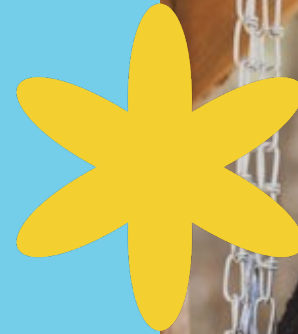


SEXUAL HEALTH INFLUENCERS

A GUIDE TO
COLLABORATING WITH YOUNG
CONTENT CREATORS

Healthy Teen Network
Supported by Baltimore City Health Department

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Lastly, we want to celebrate the creators themselves—for bringing their lived experience, vulnerability, and creativity. Their perspectives and ideas introduced a level of authenticity and innovation we could never have imagined on our own, helping promote clinics and making sexual health conversations more approachable for young people.

THE CHALLENGE

PROJECT GOALS

Over **3 years**, in **3 clinics**...

+ 150

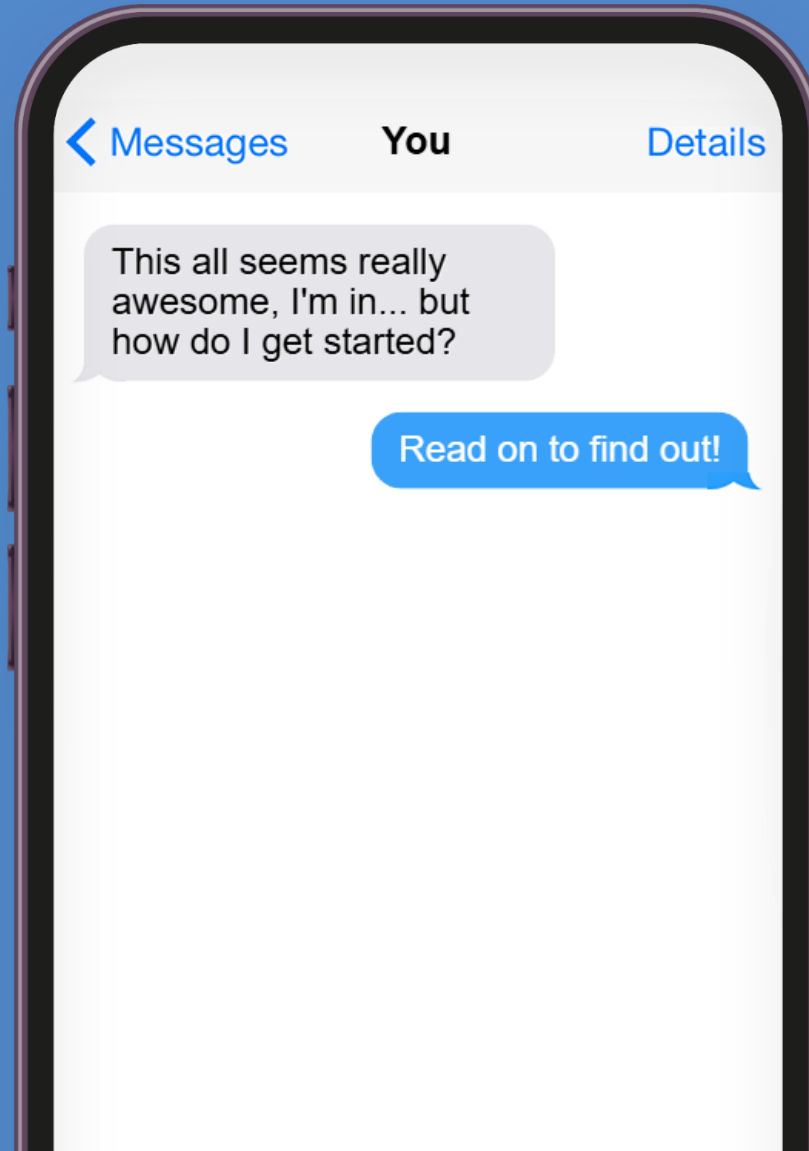
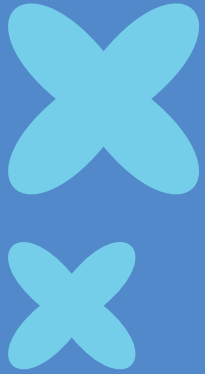
young people who identify
as LGBTQ+

+ 255

young people not connected
to school or work

Over three years, our project team worked to increase clinic use among young people who identified as LGBTQ+ or were not connected to school or work in Baltimore, Maryland.

