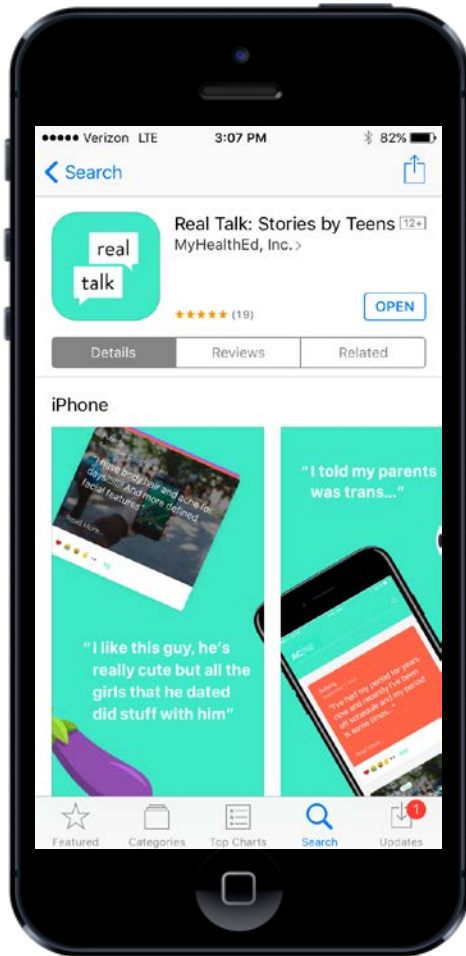
 **UNC** | GILLINGS SCHOOL OF  
GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

 **UNC** | INNOVATE  
CAROLINA



**IDEO**

# What is Real Talk?



Real Talk is a mobile app for teens ages 13-15 that uses real stories by real teens to convey relevant and credible information about sexual health.

Users can browse, search, and share stories and access linked high-quality online resources within the app.

**teen**VOGUE

**FAST**COMPANY

**TE**  
TechCrunch

# Overview

Today, I will:

- Present an overview of design thinking;
- Describe our design thinking approach for developing our Real Talk app with teens; and
- Offer some opportunities for innovation.

