



# MANY WAYS OF BEING



**Caption:** Ideas about manhood, womanhood, and being nonbinary have been around for a long time and come with a lot of outdated baggage. Often, this baggage binds us from freely expressing who we really are. Breaking out of society's rigid boundaries means acknowledging that there are not just one or two or three ways to be. Instead, there are Many Ways of Being.

## CURRICULUM (8 two-hour sessions)

1. Welcome
2. Exploring Gender and Identity
3. Understanding and Expressing My Emotions
4. Exploring Power and Relationships
5. Sex and Sexuality in Media Today
6. Keeping Yourself and Others Healthy and Safe
7. Contraceptives and Seeking Services
8. Journey Ahead

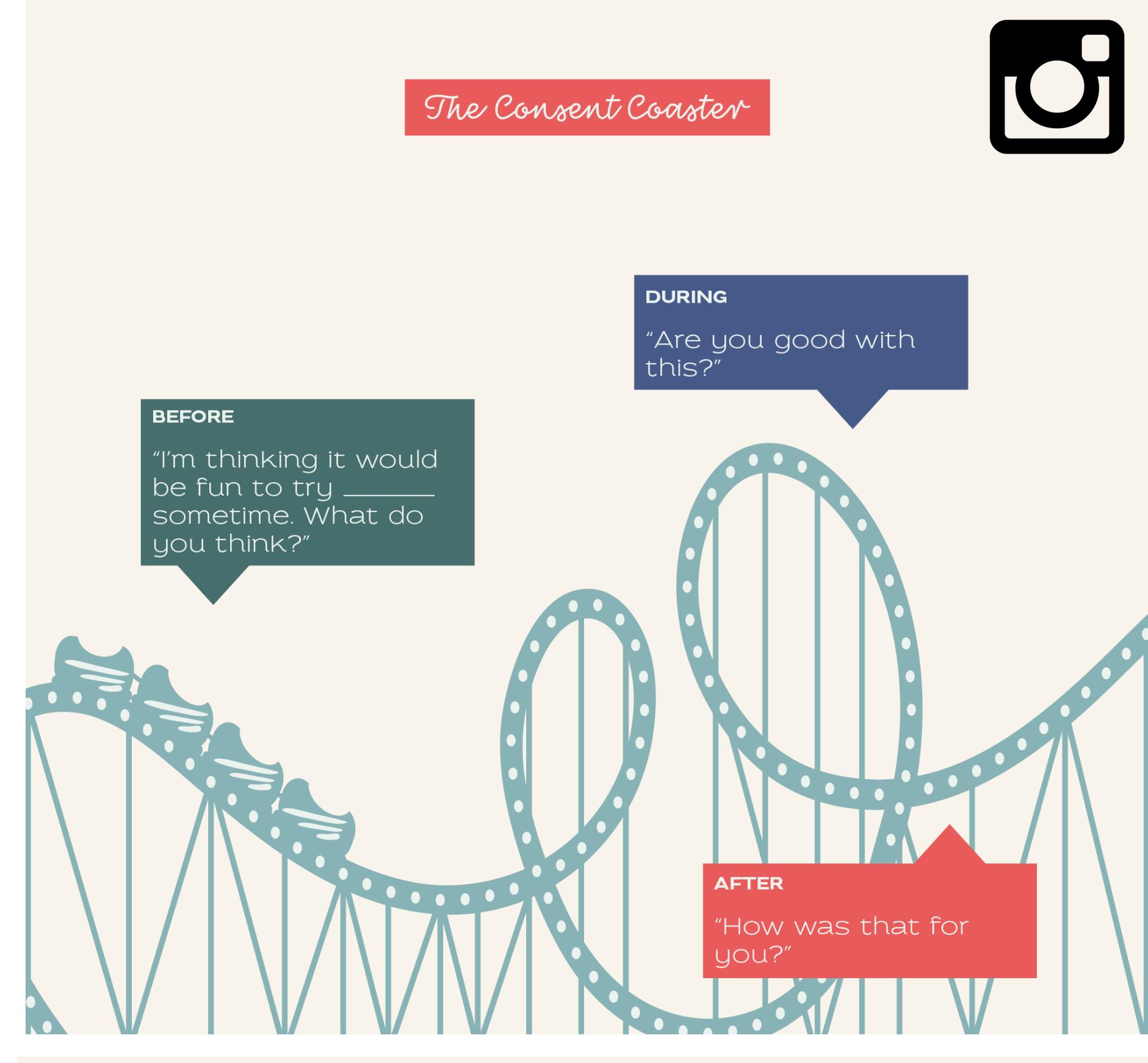
## FINDINGS FROM FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Method: digital focus group of 17 youth

