

Is “Get Tested” Enough?
New Qualitative Research on Communication
Strategies to Increase STI Testing

NECHA Annual Meeting
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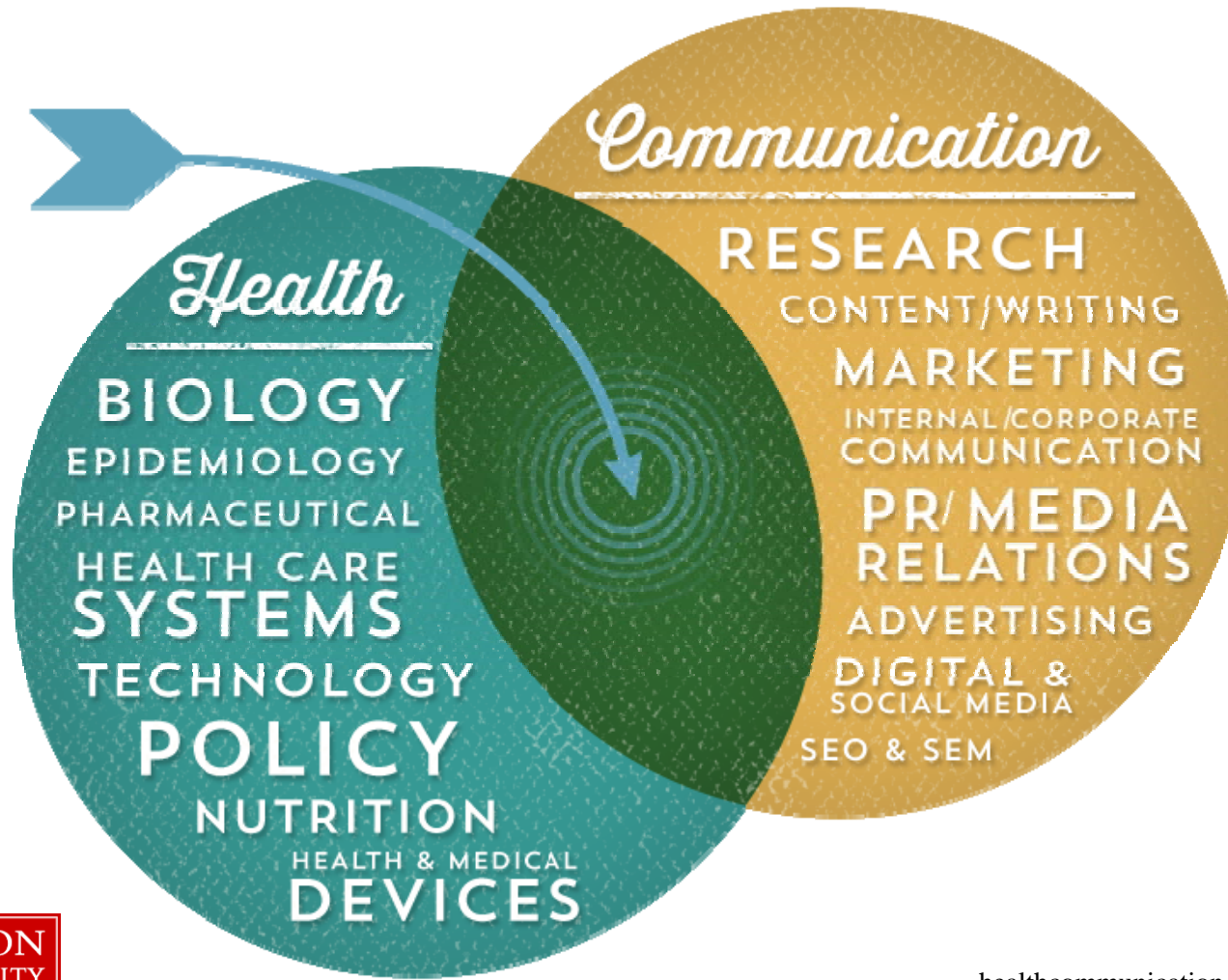


Learning Objectives



- Identify strengths and limitations of “get tested” mass communication strategies
- Describe a new approach to communications designed to increase STI testing

Applied Learning Experience (ALE)



ALE Project Aims

Create a deliverable that coordinates with Boston University's snail-mail condom distribution program and is designed to increase:

- 1) Knowledge of STI-risk for unprotected oral, vaginal, or anal sex among students;
- 2) STI testing rates among students

Boston University

- 16,500 undergraduates (33,000+ student body)
- Students from every U.S. state, 100+ countries
- 1 in 4 is an international student
- Over 250 programs of study



BU Student Health Services

- Employs 77 staff with 43,000 appointments per year
- Primary Care
- Behavioral Medicine
- Wellness & Prevention
- Sexual Assault Response & Prevention



Wellness & Prevention Services

- **Staff Makeup**
 - 2 FTE (1 MPH, 1 LMHC)
 - 3 part-time graduate student employees
 - 1 part-time undergraduate intern
 - 16 peer educators
- **Annual Impact on Campus**
 - 200 programs that served 15,000 students in AY 14-15

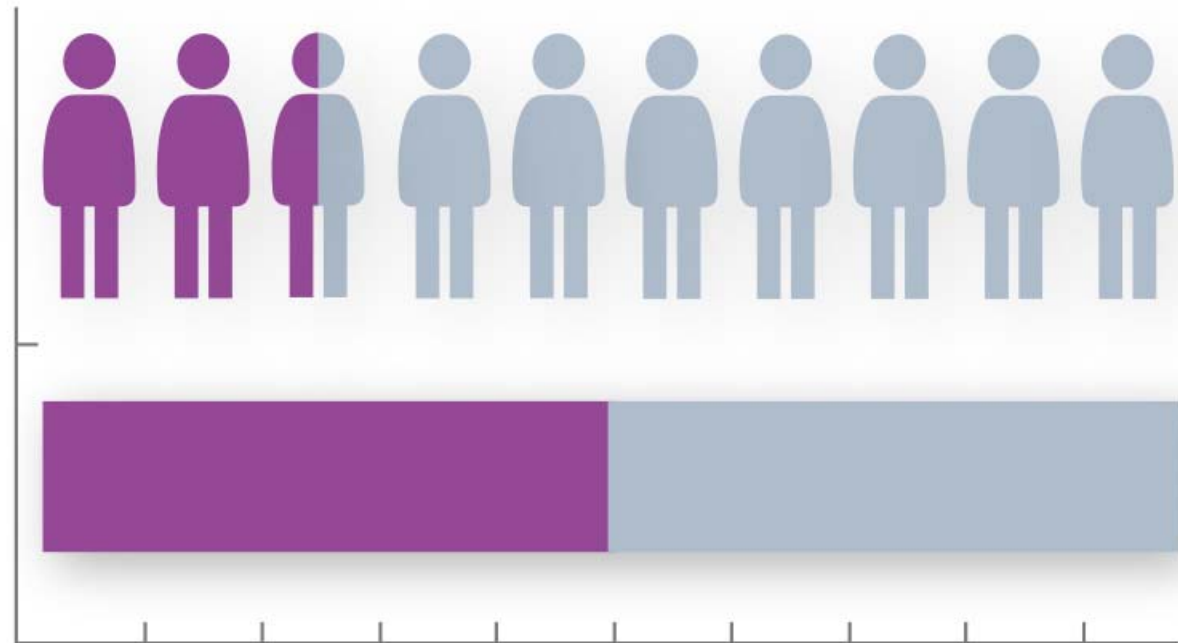


Problem Statement:

