



# ACTIVATE

THE CENTER TO BRING ADOLESCENT  
SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH  
TO YOUTH-SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS

*Helping Young People Choose the  
Birth Control Method Right for Them*

## Resource Tutorial

Module 1: Using the Reflective Questions  
in the Birth Control Methods Guide



# Tutorial Purpose

This tutorial will show youth-supporting professionals how to use Activate's "Helping Young People Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them" resource.

# Birth Control Methods Guide

- Instructions for using the guide
- Background information
- Reflective questions
- Conversation starters
- Birth Control Methods Matrix

## Helping Young People Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them: A Guide for Youth-Supporting Professionals

Amanda M. Griffin, Colleen Schlecht, Emma Pliskin, and Amy Dworsky

### Introduction

"Helping Young People Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them: A Guide for Youth Supporting Professionals" (the Guide) is a research-informed resource designed for professionals who work with young people who experience the child welfare or justice systems, homelessness, or disconnection from school and work. It is intended to facilitate a conversation that centers young people's birth control preferences, needs, and priorities. The guidance it offers was informed by research and conversations with young people who have lived expertise and with youth-supporting professionals. By using this resource, youth-supporting professionals can empower all young people, regardless of their gender or sexual identity, to choose the birth control method that is right for them.

The Guide includes three sections that are meant to be used together:

1. Instructions for Using the Guide
2. Background
3. Conversation Starters and Birth Control Methods Matrix

"A Birth Control Methods Information Booklet" (Information Booklet) provides detailed information about all the birth control methods included in the birth control methods matrix. It also includes a glossary of terms. Professionals can use this resource to learn about birth control methods they are not familiar with and can share the information with young people to empower them to choose the birth control method that is right for them.

### Instructions for Using the Guide and the Information Booklet

Familiarize yourself with the questions, statements, and birth control methods matrix in the Conversation Starters and Birth Control Methods Matrix ahead of talking with a young person. For additional guidance, read Activate's "[Seven Tips for Youth-Supporting Professionals for Talking with Youth about Sexual and Reproductive Health](#)."

1. Review the Background section which summarizes the research informing this Guide.
2. Reflect on the questions at the top of page 4 before starting a conversation about birth control with a young person.
3. Record the young person's responses or have the young person record their responses to the five conversation-starter questions at the bottom of page 4.

*Activate: The Collective to Bring Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Research to Youth-Supporting Professionals aims to bridge the gap between research and practice in support of the Office of Population Affairs' mission to prevent teen pregnancy and promote adolescent health. Activate translates research into practice by creating research-based resources for use by professionals who support young people who experience the child welfare and/or justice systems, homelessness, and/or disconnection from school and work (i.e., opportunity youth).*

# Birth Control Methods Information Booklet

- Information about each birth control method listed in the Birth Control Methods Matrix
- Glossary of key terms

## Helping Young People to Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them

### Birth Control Methods Information Booklet

Amanda M. Griffin, Colleen Schlecht,  
Emma Pliskin, and Amy Dworsky

#### Glossary of Key Terms<sup>16</sup>

This glossary of terms may help you understand the information contained in this booklet. It can also be used to explain the information in this booklet to young individuals.

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**Barrier birth control methods** prevent pregnancy by blocking sperm from passing through the cervix. Examples include condoms, diaphragms, foam, sponges, and cervical caps.

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**Basal body temperature** method is a fertility awareness-based birth control method that involves tracking body temperature over time to predict ovulation.

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**Birth control** is any behavior, device, medicine, or procedure used to prevent pregnancy—also known as contraception.

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**Cisgender** refers to a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

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**Cervical mucus monitoring** is one fertility awareness-based birth control method that involves tracking changes in the appearance and quantity of cervical mucus.

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**Cervix** is the narrow, lower part of the uterus, with a small opening that connects the uterus to the vagina.

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**Contraception** is any behavior, device, medicine, or procedure used to prevent pregnancy—also known as birth control.

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# Resource Development



Identified a need for a resource on birth control methods



Reviewed the literature on factors that influence birth control choices



Sought input from youth-supporting professionals and young people



Had the resource reviewed by medical and public health experts

# Tutorial Modules

**Background:** Birth Control Methods and Birth Control Method Choice

**Module 1:** Using the Reflective Questions in the Birth Control Methods Guide

**Module 2:** Using the Conversation Starters in the Birth Control Methods Guide

**Module 3:** Using the Birth Control Methods Matrix in the Birth Control Methods Guide





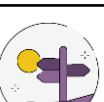

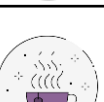
**Module 4:** Using the Birth Control Methods Information Booklet

# Learning Objectives

After completing this module, you will know how to:

- Assess your readiness to talk with young people about choosing a birth control method.
- Prepare for a conversation about birth control methods with a young person.