As part of this effort, we recruited and collaborated with young creators from across the city. We anticipated that by drawing on their lived experiences, they would deliver authentic and relatable messages about sexual health and clinic services that resonated with other young people in a way that traditional public health campaigns could not. Ultimately, we expected our collaboration with young creators would increase clinic use, creating long-term impact on birth and STI rates among young people, and build the young creators' skills as sexual health influencers.



Over the past three years, we've built, tested, and learned alongside youth sexual health influencers to figure out what really works. This guide brings together our best tips, tools, and lessons to help you get started strong.



TEAM & TIME TOOLS



We started by mapping out the staff roles, time, and tools needed for the influencer work.

| Tasks | Estimated Hours/Month | Total Months | Yearly Cost Estimate |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Creation & Dissemination of Recruitment Materials | 10 | 2 | - |
| Influencer Communication | 10 | 12 | - |
| Creation of Engagement Activities & Influencer Briefs (i.e., creative guidelines & key messages) | 5 | 10 | - |
| Project Oversight | 5 | 12 | - |

| Tools | Yearly Cost Estimate |
|--|----------------------|
| Digital Editing Software | \$120 |
| Survey Platform | \$660 |
| Cell Phone (texting and utilizing social media channels) | \$660 |
| Gift Card Distribution Software Membership | \$30 |



INFLUENCER INCENTIVES



We made paying creators a priority, budgeting for 10 influencers.

| # of Influencers | | Payment per Month | | Total Posting Months | | Total Incentive Costs |
|------------------|---|-------------------|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 10 | × | \$100 | × | 5 | = | \$5,000 |



TEAM & TIME TOOLS (D.I.Y.)



Think about your organization. Consider what survey or editing software you can leverage, including free options that protect participant privacy. Think about whether you have available staff or will need to hire. Remember: you can revisit and adjust your answers as you move through this guide.

| Details | Estimated Hours/Month | Total Months | Yearly Cost Estimate |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Creation & Dissemination of Recruitment Materials | | | |
| Influencer Communication | | | |
| Creation of Engagement Activities & Influencer Briefs (i.e., creative guidelines & key messages) | | | |
| Project Oversight | | | |

| Details | Yearly Cost Estimate |
|--|----------------------|
| Digital Editing Software | |
| Survey Platform | |
| Cell Phone (texting and utilizing social media channels) | |
| Gift Card Distribution Software | |
| Membership | |



INFLUENCER INCENTIVES (D.I.Y.)



Consider how many influencers you'll recruit, how often they'll post, and how much you'll pay.

of Influencers

Payment per Month

Total Posting
Months

Total Incentive
Costs



A green, multi-pointed starburst shape with a white outline, containing the number 01 in white.

01

RECRUITING YOUR CREATORS

CREATOR CRITERIA

Are there specific young people you are you looking to work with?

Our influencer campaign aimed to boost clinic usage among LGBTQ+ young people as well as young people not currently in school or working. We recruited creators who shared these lived experiences to ensure the content felt real and was relatable, so audiences could connect with it in a genuine way.



INFLUENCER PERSONA

Use the space below to brainstorm ideal identities of the young people you are working with. When identifying our creators, we considered the following:

- Age and demographics
- Social media use and followings
- Interest in sexual and reproductive health topics

TIPS FOR RECRUITMENT MATERIALS



1 Consider your budget

Do you have funds for targeted ad campaigns through social media or other platforms?

2 Leverage your network

Are there already established youth advisory councils you can work with? Who in your community could help get the word out?