1. **Sex Ed Experiences** – all youth had received some sex education in the past, but many found it superficial: "The majority of the information taught was always vague and almost common knowledge"
2. **Identity** – youth understand their intersectional identities, but most sex ed curricula do not; "I am El Salvadorian and Black. When it comes to relationships, I think there's a higher expectation to be in a relationship due to the adultification of black and [H]ispanic girls"
3. **Consent** – youth were unsure in expressing their boundaries and desires; "Fear of letting someone down or changing their perspective of you" prevented youth from asking or receiving consent
4. **Social Media, Porn & Sexting** – youth relationships often manifest in "cyberspace" so these topics must be included in curricula
5. **Group Genders** – youth wanted mixed-gender groups and noted faults of cis- and heteronormative sex ed; "[It's important to have] a variety of different perspectives instead of the same ideas echoing off of each other"
6. **Digital strategy** – youth cited Instagram as the ideal place for sexual health information, noting its concise, scrollable, image-heavy format and widespread use; youth also emphasized anonymity in seeking information and asking questions discreetly online

## DISCUSSION

- Complementing a gender transformative curriculum with a digital strategy will help reinforce healthy, equitable, and non-violent relationships.
- Even in a gender inclusive intervention, the binary gender norms (man/woman) need to be well understood to then be scaffolded, challenged, and deconstructed through an intersectional and transformative lens.
- Youth's diverse lived experiences and intersectional identities need to be reflected, normalized, and celebrated in the curriculum.



**Caption:** If you're having sex, you and your partner should enjoy it! Checking-in is important and can make sex more fun. How do you check in before, during, or after sex?



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## BACKGROUND

- Traditional gender norms, unequal power in sexual relationships, and intimate partner violence are linked with negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes (STIs, HIV, and unintended pregnancy) as well as mental health problems.
- Black and Latino teens in the United States experience high levels of SRH disparities, lack of available sexual and reproductive health services, due primarily to structural barriers, such as discrimination and coercion from health care providers.

## PROGRAM HYPOTHESIS

A gender transformative sexual and reproductive health program that is grounded in exploring intersectional identities and restrictive gender norms can yield significant improvements in healthy relationships and sexual health behaviors among Black and Latino teens, ages 15-19 in Washington, DC, USA.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