Youth bear disproportionate share of STIs

Americans ages 15-24 make up just **27%** of the sexually active population

But account for **50%** of the **20M** new **STIs** in the U.S. each year

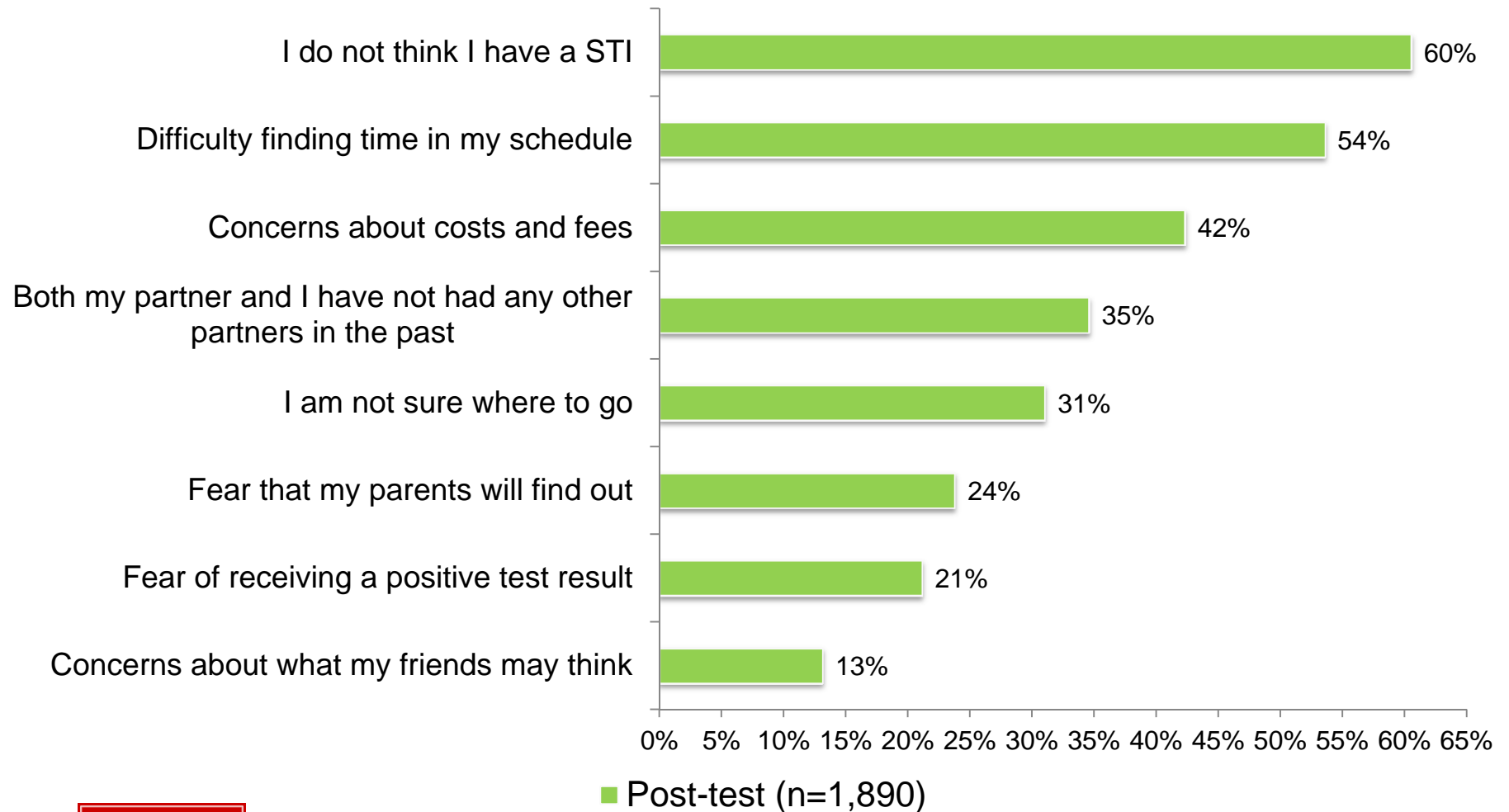


Barriers to STI Testing Among College-Age Youth

- Lack of health insurance
- Lack of transportation to services
- Inability to pay for services
- Concerns about confidentiality
- Discomfort with STI procedures
- Perceived to not be at-risk
- Unsure about what's involved in getting tested
- Unsure of where to go
- Concerns about finding time to be tested
- Fear of diagnoses
- Negative attitude toward testing
- Perceived stigma