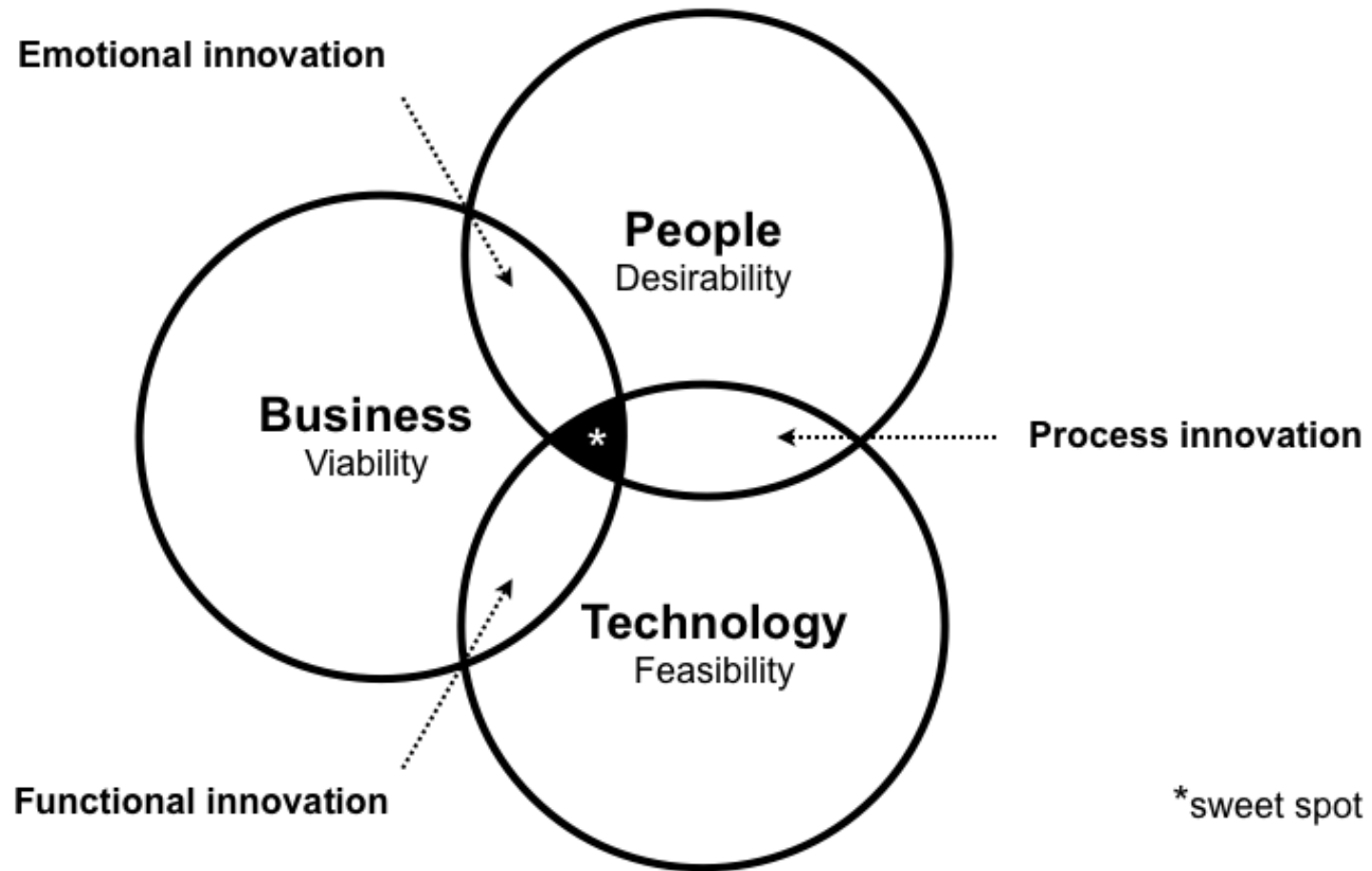
*DESIGN THINKING  
OVERVIEW*

# What is design thinking?

*"Design thinking is a **human-centered** approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.*

**—TIM BROWN, CEO OF IDEO**

# What is design thinking?



# What is design thinking?

Design thinking is:

- an approach/process
- a set of methods; and
- a set of mindsets.





# What is the design thinking approach?

## INSPIRATION

I have a design challenge.

How do I get started?  
How do I conduct an interview?  
How do I stay human-centered?

## IDEATION

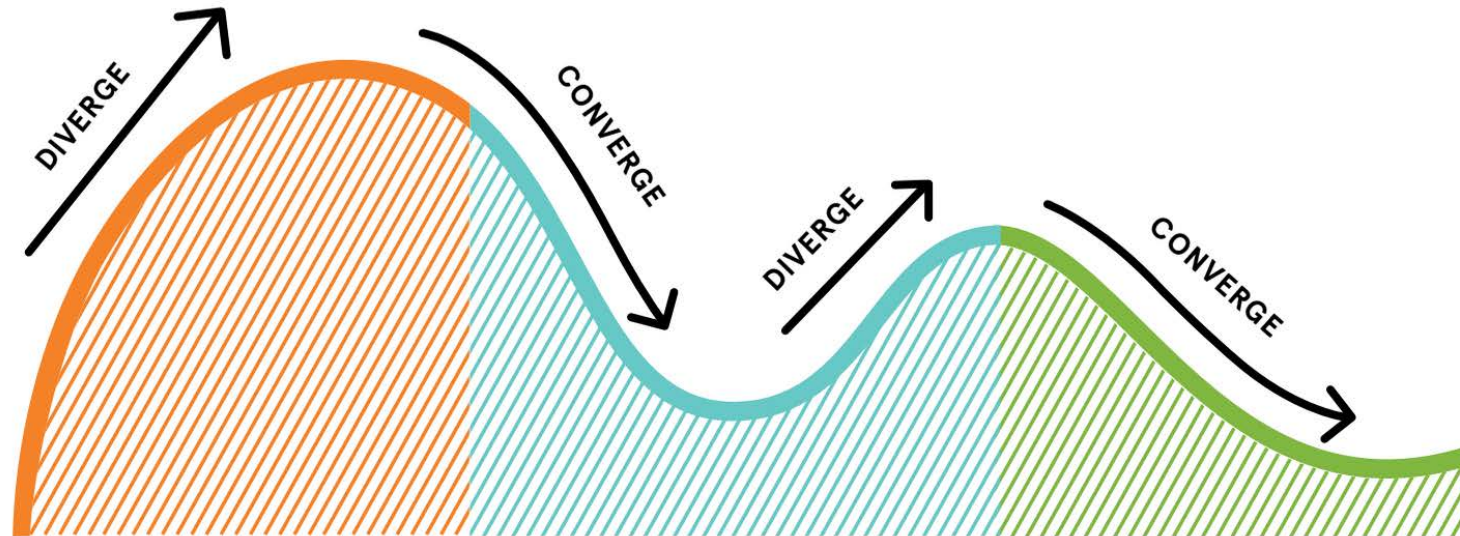
I have an opportunity for design.

How do I interpret what I've learned?  
How do I turn my insights into tangible ideas?  
How do I make a prototype?