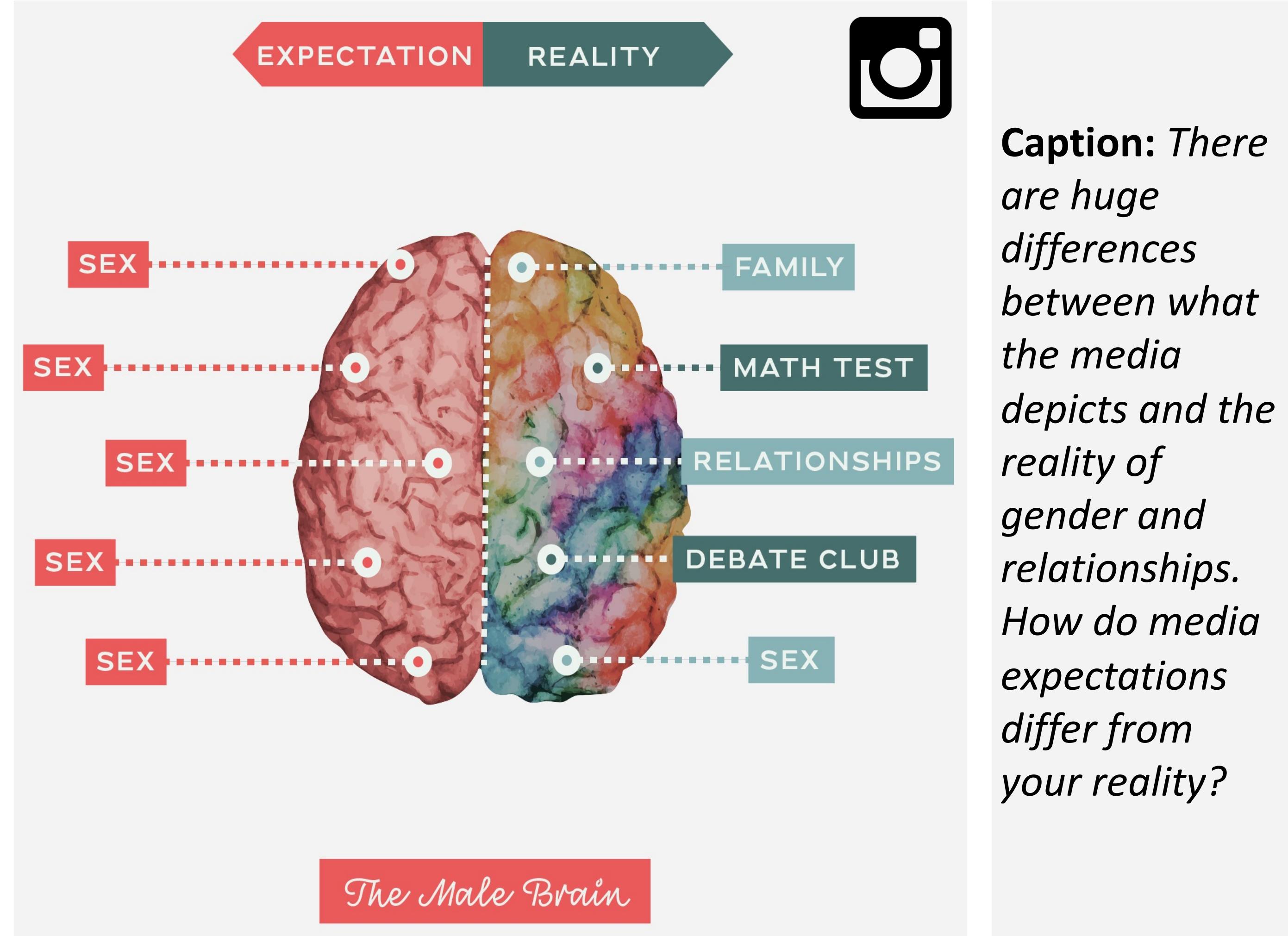
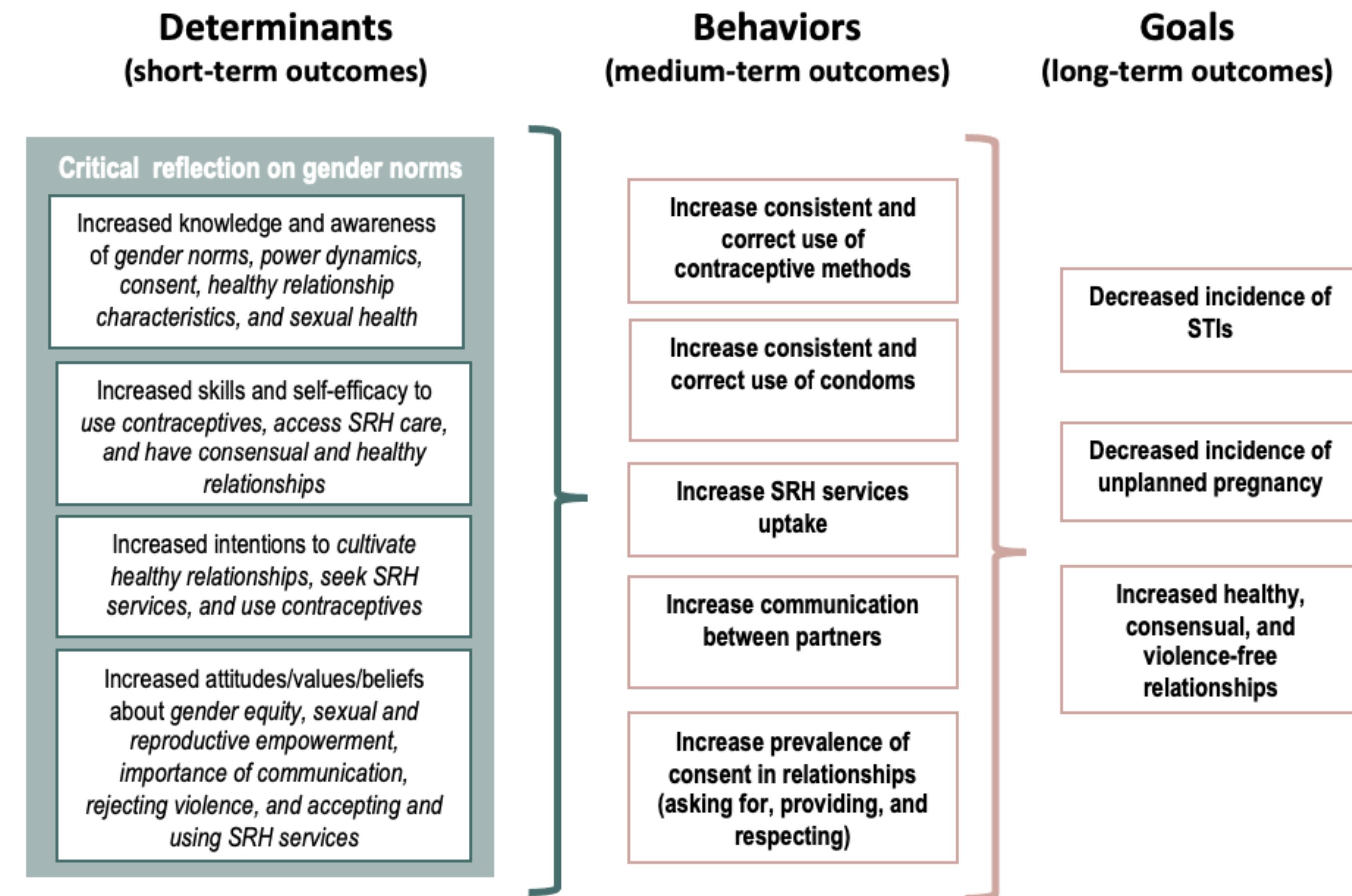
1. Adolescents are capable decision-makers.
2. Gender equity and diversity are catalysts for empathy and understanding.
3. Intersectionality is a means of representation.