Barriers to STI Testing among BU Students

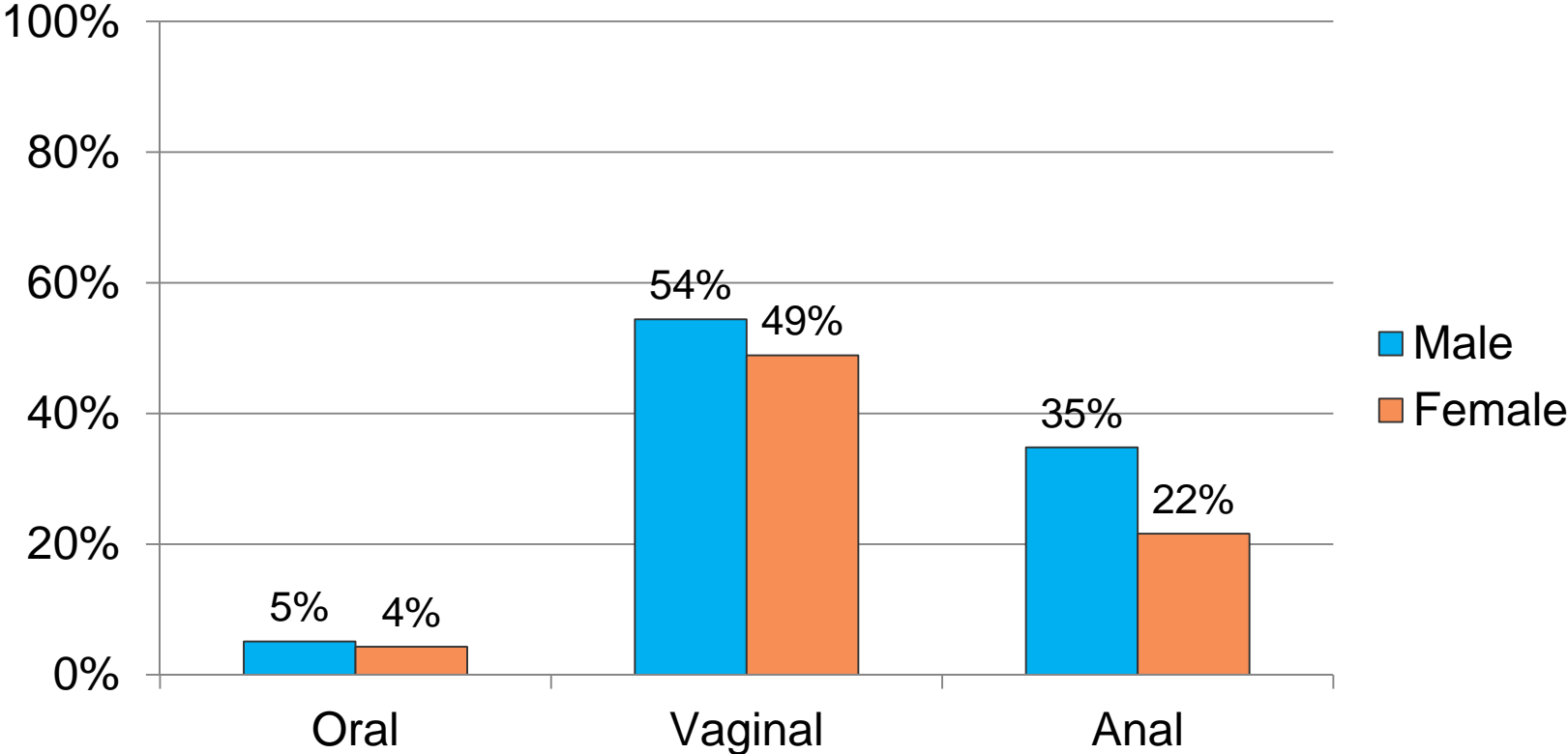


Source: Boston University Condom Fairy Program™ Pre-Test

Risk Factors



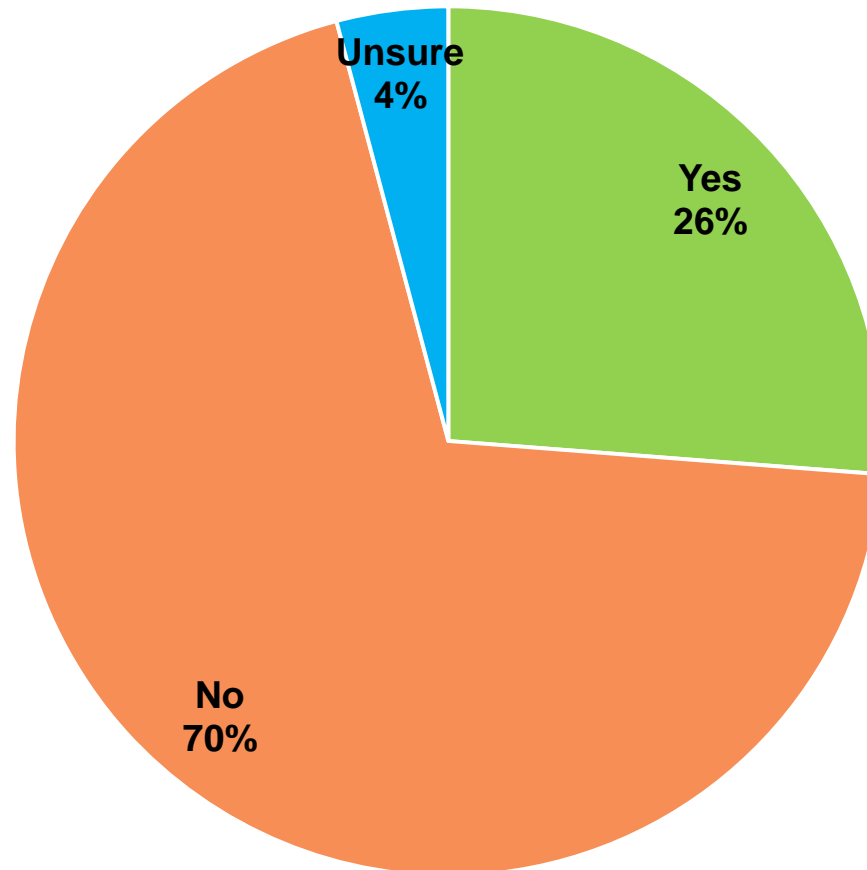
Using a condom or other protective barrier within the last 30 days (“mostly” or “always”):



Among students who reported sexual activity in the last 30 days

ACHA-NCHA II, 2014

Reported Testing in the Past Year among a Segment of BU Students

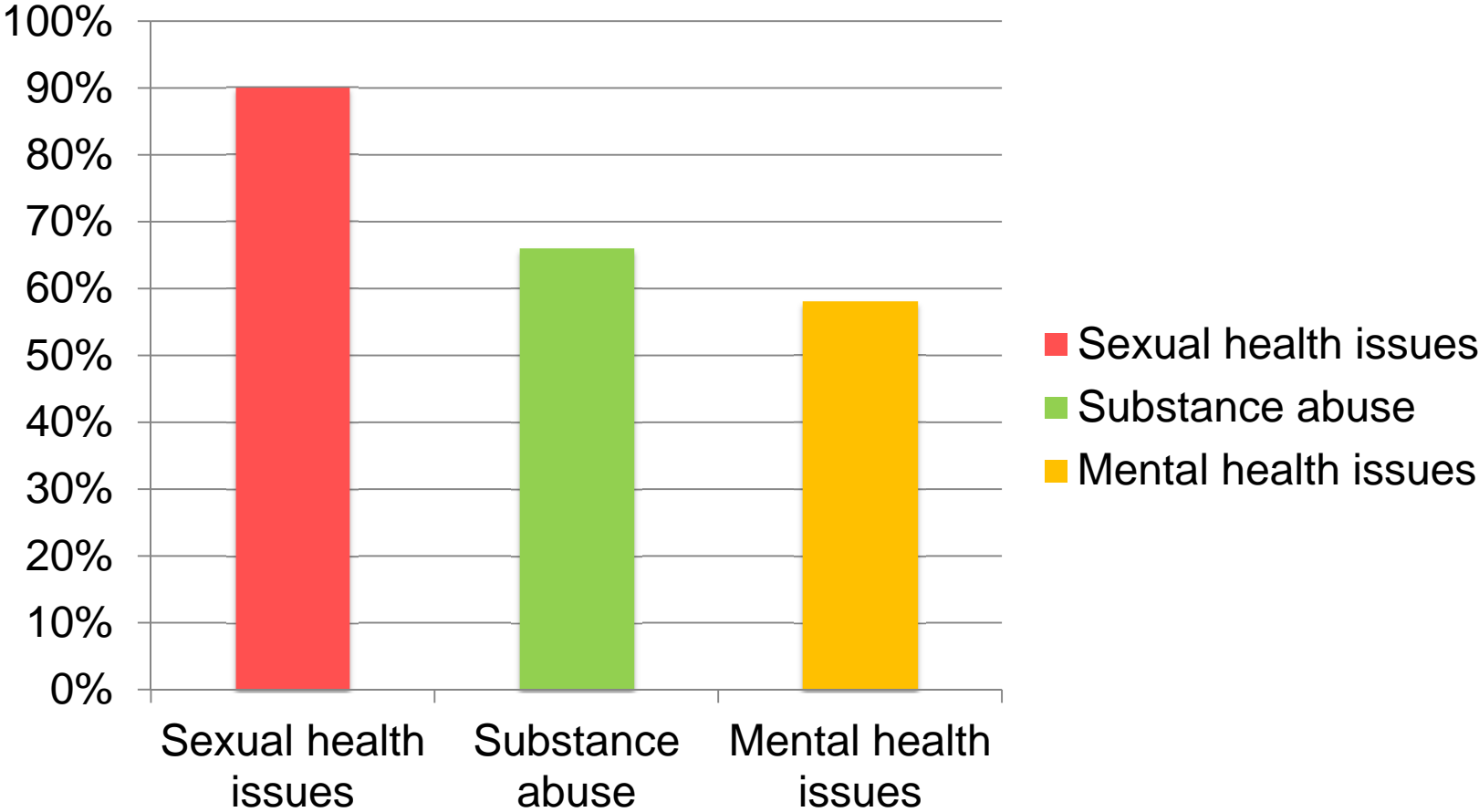


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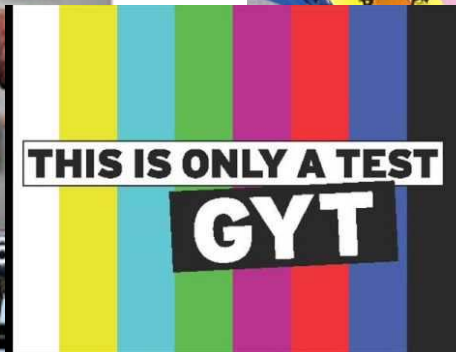
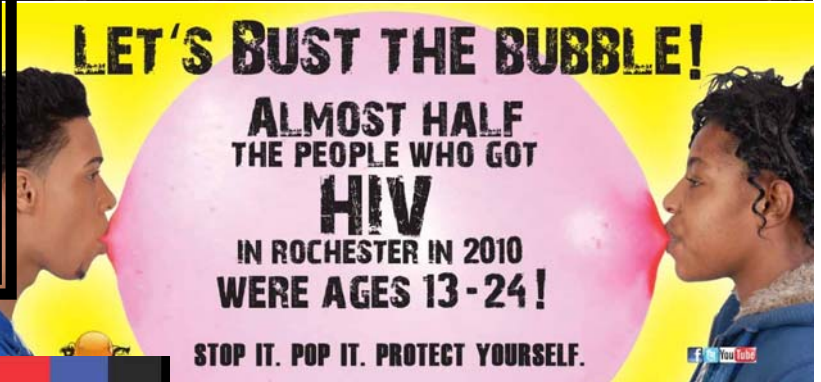
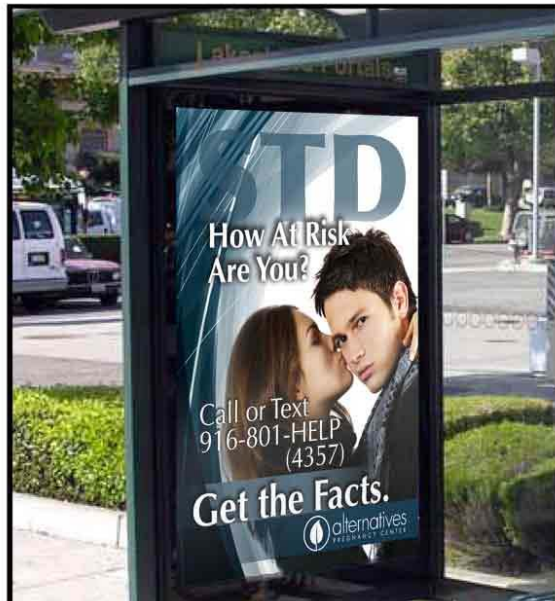


Source: Boston University Condom Fairy Program™ Pre-Test

Reported Concern About Health Issues, by Topic



Mass Communications Approach



Research Question

1. How effective are current mass communications at increasing students' intentions to be tested for STIs?
 - a) What content is needed to increase intentions to get tested?
 - b) What message style and tone do students prefer?
 - c) What channel(s) are best for disseminating messages about STI testing?