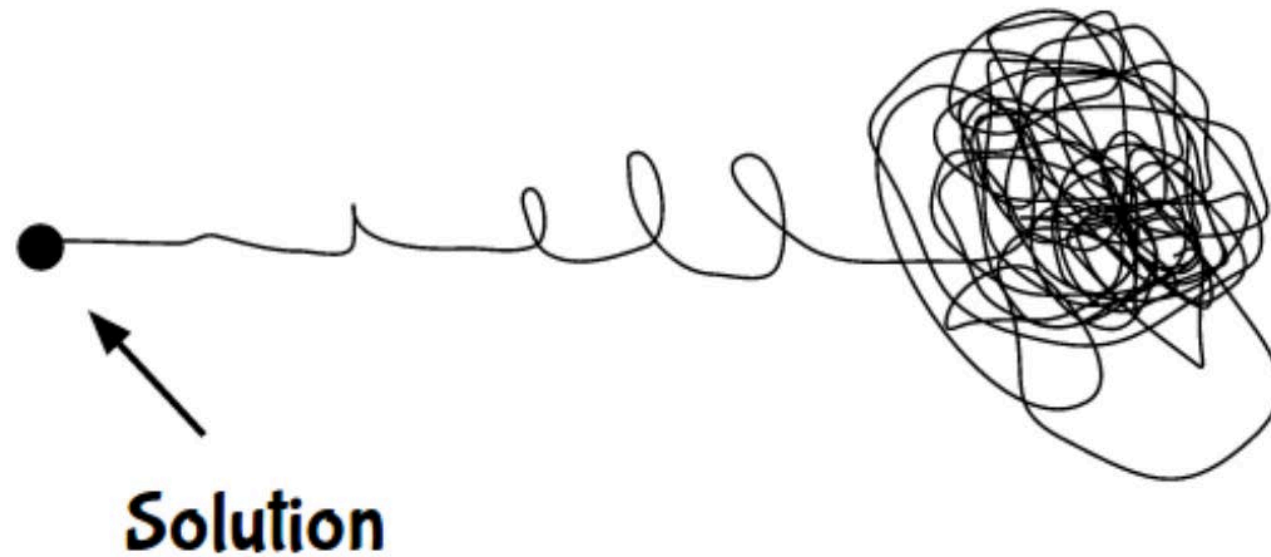
## IMPLEMENTATION

I have an innovative solution.

How do I make my concept real?  
How do I assess if it's working?  
How do I plan for sustainability?



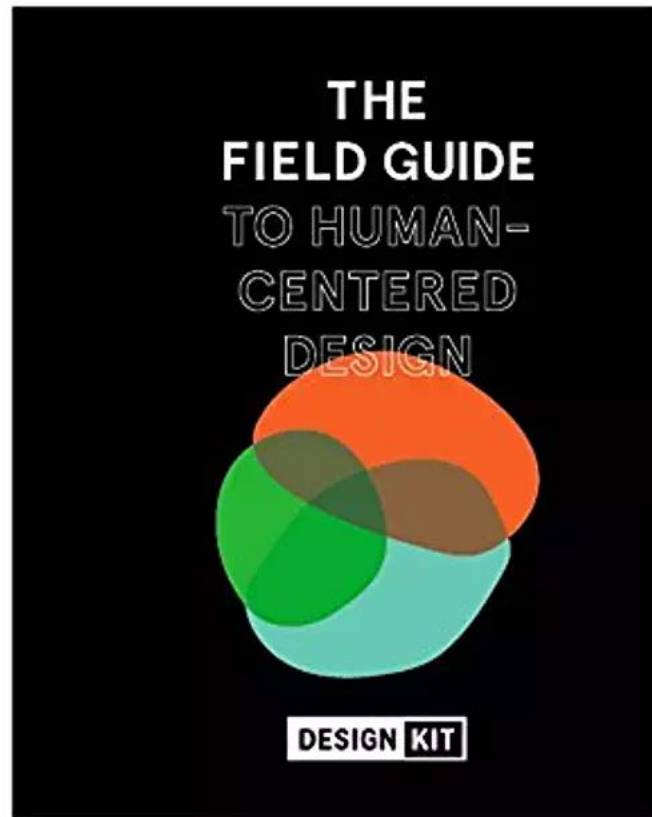
# Traditional problem solving



# Design thinking

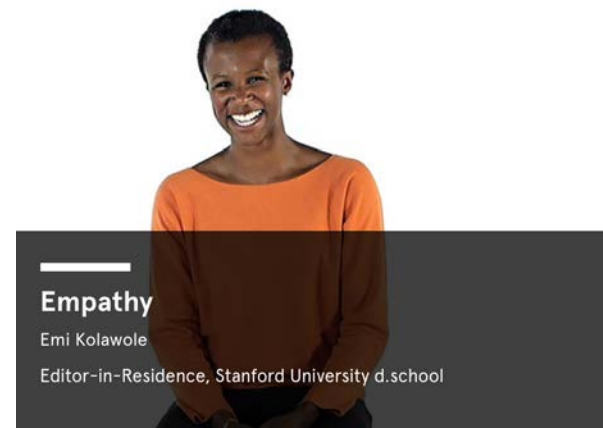


# What are the design thinking methods?



# What are the design thinking mindsets?

1. Creative confidence
2. Make it
3. Learn from failure
4. Empathy
5. Embrace ambiguity
6. Optimism
7. Iterate, iterate, iterate