## PROCESS

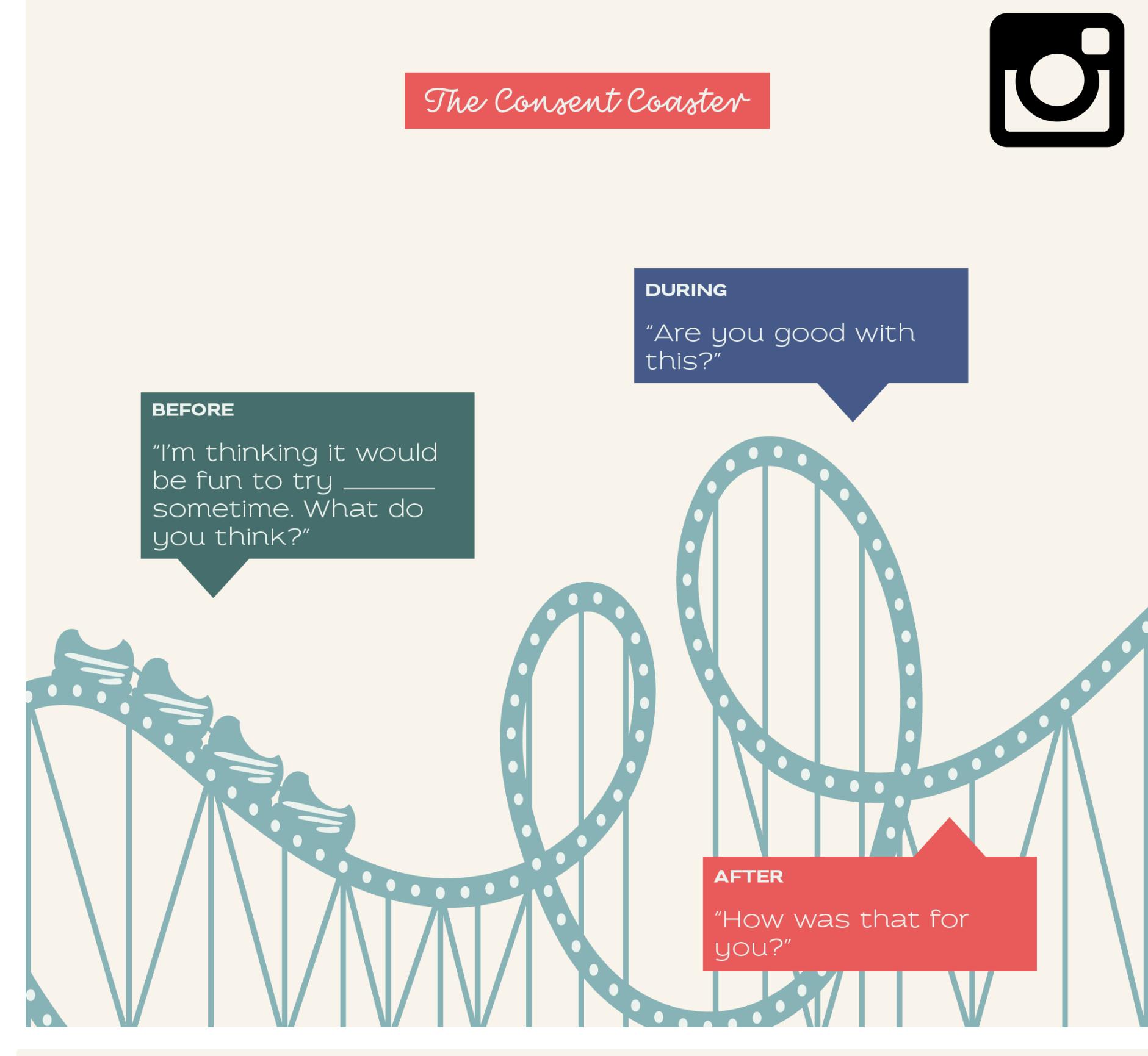
1. Conducted formative research with youth to inform the adaptation of Equimundo's evidence-based gender-transformative curricula.
2. Developed a complementary digital component to accompany the in-person sessions
3. Pilot (2022) & implementation (2023-2025) in community center and charter school settings in English and Spanish