Research Methods



Small Group Activity

Review a message designed to increase intentions for STI testing. Consider the message's style, tone, and communication channel.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What do you think students would like about this message?
2. What do you think students would dislike?
3. Would this message be effective at increasing STI testing among students? Why or why not?



Hot weekend?

Get checked for HIV and STDs

MANUP
MONDAY.ORG

A black and white photograph of a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark button-down shirt, talking on a mobile phone. He is holding a white sign that says "IDIE" in large, bold, black letters. The background is a brick wall.

Get tested.

Call for free STI testing
+1 (203) 432-0312

It is all of our responsibilities as sexually active individuals to get tested regularly, regardless of whether or not we have had a "risky" encounter. Take the initiative to be proactive about your sexual health. Call now to make an appointment for free and confidential STI testing at YUHS or look out for our on-campus locations during Sex Week.

RALY

In partnership with

SWAY

Sponsored by Peer Health Educators



HOLY &#@%!

(YEAH, THAT WAS MY REACTION TOO.)

1 IN 2 SEXUALLY ACTIVE PEOPLE
WILL GET AN STD BY THE AGE OF 25.
MOST WON'T KNOW IT.

THERE IS SOMETHING
YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT
GET YOURSELF TESTED TODAY

GYT

GYTNOW.ORG  



**BOSTON
UNIVERSITY**

MORE THAN A REALLY GOOD IDEA

GET YOURSELF TESTED



1 IN 2 SEXUALLY ACTIVE
YOUNG PEOPLE WILL GET AN
STD BY THE AGE OF 25. MOST
DON'T KNOW IT.

2 THE ONLY WAY
TO KNOW FOR SURE
IF YOU OR ANYONE ELSE
HAS AN STD
IS TO **GYT**.

3 THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT TESTS HAVE
BOTTEN EASIER AND QUICKER.
EVEN BETTER NEWS, MOST STDs ARE
CURABLE, AND ALL ARE TREATABLE.

ASK TO BE TESTED!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



GYT

GYTNOW.ORG



BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

AT DOLORES PARK CAFE

I WAS AT THIS CRAZY PARTY LAST NIGHT. IT WAS SO DARK IN THERE, I COULD BARELY SEE MY OWN BALLS...

SLURP

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MAN?

LOOKING FOR SYPHILIS SORES.

THUMPA! THUMPA! THUMPA!

I DON'T SEE ANY, BUT THEY CAN HIDE WHERE YOU CAN'T FIND THEM.

THAT'S WHY I GET CHECKED REGULARLY.

THANKS, BYRON! WE'LL GET TESTED TOMORROW!

I ALSO WARNED GUYS ABOUT SYPHILIS AT A PARTY LAST NIGHT!

GREAT!

I SPENT LAST NIGHT WATCHING "AMERICA'S NEXT TOP PENIS."

GET TESTED FOR SYPHILIS

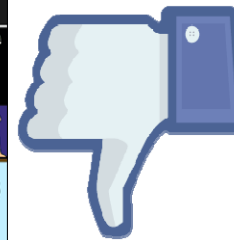
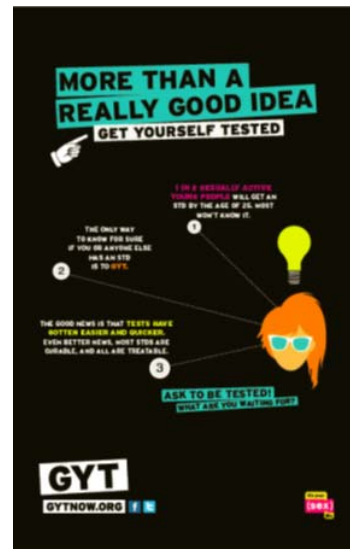
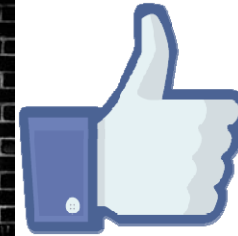
EVERY THREE TO SIX MONTHS

HEALTHY PENIS .ORG

Reading: San Francisco Department of Public Health - STD Prevention & Control Services | design: Better World Advertising (www.usadvertising.com)



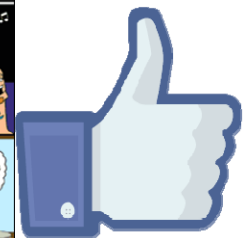
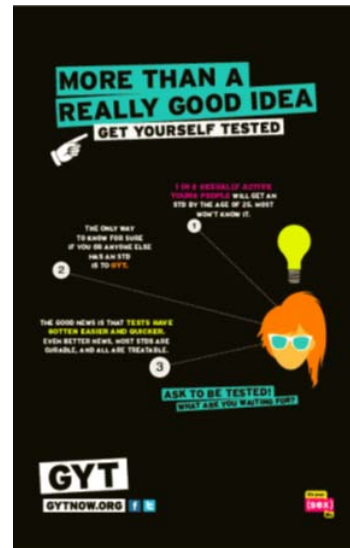
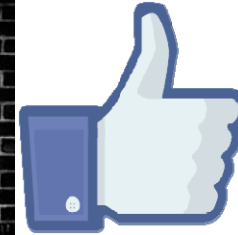
Content





“[The poster] says, ‘**whether or not you’ve had a risky encounter,**’ so like, [that means] everyone. Even if you’ve been in a relationship for 5 years and that’s your only partner, you should probably make sure you’re alright. **I like that.**”

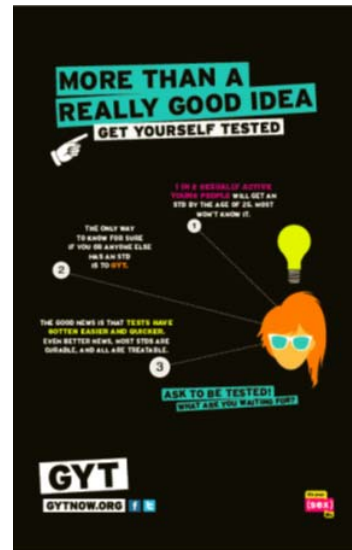
Tone





"The humor makes it not big and scary, and shows it's preventable. I like the tone, it's very accessible."

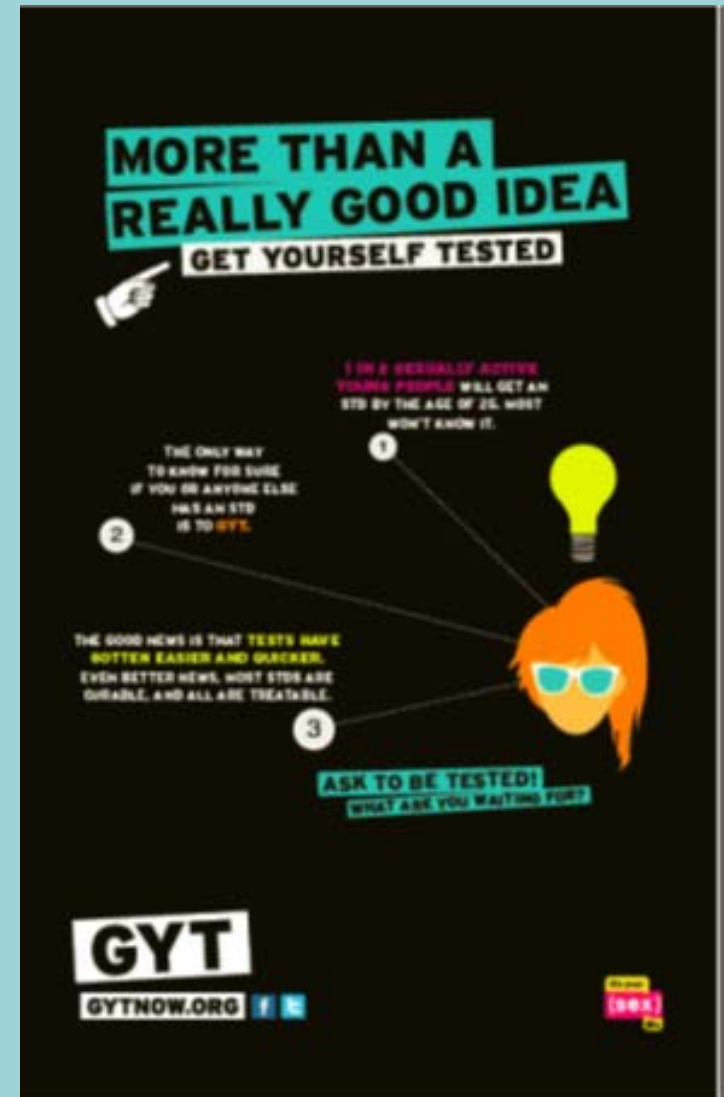
Style



Channel

"If this [poster] were in a magazine, I'd be likely to stop here. It's catchy, it **gets me the main idea very quickly and then I could keep reading for more.**

But if this was like, on one of those billboards outside of [the dorms], and I actually had to stop in front of it to read everything, college students wouldn't do that. It's like, one, **the stigma, and being embarrassed,** and two, we just don't have time."