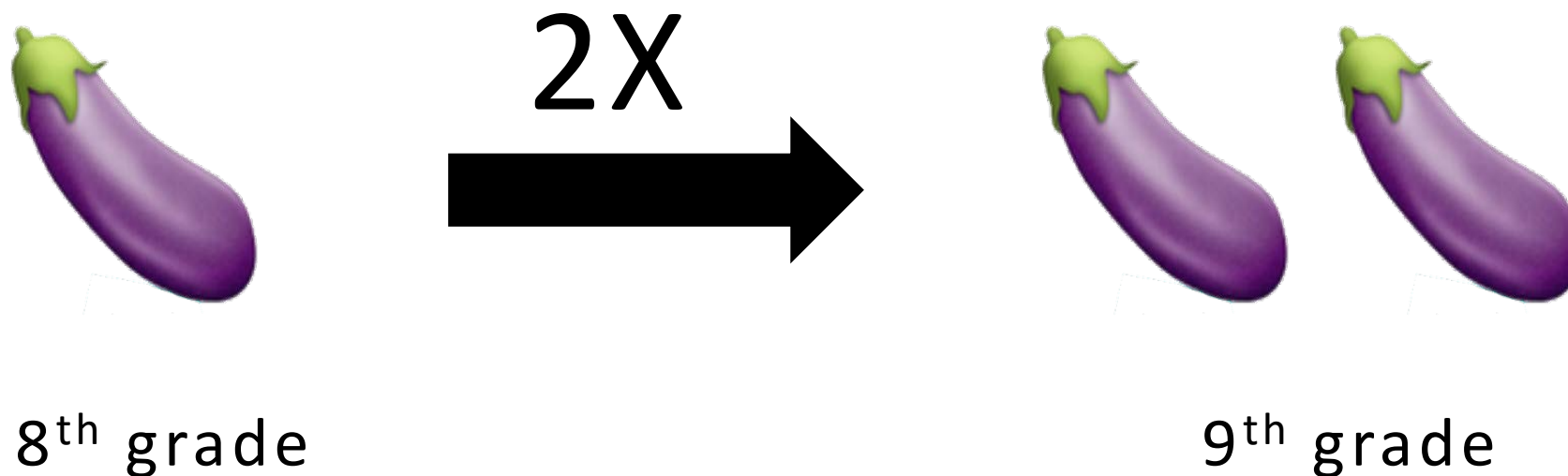
# *THE DESIGN CHALLENGE*



*How might we develop a technological solution for teen pregnancy?*

# Our specific design challenge

How might we increase access to high-quality, comprehensive sexual health education to teens ages 13 to 15 across the U.S.?



# Initial Idea



Sex ed mobile app for schools

- Facts/stats
- Tests/quizzes
- Q&A



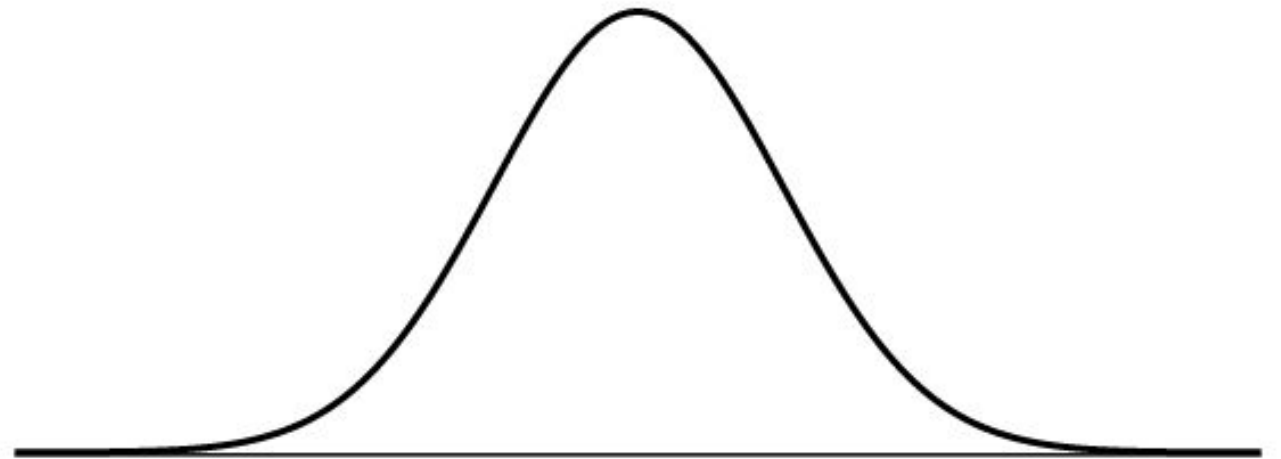
# Inspiration

The purpose of the Inspiration Phase is to learn directly from the people you're designing for. You immerse yourself in their lives in order to deeply understand their needs.