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

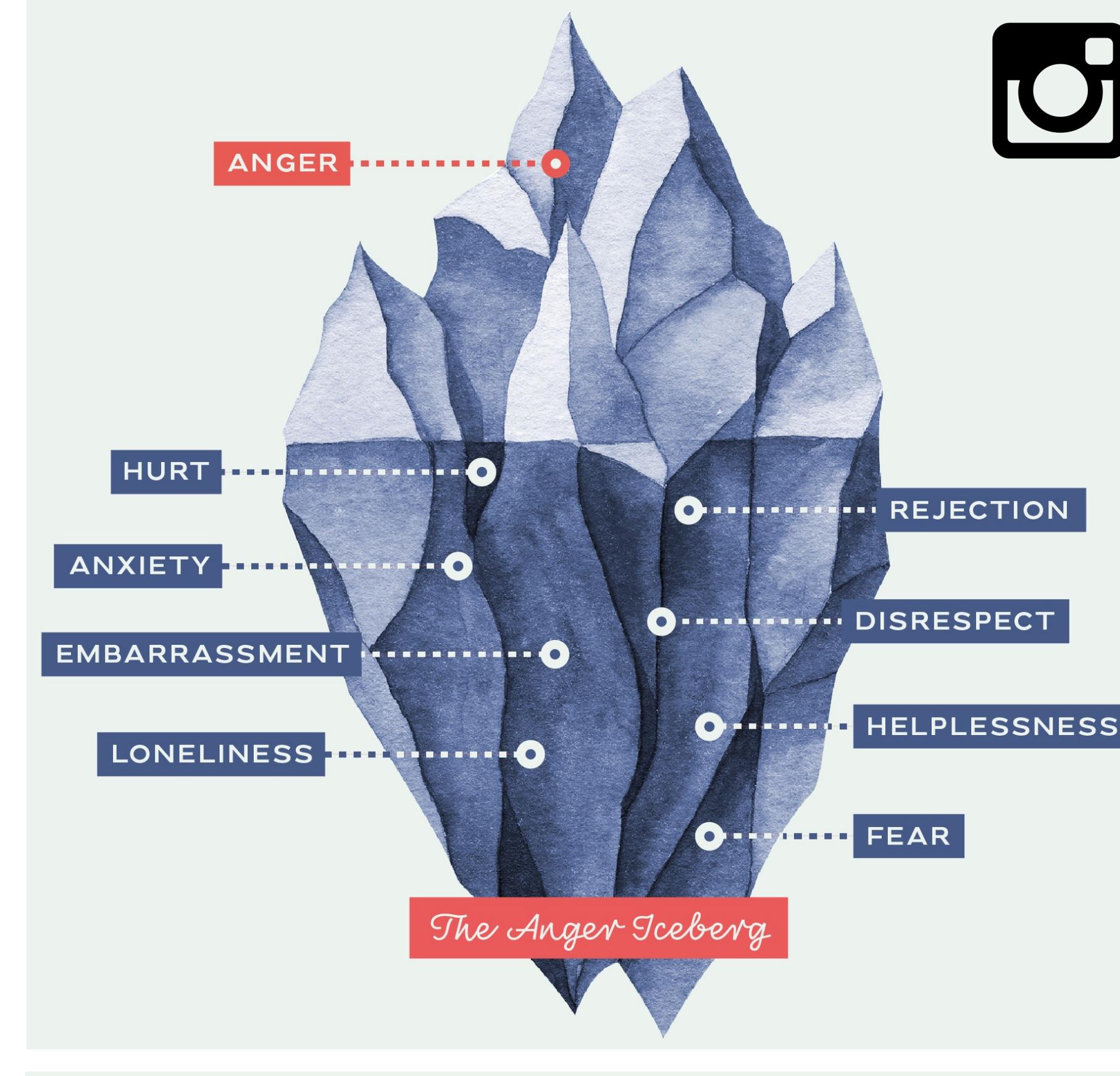
Through a Randomized Control Trial (RCT), we will evaluate the following short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of the intervention.