*She delivers
so you can too.*

Discreet delivery to your on-campus mailbox.

Request free supplies at bu.edu/shs/condomfairy

Condom Fairy™ Program Objectives:

1. Decrease **privacy, embarrassment barriers** to condom use
2. Increase **condom availability** on campus
3. Increase **accessibility** of condoms, lubricant, and oral dams
4. Increase intention for **STI testing** among CF participants
5. Increase awareness of enthusiastic **sexual consent**

Program Overview

Students...

- Visit the Condom Fairy website
- Review the “Protection Plan” and available supplies
- Submit an electronic request form
- Receive a confirmation email with a pre-test survey link

Staff...

- Download the request data
- Print reports with student requests
- Send post-test survey ~4 weeks after request is made

Peer Educators...

- Assemble students’ orders in discreet packaging

BU Mail Services...

- Pick up packages and deliver them on-campus

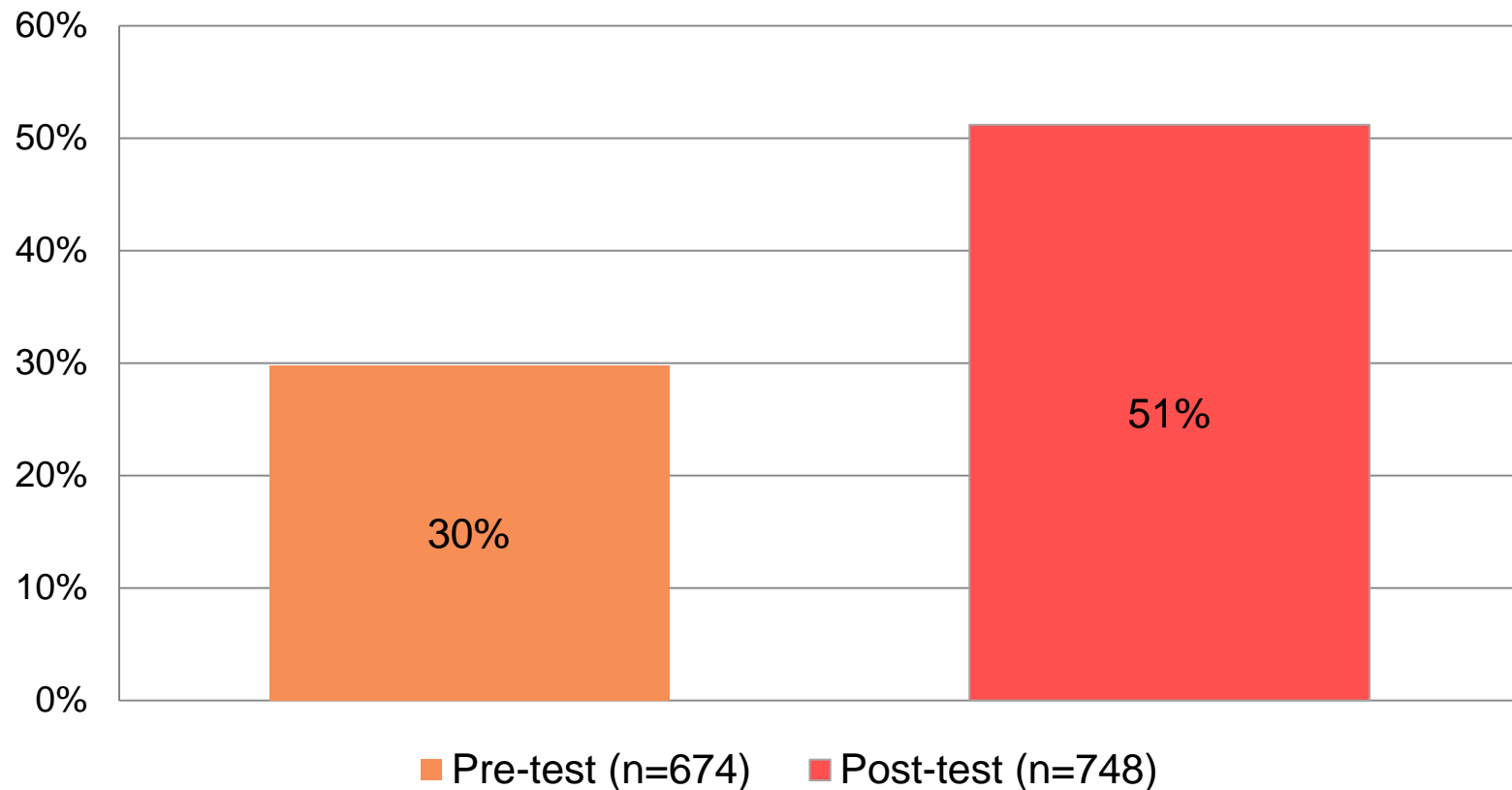




BU Student
Box 100
575 Commonwealth Ave
Boston, MA 02215

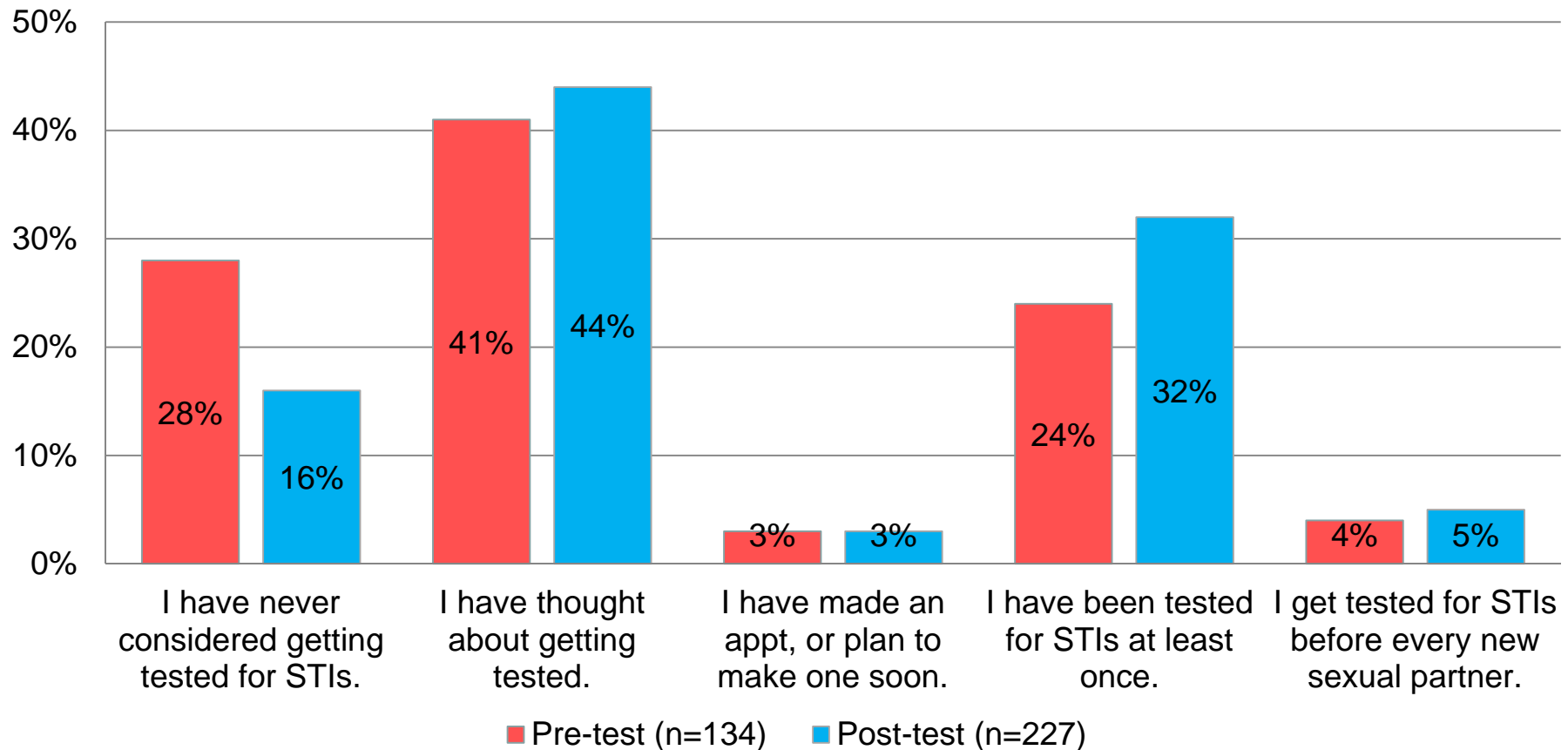
BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