3 Keep it simple

Make it easy for young people to fill out the survey and be sure your ads and flyers clearly explain what you're asking them to do.

4

Consider safety.

JOIN OUR MOVEMENT if YOU ARE:

- LGBTQ+
- OR ANYONE NOT IN SCHOOL AND NOT WORKING



JOIN OUR MOVEMENT if YOU ARE:

- LGBTQ+ OR AN ALLY
- OR ANYONE NOT IN SCHOOL AND NOT WORKING



TRIED & TESTED

RECRUITMENT COPY

Early on, we realized that safety is key to making young people feel comfortable joining as creators. Our initial recruitment materials mentioned LGBTQ+ young people, but we saw this could pressure some creators to publicly label their sexuality. We revised the invitation to include “or ally,” allowing participation without requiring self-identification.

SEXUAL HEALTH INFLUENCER AGREEMENTS

TIMELINE

You are invited to be an influencer from December 2024 to August 2025.



HOW IT WORKS

You will have *engagement* tasks and *creation* tasks.

Engagement tasks will help you learn more about the Baltimore Health Clinics and build up your own brand and skillset as an influencer! These tasks include, but are not limited to:

- sharing out Healthy Teen Network-created content with your followers
- learning more about follower engagement and skills to build up your profiles
- providing feedback on Baltimore clinic websites and social media campaigns

Engagement Months: End of Feb, May, July

Creation tasks are when you create your content based on influencer briefs we send you. The briefs will provide you the monthly theme and any posting requirements.

Creation Months: January, March, May, June and August

August

COMPENSATION

Influencers are paid \$100/month for creation months and \$50/month for completing engagement months.

To be paid, you are required to follow all guidelines given in the influencer briefs and complete all engagement tasks in the specified month. There is additional compensation for posts that excel at originality, creativity, relevance, and storytelling.

If you ever miss a post or don't feel comfortable making a post, please reach out to Kaitlyn. We want to make sure that you feel supported and comfortable with every task you are assigned.



CREATOR SAFETY

A key component of safety is communicating expectations. In our influencer agreement, we provided clear expectations and emphasized that creators could reach out at any time if they didn't feel comfortable making a post.

What are some ways you could create a safe environment for your creators?

A green starburst shape with multiple points, containing the number 02 in white.

02

BUILDING THE CREATOR PLAYBOOK

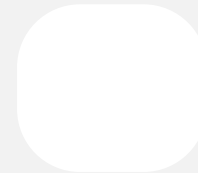


CONTENT SCHEDULE & STRATEGY

The following questions will help guide you in narrowing in on the themes, timeline, and frequency of posts for your creators. Remember, it is crucial to keep your creators engaged and creating; therefore, we recommend a strategy that involves many touchpoints and consistent communication.

1. HOW OFTEN WILL YOUR CREATORS BE POSTING?

Look back at your planning phase and record the number of influencer briefs you plan to conduct below. We call these "posting months."



≡ TOTAL POSTING MONTHS

2. HOW DO YOU PLAN TO KEEP YOUR INFLUENCERS ENGAGED BEYOND SHARING THE INFLUENCER BRIEFS?

Showing up consistently shows you care. This could mean sending check-in texts, sharing content “inspo,” or inviting influencers to help with other (paid!) parts of the project. Set a goal for how often you’ll reach out and start thinking of ways to keep them engaged. For example, we invited our influencers to do mystery shopper calls, give feedback on clinic websites and social media, and share thoughts on the clinic space.



I will check in with my influencers every...

 DAYS
 WEEKS

After I send a brief, I will see if they need more support within...