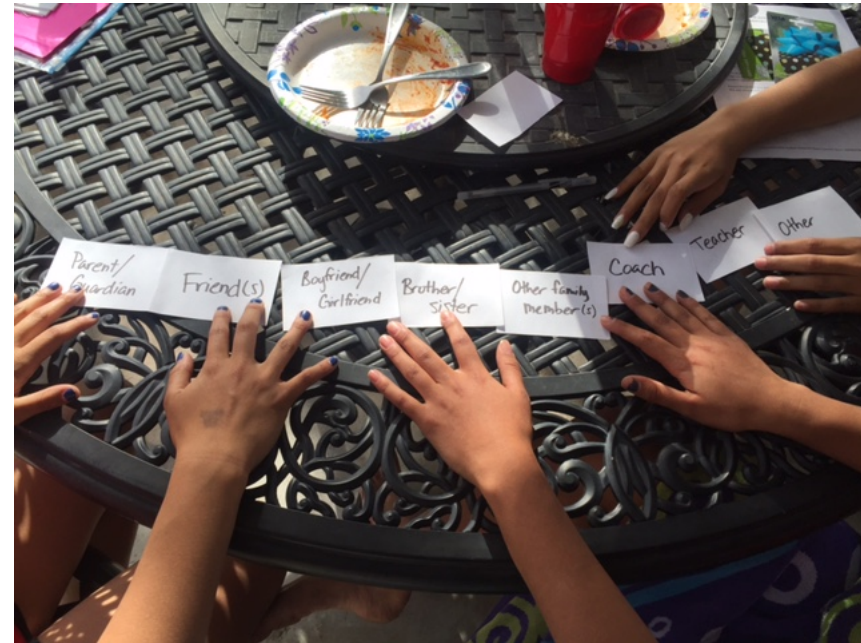


# Method #1: Extremes and mainstreams

An idea that suits extreme users will nearly certainly work for the majority of others.



# Method #2: Card sorts



# Inspiration

## Key findings:

- Schools are **not** a preferred place to learn about sex and relationships
- Teens care about privacy, source credibility, and safety
- They get their info from peers, Google, and porn
- Teens prefer to use smartphones instead of computers to access Google and porn

# Ideation

The purpose of the Ideation Phase is to identify opportunities for design and to prototype (i.e. test) possible solutions with real intended users.