"I know of locations in Boston that offer free STI testing."



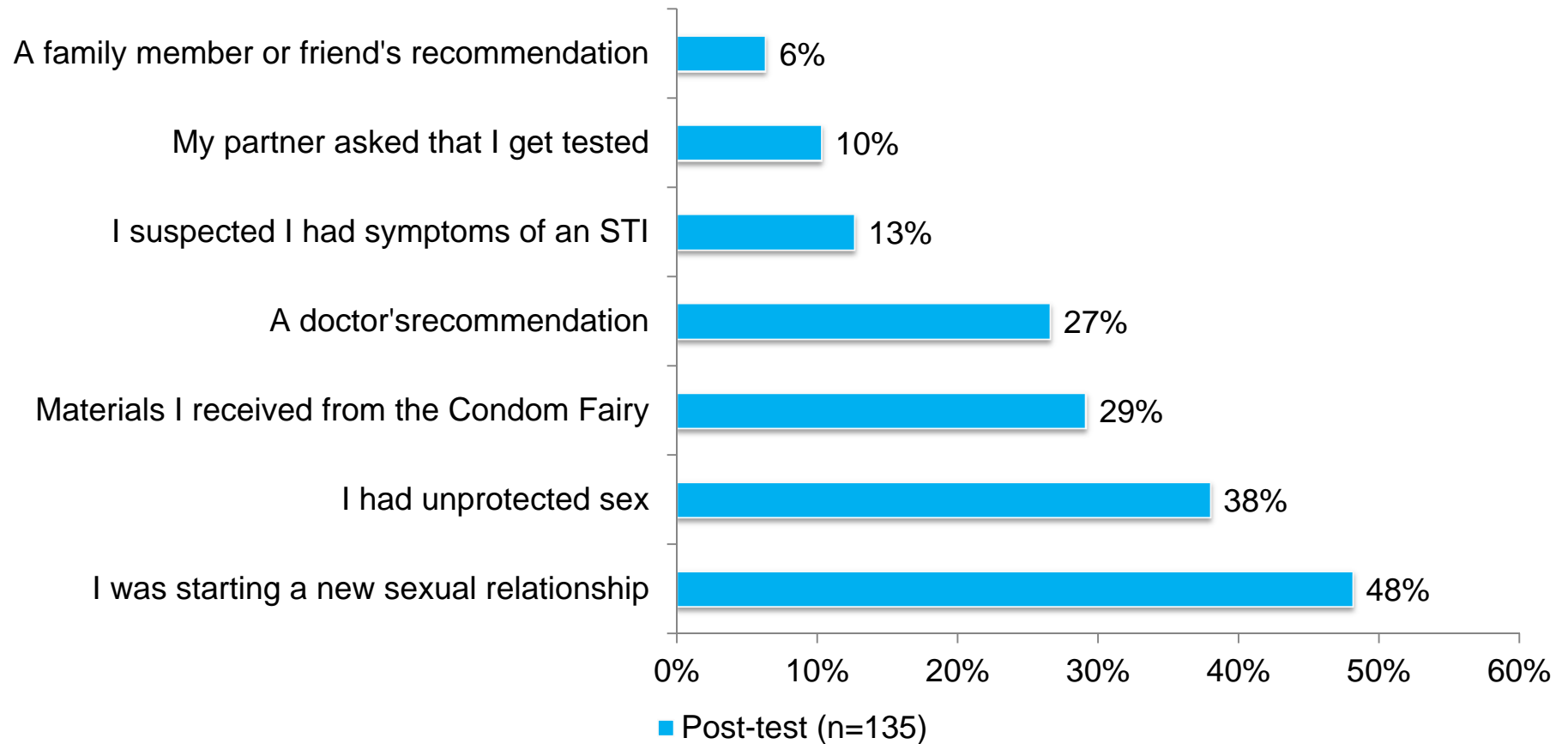
Source: Boston University Condom Fairy Program™ Evaluation

"Which of the following statements best describes you?"



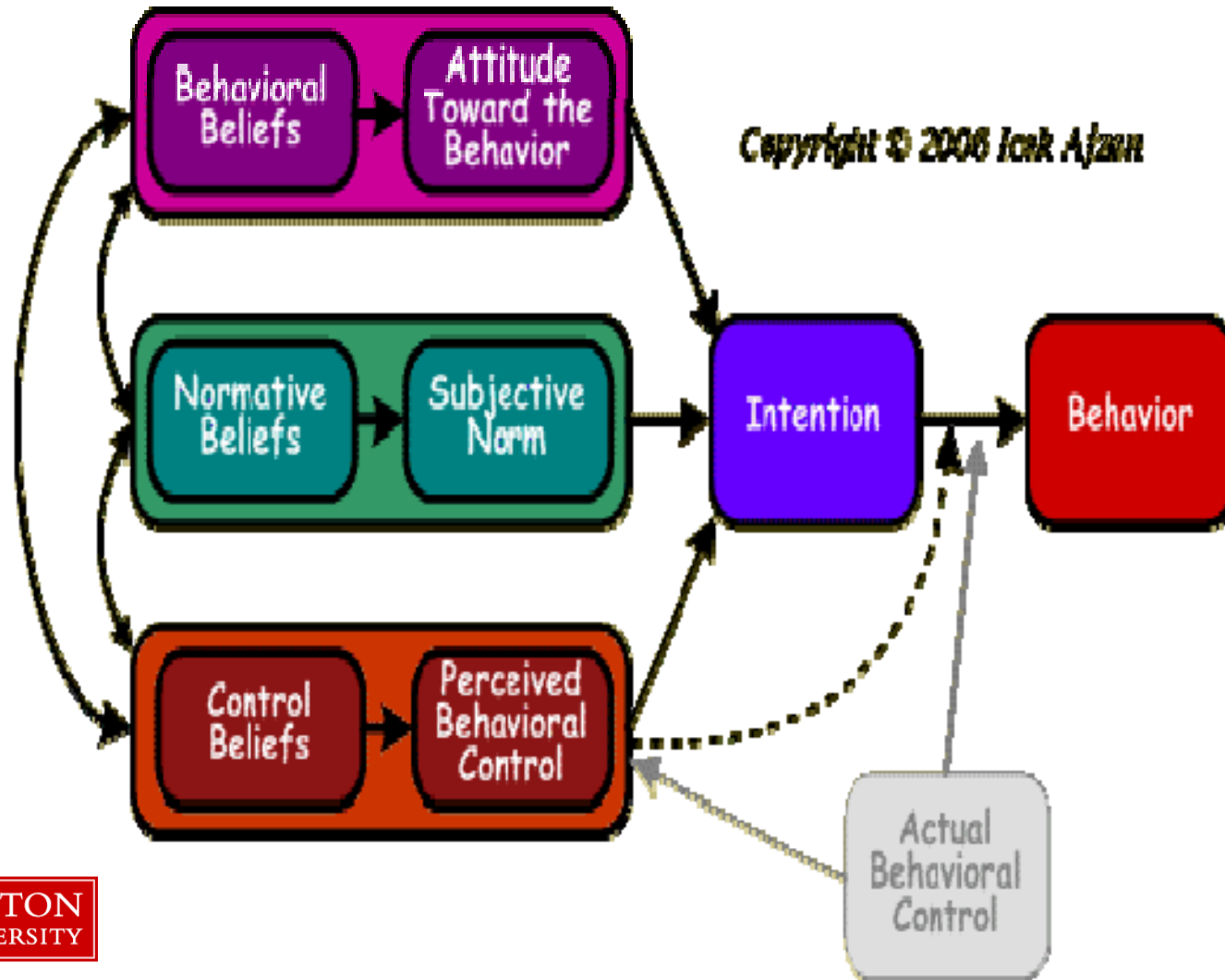
Source: Boston University Condom Fairy Program™ Evaluation

“What motivated you to get tested?”