 DAYS

Some ways I’ll keep my influencers engaged beyond sharing posting information are:

3. CREATE YOUR CALENDAR

Look at the calendar year to brainstorm themes for each Influencer Brief. List the months you're planning to post and what topics you plan to focus on in your brief. Be creative—and make your own holidays! (We're looking at you, #AnalAugust!)

| Month | Example Content | Your Content |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| January | | |
| February | Valentines Day: Healthy Relationships | |
| March | | |
| April | Spring into Body Positivity | |
| May | | |
| June | Pride: LGBTQ+ Sexual Health | |
| July | | |
| August | #AnalAugust | |
| September | | |
| October | | |
| November | | |
| December | Holiday Unboxing: At-Home STI Tests | |

Creating an Influencer Brief

Now that you've recruited your influencers and planned your content, it's time to share the knowledge they need to post with confidence. An influencer brief includes key information—like monthly theme, posting format, sample prompts, and safety reminders—while still giving them space to be creative. Use the example to help you craft your own on the following pages.

AUGUST 2023

Hey there, Influencer!

This month, we're talking about preparing for back to school, including getting our seasonal testing in! Use one or two of the talking points below as a rough guide for what to talk about—but keep it short and don't use all of them. Using one is just fine!

It's important that messages sound like they're coming from you. That's why we recommend posting a video with a voiceover and using words and phrases that feel natural to you instead of reading what's below word for word.

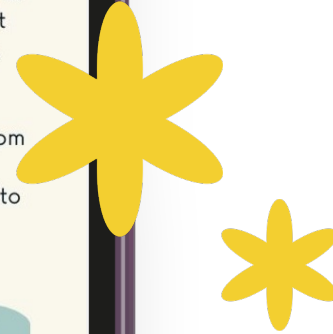
1

Back to school season is here, and you know what that means — new beginnings, exciting challenges, and a whole lot of learning! With all the hustle and bustle, let's not forget to prioritize something equally important: our health and well-being. Druid Sexual Health Clinic offers STI testing, pregnancy testing, condoms and much more at no cost to you. Make an appointment by calling 410-396-0186.

2

Schools starting again and you know what that means? You might run into your sneaky link you thought you left back in the Spring. How can you best prepare? By swinging by UMD Adolescent Center for routine sexual health appointments! While you're there, you can stock up on all the school year necessities (like condoms!) and chat with your providers about sexual health testing, contraceptives, and much more at no cost to you! Just call 410-706-6000 and ask to make a sexual health appointment, or feel free to drop by anytime from 9:30 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday.

Have you had a sexual health appointment? Have you been to these clinics? If you have relevant personal experiences related to sexual health that you're comfortable sharing, you can share them in your post, too. Sharing your story can make the talking points



CREATING AN INFLUENCER BRIEF

01

State theme

What is the theme of your brief?

Prioritize your sexual health by making an appointment at one of the health centers.

02

Set format

10-second video? Photo and caption?

What is your preferred format?

Short video with voiceover; one or two talking points only

03

Give examples

Write example prompts for influencers to use. These prompts are a great starting point for creators and should clearly convey the main message you are trying to get across. Be sure to tie in your theme!

Back to school season is here, and you know what that means—new beginnings, exciting challenges, and a whole lot of learning! With all the hustle and bustle, let's not forget to prioritize something equally important: our health and well-being. Druid Sexual Health Clinic offers STI testing, pregnancy testing, condoms, and much more at no cost to you. Make an appointment by calling 410-396-0186.

04

Provide reminders

Make your safety guidelines super clear.

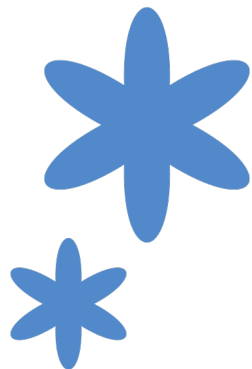
Don't share private details about yours or other people's sexual behavior.

05

And share!

Ask your influencers how they prefer to receive the brief.

Text message



AUGUST 2023

Hey there, Influencer!

State theme

01

This month, we're talking about preparing for back to school, including getting our seasonal testing in! Use one or two of the talking points below as a rough guide for what to talk about—but keep it short and don't use all of them. Using one is just fine!

Set format

02

It's important that messages sound like they're coming from you. That's why we recommend posting a video with a voiceover and using words and phrases that feel natural to you instead of reading what's below word for word.