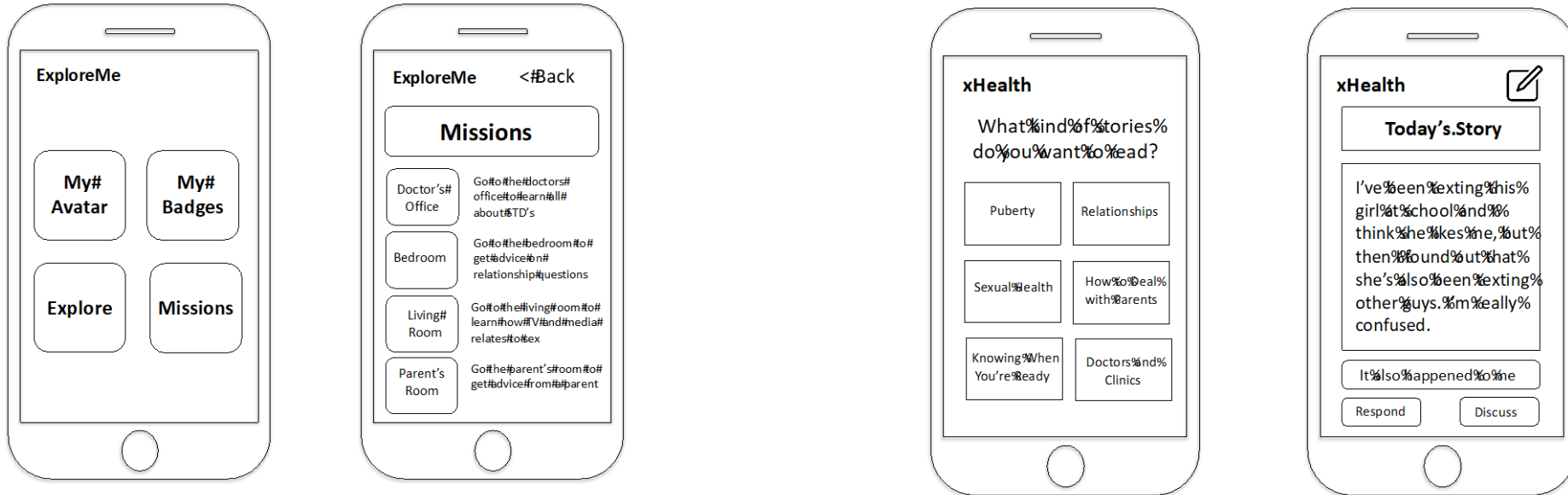
# Method #3: Co-creation session

**How might we...** share facts and stories about sex and relationships with teens ages 13-15?



Scanned by CamScanner

# Method #4: Rapid prototyping



ExploreMe vs. xHealth

# Ideation

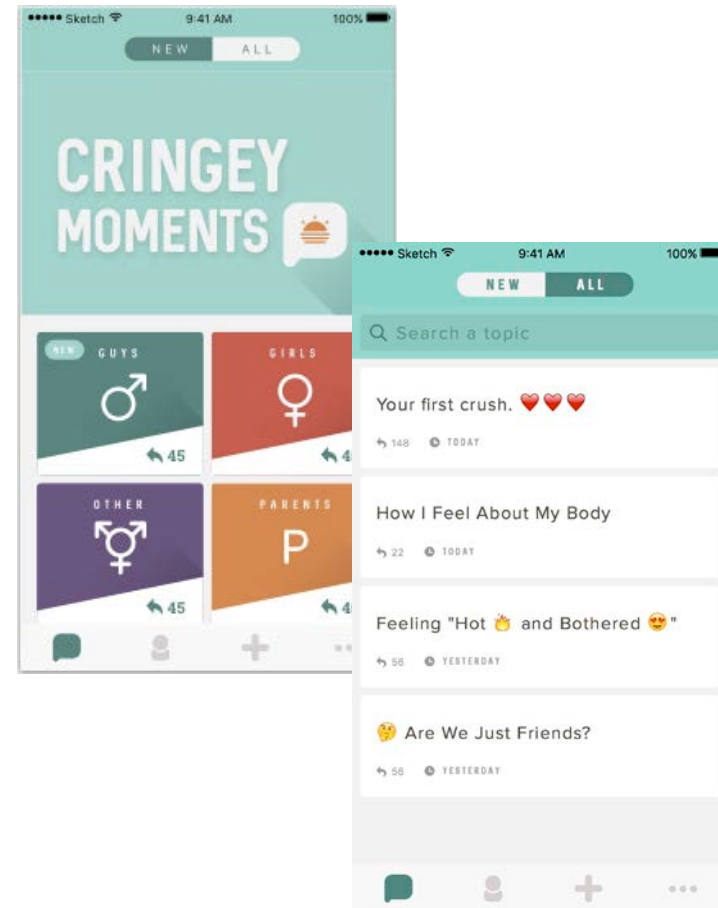
## Key findings:

- Teens want to know that they're not alone
- Teens want to read stories (not facts)
- Teens want to read text message convos instead of prose
- Teens like reading stories from different perspectives

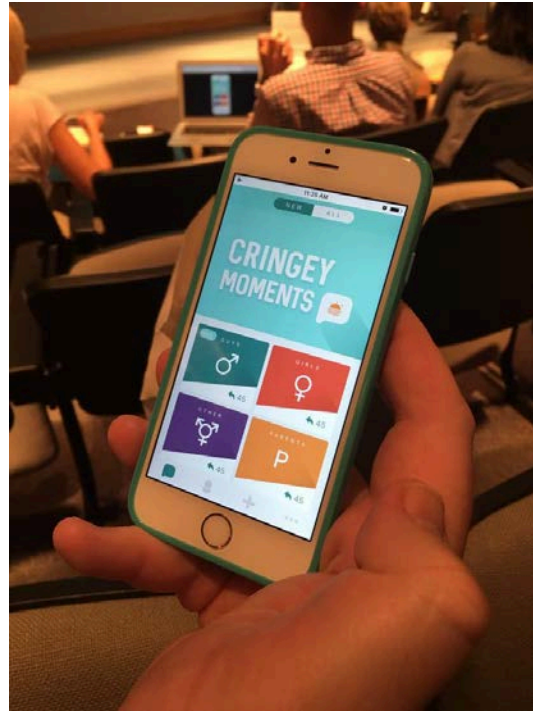


# Implementation

The purpose of the Implementation Phase is to turn your idea into reality and to test it in the real world.