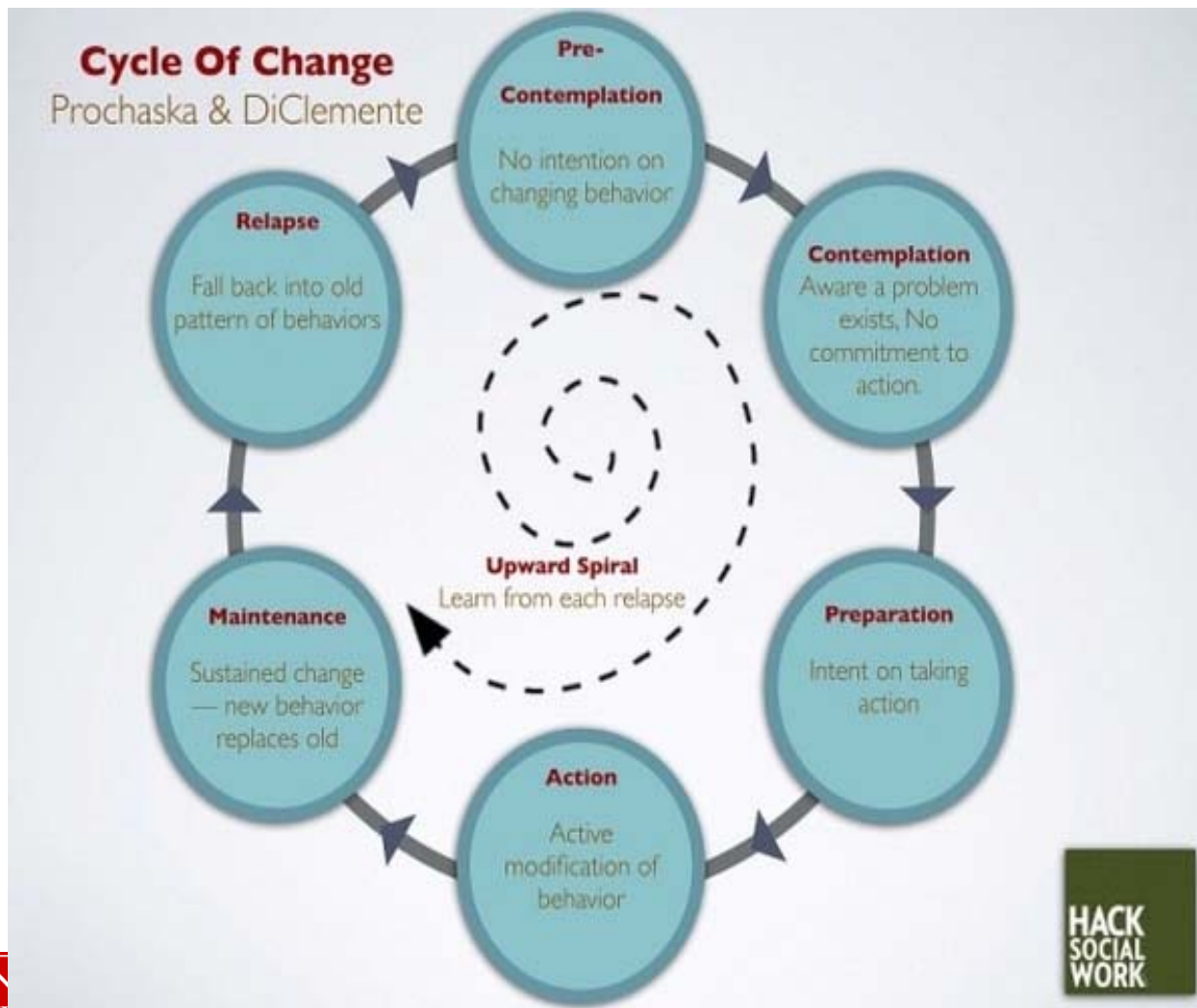


Source: Survey-based program evaluation

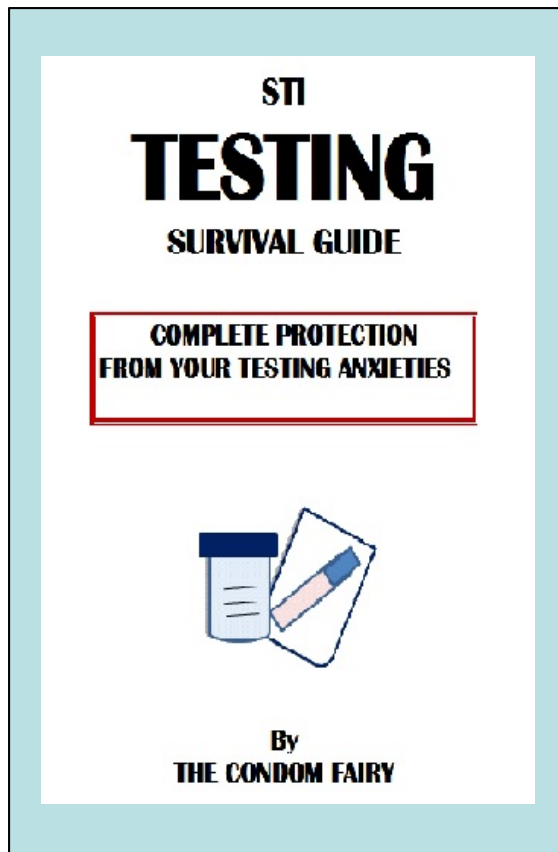
Theory of Planned Behavior



Transtheoretical Model



Proposed Content



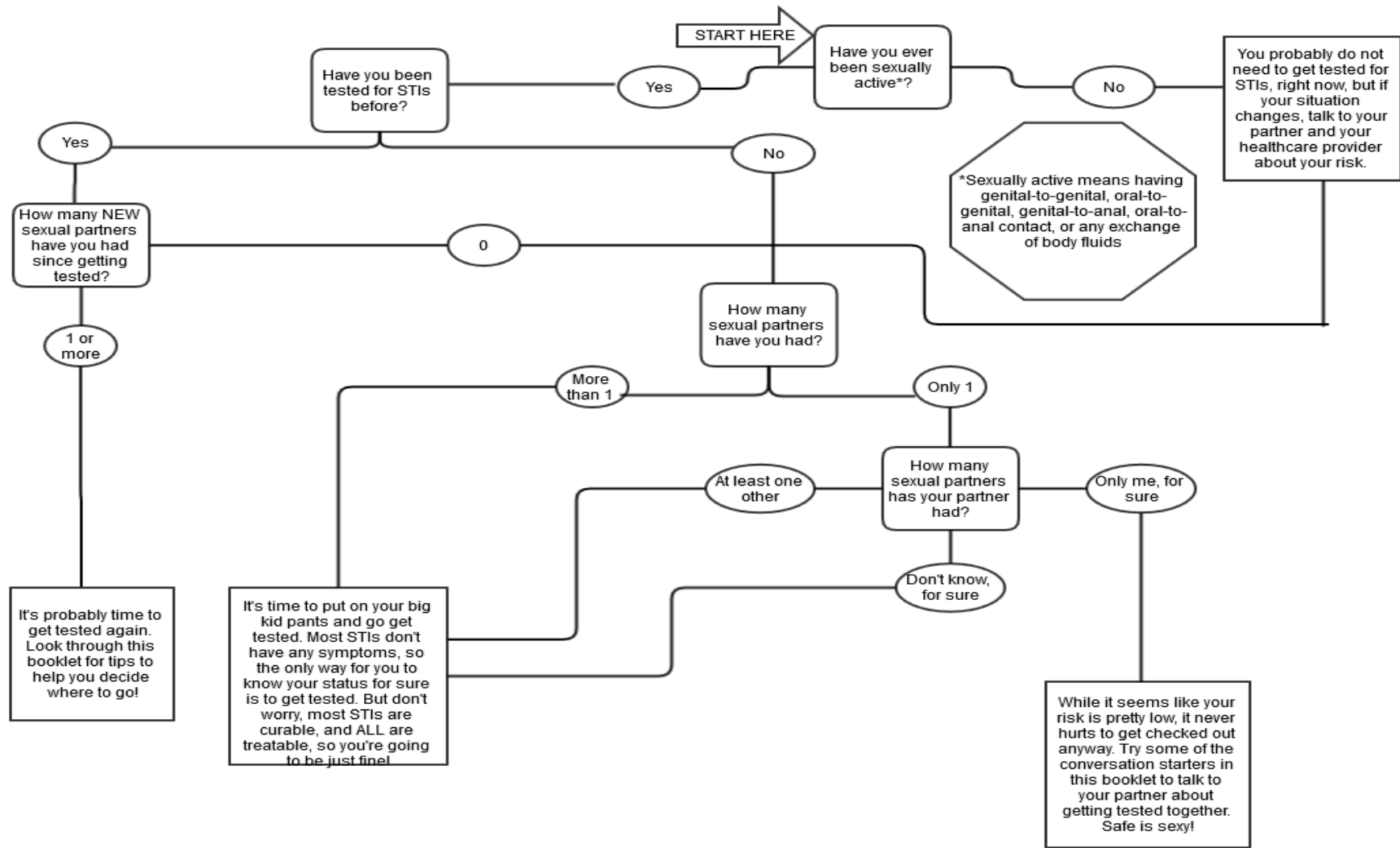
Letter from the Condom Fairy

Hey Students!

Thanks for keeping me busy with your orders for safer sex supplies - it seems you've all been pretty busy as well ;)

I'm glad you're having fun and staying safe, but there's one little thing we need to talk about: STI testing. I know, I know, you hear it all the time: get tested. Well, you *know* it's a good idea, but everyone's telling you what to do, and they're not telling you *how* to do it!

Risk Assessment Quiz



STI Spotlights

Chlamydia

- Chlamydia is the most common bacterial STI reported in the U.S.
- It can be passed along during any type of sexual contact. It can infect the genitals, anus, eyes, or throat.
- Known as a "silent" infection because most times, there are no symptoms.
- Can be treated by oral antibiotics.
- If left undiagnosed and untreated, chlamydia can lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease and potentially infertility.

What's Going to Happen?

Infection	How they test for it	Treatment
Chlamydia	Urine test or self-administered genital swab	Antibiotics
Gonorrhea	Urine test or self-administered genital swab	Antibiotics
Syphilis	Blood test	Antibiotics
HIV	Saliva test or blood test	Medication and therapy to manage disease
HPV	Visual examination of symptoms or cervical screening	Removal of warts, topical medications to manage warts, treatments and minor procedures to prevent abnormalities found during cervical screenings from becoming cancerous
Herpes	Visual examination of symptoms	Medications to reduce the number of outbreaks, treat symptoms, and reduce the chance of spreading herpes to sexual partners

Getting Ready

If you're thinking about getting tested, but you don't want to go it alone, why not ask a friend or a partner to go with you? Chances are, they might be thinking the same thing! Here are some ways you could open up that dialogue:

- Did you see that STI Testing Survival Guide in the latest Condom Fairy package? Maybe we should make appointments at Health Services. We can go at the same time, and then go get some ice cream after!

Comparison Table

Place	Services	Cost/Insurance	Appointment	Contact
BU Student Health Services	Testing for chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, Pap tests for HPV, physical exams for herpes	Students enrolled in the Aetna Student Health insurance plan can access all services for free, and will not get a bill. Students with outside insurance can see a provider for free, but lab tests will be sent out, and a bill will be sent to the address on file.	You need an appointment to be seen. You can make an appointment by calling or online through Patient Connect. Most of the time, you will get an appointment within a few days.	<p>Student Health Services 881 Commonwealth Ave</p> <p>Patient Connect website: http://www.bu.edu/shs/resources/actsheets/patientconnect/</p> <p>Phone: 617-353-3575</p> <p>STI Info: http://www.bu.edu/shs/wellness/wellness-programs/sexual/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/</p>

Now What?

So, you did it. You got tested. You, my friend, are a rock star. Now that *that's* over with, what do you do now?

If your results were positive:

Don't Panic! You are not alone. Millions of people get diagnosed with an STI every year, so chances are, you already know someone who's been through this. Remember, most STIs are totally curable, and ALL are treatable.

We're gonna get through this!



intimate inquiry

BU students ask their favorite fairy for the low down on sexually transmitted infections

Dear Condom Fairy,
I've been dating around for a couple of years now, and have never been tested for STIs. I don't have any burning or itching, but my friend told me I should get tested anyway. What should I get tested for? —Curious