Give examples

03

1

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Provide reminders

04

Have you had a sexual health appointment? Have you been to these clinics? If you have relevant personal experiences related to sexual health that you're comfortable sharing, you can share them in your post, too. Sharing your story can make the talking points more relatable and help others take action. (But be sure to respect others' privacy and share only experiences are yours and yours alone. Don't share others' names or stories that allow your followers guess who you're talking about.)

05

And share!

CREATING AN INFLUENCER BRIEF (D.I.Y)

01

State theme

What is the theme of your brief?

02

Set format

10-second video? Photo and caption?
What is your preferred format?

03

Give examples

Write example prompts for influencers to use. These prompts are a great starting point for creators and should clearly convey the main message you are trying to get across. Be sure to tie in your theme!

04

Provide reminders

Make your safety guidelines super clear.

05

And share!

Our creators let us know that text was the best for communications. Check with yours on their preferences!



Start a trending moment...

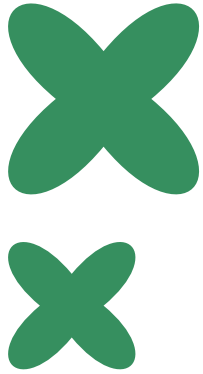
The “Add Yours” sticker on Instagram creates a prompt for your followers to jump in on!

It is a great way to get your followers engaged in a topic you care about by creating a template for anyone to add to.

TRIED & TESTED INFLUENCER TIPS

We started by sending creators text reminders, like "use #hashtags," but we quickly realized they wanted more guidance on engaging their audience. To address this ask, we created Influencer Tips—posted on a private Instagram account exclusively for creators—to share an organized, easy-to-reference library of tips. Each month, we paired a new tip with their influencer brief, giving creators space to practice a variety of engagement tactics.

What influencer tip could you pair with your influencer brief?



Hey there! Here's your influencer brief! To get paid, post at least 1 video (story, reel, or feed) on the IG you shared with us between August 13–16.

🎭 You don't need to show your face or voice – feel free to use filters or get creative

🦄 Use your own style + voice, but stay on topic

🚫 Only share your own story (not anyone else's)

👩🏫 No need to get your post approved – we trust you to do your thing! Let me know if you have any questions—we're here to help! 😊

Revisit, Remind, Repeat!

When sharing your brief, revisit key points, repeat important details, and remind creators you're here to help.

Where do you see safety guardrails used in these texts?

A green starburst shape with multiple points, containing the number 03 in white.

03

GROWING TRUST IN THE CREATOR COMMUNITY



TRUST & SAFETY IN COMMUNITY

Some of our creators were eager to connect, while others preferred to keep to themselves. To best support all their needs, we created a private Instagram account with resources and an optional space for peer engagement. Peer-to-peer interaction varied by year, and we learned a lot about what it means to promote safety and build trust in community spaces with young people who identify as LGBTQ+ and/or are not connected to school or work.



Involve Creators in Shaping their Community Space

Before launching a community space, we asked creators what platforms they were already using for connecting with peers. This ask can be a quick text or part of an early survey. For us, Instagram was a top choice, since all creators were actively using their accounts.



Let Creators Set Their Own Engagement Levels

When we invited creators to our private Instagram account, we emphasized that they could participate at whatever level of vulnerability felt most comfortable. They could keep their accounts private and engage with other creators as much or as little as they wished.



Support Optional Peer Engagement

A quieter community space doesn't mean it's failing; rather, it reflects what feels safe for that cohort. You can gently prompt conversations, such as encouraging introductions or sharing new things they've learned, while also checking in with them 1:1, to keep the space supportive.



BEYOND THE HANDLE



Every influencer has a unique story and way of creating and connecting. This diversity is a strength—it lets them reach their communities in ways others can't.

While building a community to encourage trust is important, it's also crucial to build trust by meeting each influencer where they are, respecting their pace, and supporting their individual journeys.