# Method 5: Live prototyping



# Method 6: Pilot

Key findings for web prototype Pilot Test #2 (5 days, 10 users):

- The average user session lasted 4 min, 56 sec
- Most user sessions (55%) occurred after school (3 pm – 7 pm) and before bed (7 pm – 12 am)
- Users viewed an average of 4.16 stories per session
- 30% of users used the search bar

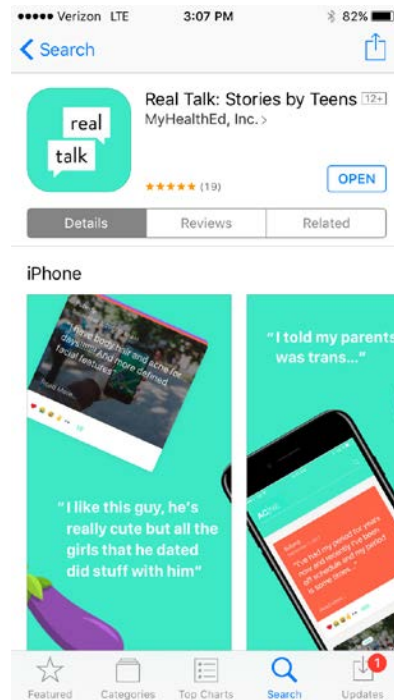
# Implementation

## Key findings:

- The name of the app matters
- The App Store description matters
- Teens wanted to browse stories easily (like Instagram)
- Teens wanted to continue to inform decision-making (Teen Advisory Board formation)

# Implementation

We released the beta version of our Real Talk app in the iTunes App Store in September 2017.