89 The percent of CF customers who agree that students should get tested even if they don't have STI symptoms³

Dear Curious,
Your friend is right; most STIs don't show any symptoms, so you can't rely on your body to tell you that you have an infection. The good news is that you probably don't need to get tested for everything! Chlamydia and gonorrhea are the most common STIs among college students.⁴ If you are tested at Student Health Services, your provider will ask questions about your sexual history to determine which tests you need. If you go to a different clinic, you should ask for their advice on which STIs you should be tested for.

♡ Condom Fairy
7

Dear Condom Fairy,
My high school girlfriend and I went on a break for our first semester at college. We ended up hooking up while we were home for break. You help me have safer sex at school, but since you can't discreetly deliver to my parents' house, I didn't have a condom. I'm not sure if my girlfriend was with other people, so I want to get tested. How much will that cost, and can I keep it a secret from my parents? —Worried

Dear Worried,
If you have the BU Aetna Student Health insurance, testing is free and confidential at Student Health Services! There are also places that provide free and confidential ST testing without billing insurance c notifying your parents, such : Boston Medical Center STD Clr or Project Trust (see page 13 f more info). Cost varies at ot clinics depending on your he: insurance, but most insurance p' do cover STI testing. To deterr the exact cost, call the numbe your insurance card.

♡ Condom Fairy

90 The percent of CF customers who believe she makes it easier to practice safer sex³

Dear Condom Fairy,
I've been hanging out with this guy I met in class, and things have been heating up lately. I asked my doctor to test me for STIs at my last visit, and the tests came back negative. I'd like to keep my clean bill of health, so I want to ask him to get tested before we have sex. How can I ask him without ruining the moment? —Awkward

The percent of CF customers who got tested because they were starting a new relationship³

60

Dear Awkward,
Way to take the initiative! Starting a new sexual relationship is a common reason to get tested, so he should understand. Next time you're hanging out, you could say, "I'm excited to take things further, but I want to be sure we're being safe. When is the last time you were tested?" Maybe he was tested after his last partner and you're good to go! If he hasn't been tested, tell him that most appointments at Student Health Services are only 15 minutes long, and it's probably as easy as peeing in a cup! Reassure him that if he has something, you won't think any less of him—you just want to be sure you're both healthy before gettin' it on. If he refuses to get tested even after you give him time to think about it, you may want to re-evaluate getting hot and heavy with him.

♡ Condom Fairy

STIs in boston

1 in 2 sexually active people will get an STI by age 25²

Boston's chlamydia rate is nearly **twice** the national rate⁵

2x

64% of Boston chlamydia cases are among people ages 15-24⁵

80% of chlamydia cases exhibit no symptoms⁷

20% of untreated chlamydia and gonorrhea cases result in Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) in women⁷

PID leads to:

chronic pelvic pain in **18%** of women⁷

AND infertility in **8%** of women⁷

Summary

- Certain “get tested” campaigns grab attention and resonate with students, but may not lead to action
- Students appreciate messages that use humor as well as relatable images and language
- Communications that are more comprehensive in the information that they provide may be more effective
- Students desire communication channels that are more discreet, suggesting snail-mail as an effective approach



Questions or Comments?



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