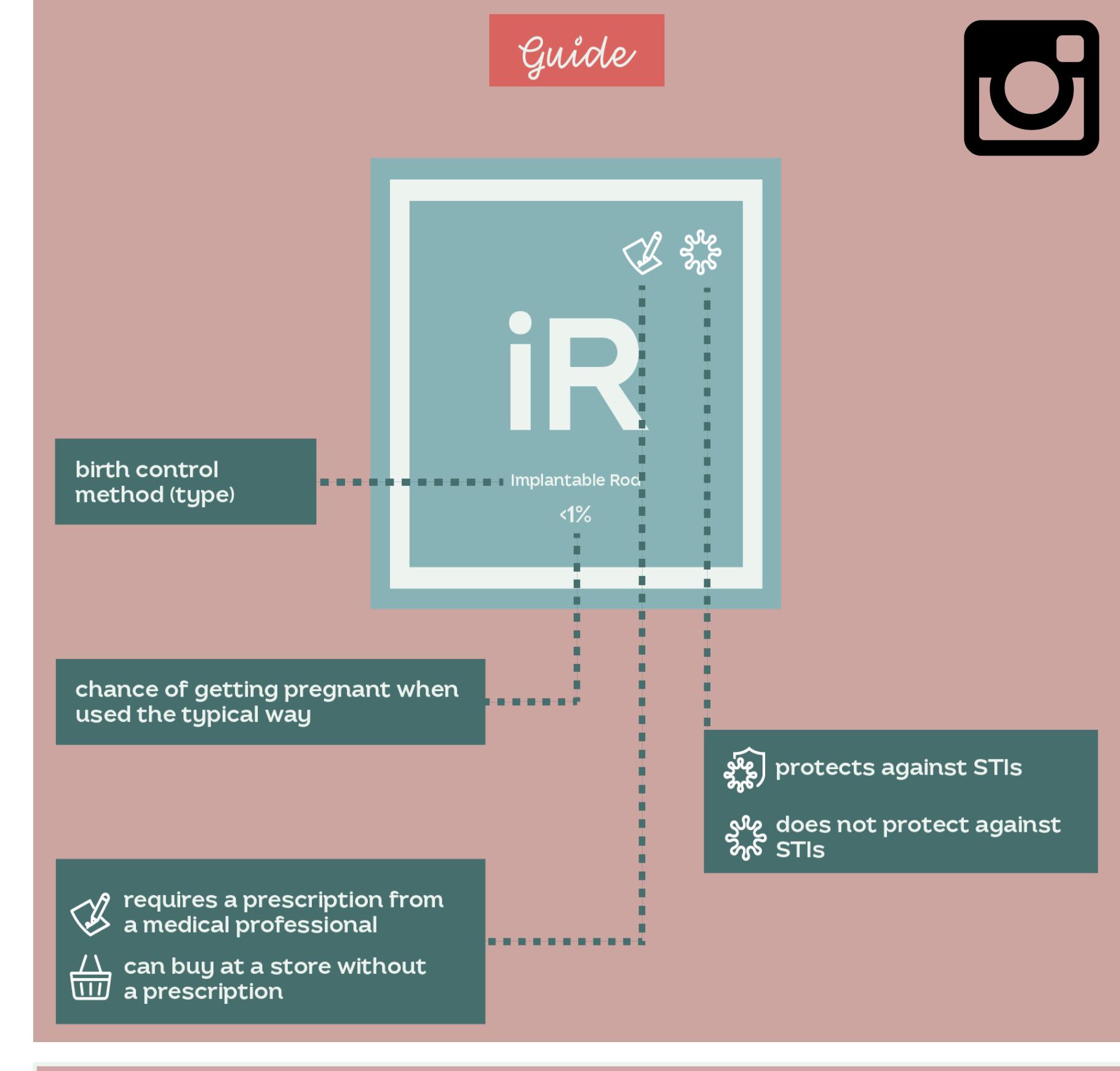
*The Male Brain*



**Caption:** If you're having sex, you and your partner should enjoy it! Checking-in is important and can make sex more fun. How do you check in before, during, or after sex?



**Caption:** What you see from the surface can be misleading. In times when you're showing anger, what other emotions are you feeling?



**Caption:** Implantable rod: A super-tiny rod inserted under the skin of the upper arm. This birth control method is longer-acting and reversible.