On the following 3 pages, you will find 3 creators with varying skill levels, communication styles, and personal life situations. Review each influencer carefully and list some ideas of how you could better meet each influencer where they are in terms of knowledge, safety, and trust.



THE POWER POSTER

This influencer has a strong foundation in content creation and communicates and posts consistently without reminders. They generally follow the influencer briefs but have expressed a desire for more challenges, seeking feedback and opportunities to grow. Their initiative, openness to learning, and reliability make them a motivated and promising partner.

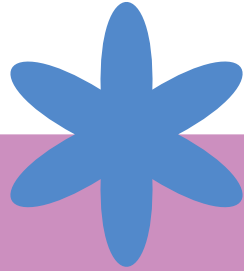
I WILL SUPPORT THIS CREATOR BY...



THE FINDING - THEIR-FLOWSTER

This creator has a solid following and a strong desire to influence their peers, though they sometimes hesitate to share their own voice because it feels a bit too vulnerable. They tend to stick closely to short prompts when creating posts but are highly receptive to feedback, eager to learn, and quick to apply suggestions. While they may not always respond to messages right away, their openness to growth and willingness to engage make them a promising and collaborative partner.

I WILL SUPPORT THIS CREATOR BY...



THE GHOSTER

This participant showed enthusiasm in their application but sometimes experiences gaps in communication. They have completed some posts but missed a few briefs entirely. While they may not always respond to messages promptly, they provide occasional explanations such as losing their phone or being sick. Their continued activity on personal social media suggests potential to re-engage; with enough support, they can become a promising contributor and sexual health influencer.

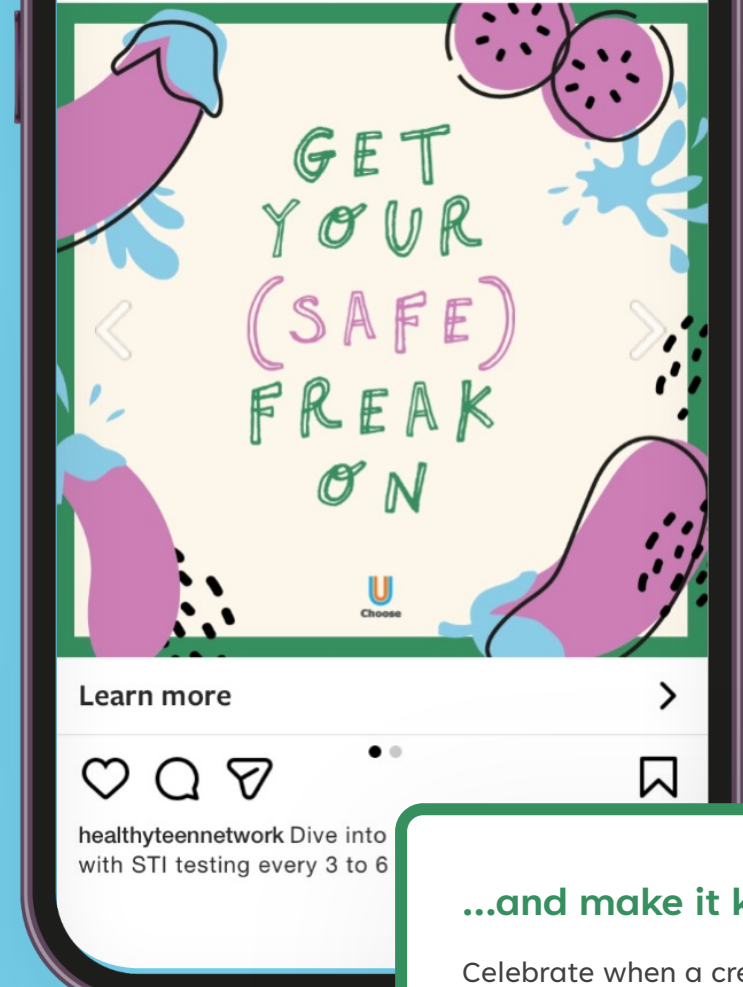
I WILL SUPPORT THIS CREATOR BY...