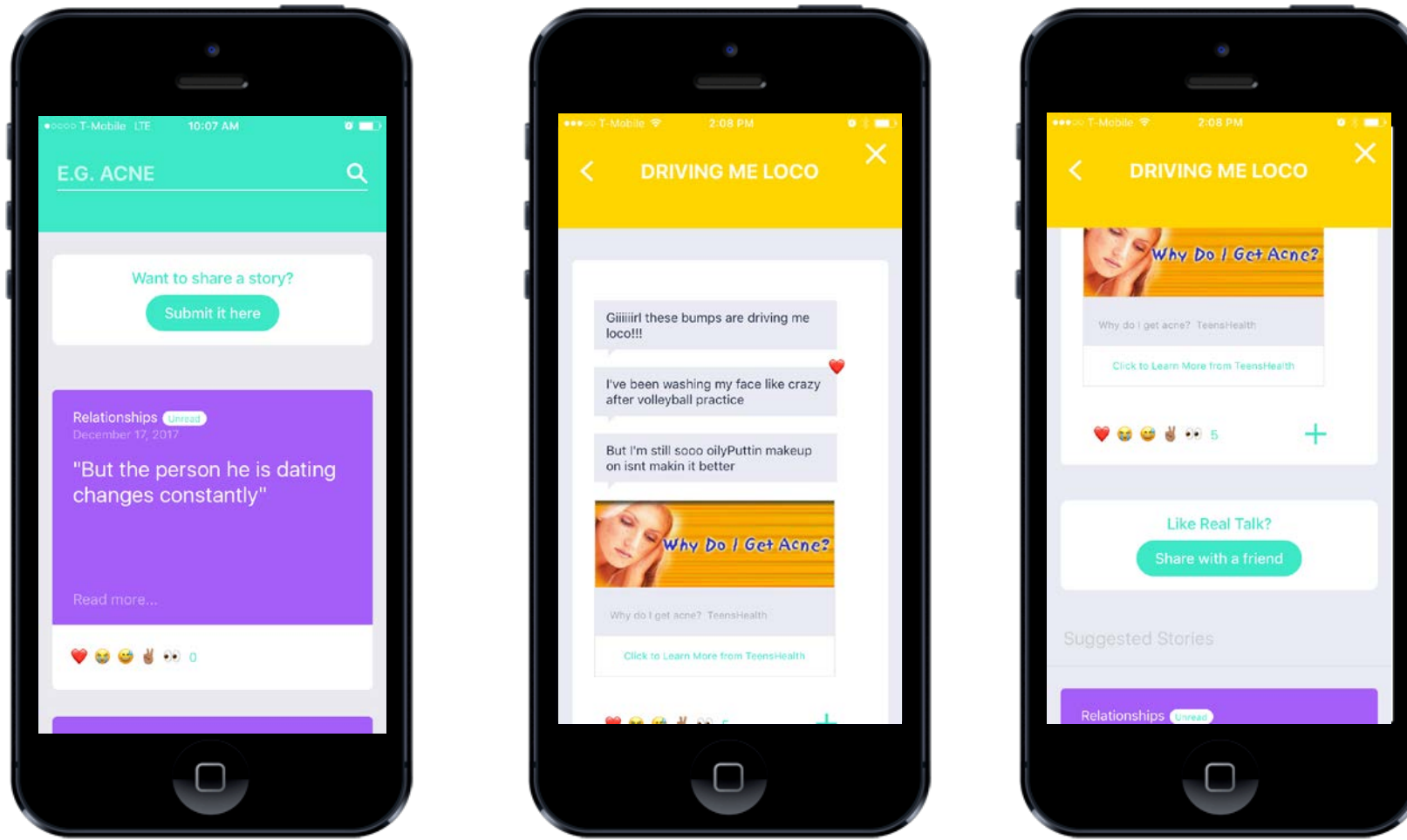


Available features:

- Read stories
- Search stories
- Click on links to learn more
- Submit stories



# Implementation



# Implementation

Current updates (as of 10/7/19):

- 14,500+ users with users in all 50 states and 100+ countries
- Total stories read in-app: 161,943
- Total resources accessed in-app: 8,989
- 73%+ of users found Real Talk stories helpful
- 66% users learned something new in reading their first 10 stories

# Implementation

Partners and supporters



This opportunity is made possible by  
Grant Number TP2AH000023-01-  
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*OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
INNOVATION*

# How might we create funding opportunities...

- Where populations and health problems are identified but the solutions are less prescribed?
- That expect meaningful engagement with intended audiences in **all** stages of solution design, development, and implementation?
- That require multiple iterations of proposed solutions and real world testing?
- That foster greater collaboration (instead of competition) among grantees?

Got questions? Email Liz at [liz@myhealthed.org](mailto:liz@myhealthed.org).

# References

IDEO.org. (2015). *The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design*. Retrieved from <http://www.designkit.org/resources/1>

NC Department of Public Instruction. (2018). N.C. Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Retrieved October 30, 2018, from <http://www.nchealthyschools.org/data/yrbs/>

# *APPENDIX*

# Real Talk logic model

Inputs	User Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes		Mid-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curated stories about sexual health topics aligned to national standards</li> <li>• External online sexual health content (e.g., Sex, Etc., Amaze.org)</li> <li>• In-app story submission portal</li> <li>• In-app search and story reaction function</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read stories</li> <li>• React to stories</li> <li>• Search for additional stories</li> <li>• Access additional linked resources</li> <li>• Submit stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of users</li> <li>• # stories read</li> <li>• # external links clicked</li> <li>• Time spent on external links</li> <li>• # stories submitted</li> <li>• # of app / content shares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased knowledge about sexual health topics</li> <li>• More positive attitudes towards sexual risk reduction</li> <li>• Increased perceived norms supporting sexual risk reduction</li> <li>• More positive outcome expectations regarding sexual risk reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased communication with parents, peers, and partners about sexual health topics</li> <li>• Increased self-efficacy for refusing sex and/or establishing consent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delayed sexual initiation</li> <li>• Fewer sexual partners</li> <li>• Increased condom use</li> <li>• Increased contraceptive use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced teen pregnancy rates</li> <li>• Reduced STI rates</li> </ul>



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

# Innovation Next Accelerator

01/2016-08/2016

Phase 1

- 10 teams of three selected to join Cohort 1
- 10 teams were awarded \$80K (Inspiration)
- 10 teams provided with IDEO training
- 10 teams participated in Pitch Day and put forth one idea to launch
- 5 teams selected to move forward to develop MVP

11/2016-05/2018

Phase 2

- 5 teams received \$325K to develop MVP by May 2018 (Ideation, Implementation)
- 5 teams provided with IDEO training and ongoing technical assistance for design thinking
- 5 teams delivered MVPs to Power to Decide

# Design thinking & Community-based participatory research

	Human-Centered Design	Both	Community-Based Participatory Research
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Delight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-creation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship-building</li> <li>• Shifting power dynamics</li> </ul>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generating action</li> <li>• Scalable solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages users/partners in all stages</li> <li>• Provides a benefit to intended stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generating research for future action</li> <li>• Localized, contextual solutions</li> </ul>
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short timeline</li> <li>• Rapid iteration cycles with low fidelity prototypes</li> <li>• Focus on individual extreme users</li> <li>• Transdisciplinary team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic</li> <li>• Flexible/adaptable</li> <li>• Generalizable</li> <li>• Iterative</li> <li>• Requires training to execute</li> <li>• Clients/partners sustain efforts at project conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long timeline</li> <li>• Focus on communities</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary team</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary outcome is product/service</li> <li>• Sole ownership of product/service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidirectional knowledge exchange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary outcome is research/knowledge</li> <li>• Co-ownership of research/knowledge</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> </ul>