TRIED & TESTED BUILDING TRU\$T

At first, we shared an influencer brief at the start of each month and asked creators to post twice, with payment at the end of the month. We noticed it often took multiple reminders to get both posts completed.

We adjusted by paying creators right after each post, which boosted timely submissions. The immediate payment built trust and encouraged creators to stay on schedule, rewarding their effort as soon as they shared content.



Trust their creativity...

Encourage creators to use words and phrases that **feel natural** to them.

...and make it known!

Celebrate when a creator **finds their unique voice**. Here we shared one of our creator's voice by using their phrasing in an ad campaign.

2 you can stock up on all the school year necessities (like condoms!) and chat with your providers about sexual health testing, contraceptives, and much more at no cost to you! Just call 410-706-6000 and ask to make a sexual health appointment, or feel free to



IN CREATORS WE TRUST



You selected them for their unique identity and perspective; now trust them to connect with their peers.

Letting creators post to their own pages shows you trust their lived experience and ability to connect authentically. That trust starts with a solid brief—clear goals, tone, and must-haves.

Then step back and give the creators space. Briefs can evolve each month based on what's working and creator feedback. It's helpful to have clear review guidelines for posts, so you can celebrate creativity and provide feedback to help creators improve for their next post. Only in rare, necessary cases should you request edits or a repost for a current post.

Creators' posts aren't meant to be perfect. Their language, formatting, or style may reflect trends you don't know, which makes the content feel fresh, relatable, and authentic to their audiences.



FLAGS, FRAME, FEEDBACK

Use this mantra as a reference when reviewing creators' posts.

Flags – Identify green, yellow, or red flags in their post.

Frame – Pause and reflect on your style versus the creator's. Is the post misaligned or just different than what you'd do?

Feedback – Celebrate successes and guide improvements for the next post, intervening only if necessary.



Red flags go against your campaign goals or values, include misinformation, or put someone at risk. They prompt immediate editing or removal.

What are your red flags?



Yellow flags are less than ideal, maybe unclear or missing parts of the brief, but not harmful. They are coaching opportunities to improve future posts.

What are your yellow flags?



Green flags deserve celebration! They are creative, accurate, engaging, and true to the creator's voice.

What are your green flags?

GETTING TO "YES" WITH PROJECT PARTNERS

As with creators, building trust with partners takes time. At first, they may hesitate to hand over real creative control to young people. Earning confidence means proving that youth-led, authentic content can make an impact while meeting funding requirements. Trust grows through open communication, shared results, and accountability.

One breakthrough came when we underscored that creators were posting on their own accounts rather than brand accounts. This gave partners the confidence to loosen their grip on content, with reviews limited to red flags. Creators gained more autonomy while we ensured compliance, leading to greater trust all around.



BUILDING BUY-IN

Reflect on working with partners when implementing a youth-led influencer approach. Taking time to anticipate problems can help you plan your strategy ahead of time.

What are some concerns partners might have with influencer content?

How might you address these concerns or find compromises that keep influencer content authentic?



04

COMMIT TO LONG-TERM
IMPACT WITH CREATORS



TRIED & TESTED CENTERING YOUTH VOICE

As we got to know our creators, we realized there were more ways to include them in other aspects of the project. This led our creators to provide feedback on how youth-friendly the clinics' physical environments, social media, and websites were. They also conducted mystery shopper calls to assess staff and services. Influencers' feedback informed recommendations for improvement provided to clinics.

COMMIT TO THE PROCESS

We know the first influencer posts won't be perfect, and that's part of the process. We commit to checking in, reflecting, and adjusting along the way. This approach allows us to support each creator in a way that fits who they are and what they need. The goal isn't just a successful post or campaign, but an opportunity for our influencers to learn, earn, and grow.



BETTER TOGETHER

Excited to put what you've learned into action? Are you feeling confident, or do you want more support? We are here to help. Reach out—we'd love to hear what you have in mind!

healthyteennetwork.org