# Seven Tips for Youth-Supporting Professionals

	Be comprehensive and clear in discussions about sexual and reproductive health.
	Explain confidentiality and reporting requirements.
	Use inclusive, gender-neutral language.
	Customize interactions with youth based on context and individual needs.
	Honor and respect youth requests and decision making.
	Use positive mannerisms and body language.
	Build safe physical and emotional environments (in-person and virtually).



# Using the Reflective Questions

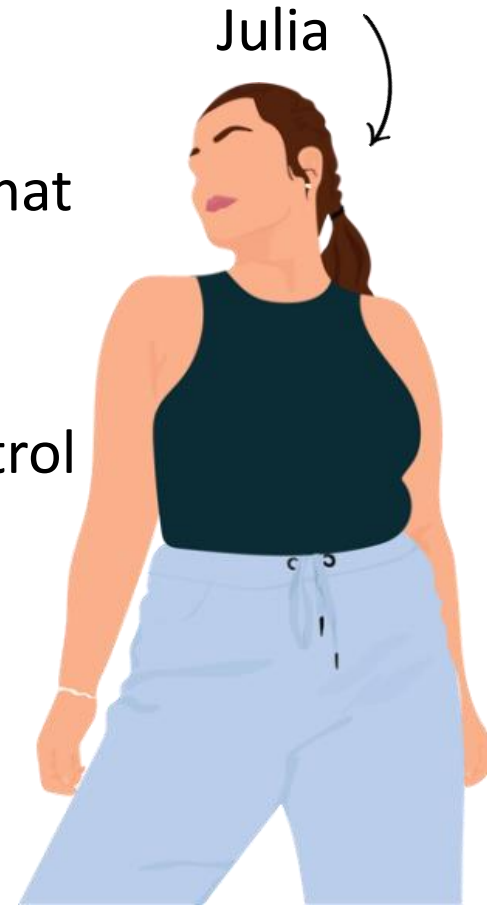


# Example for Using the Reflective Questions

- Marina works at a transitional housing program for youth.
- Julia, a 17-year-old resident who is gender-fluid\*, confided in Maria that they are interested in using birth control but don't know what their options are.
- Marina does not feel prepared to talk with Julia about their birth control options.

 **How might Marina use the Birth Control Methods Guide in this situation?**

\*Gender-fluid describes someone whose gender identify is not fixed. A gender-fluid person might identify as a man one day and as a woman the next.



# What can Marina do?

Use the reflective questions on page 4 of the Guide to prepare for this conversation.

## **Before Starting a Conversation with Young People about Choosing Birth Control**

We recommend reflecting on the following five questions before starting a conversation about birth control with a young person:

- ▶ 1. Is your location one in which the young person will feel safe and you can have a private conversation?
- 2. Will you feel comfortable having a conversation about choosing a birth control method with this young person?
- 3. Are you prepared to listen to the young person and avoid being judgmental?
- 4. Have you built enough rapport with the young person to ask sensitive questions?
- 5. Do you believe you are the best person to have this conversation with the young person?

# What can Marina do?

Use the reflective questions on page 4 of the Guide to prepare for this conversation.

## Before Starting a Conversation with Young People about Choosing Birth Control

We recommend reflecting on the following five questions before starting a conversation about birth control with a young person:

1. Is your location one in which the young person will feel safe and you can have a private conversation?
2. Will you feel comfortable having a conversation about choosing a birth control method with this young person?
- ▶ 3. Are you prepared to listen to the young person and avoid being judgmental?
4. Have you built enough rapport with the young person to ask sensitive questions?
5. Do you believe you are the best person to have this conversation with the young person?

# What can Marina do?

- Review Activate's [Seven Tips for Youth-Supporting Professionals for Talking with Youth about Sexual and Reproductive Health](#)

## Seven Tips for Youth-Supporting Professionals for Talking with Youth about Sexual and Reproductive Health



### Introduction

Youth-supporting professionals can play a critical role in educating youth about sexual health. For example, professionals can support young people in developing the skills they need to safely negotiate sexual encounters.<sup>1</sup> When professionals approach conversations with youth about sexual and reproductive health openly and honestly, they can build and maintain a rapport with young people.

This tip sheet provides youth-supporting professionals with seven tangible recommendations to promote effective and open conversations about sexual and reproductive health with young people, especially youth who are in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems or who are experiencing homelessness or disconnection from work and school (also referred to as opportunity youth).

These tips were developed through a series of discussion sessions with five youth who have been involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems or who have experienced homelessness or disconnection, and four youth-supporting professionals. Activate researchers identified relevant literature to support the themes that emerged from those discussions. Whenever possible, that research focused on youth in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, youth experiencing homelessness, or opportunity youth.

These tips are based on two assumptions about the role of professionals in communicating with youth about sexual and reproductive health:

1. Youth-supporting professionals have conversations with young people about sexual and reproductive health. The recommendations in this tip sheet are meant to facilitate those conversations.
2. Youth-supporting professionals must acknowledge when they do not have answers to youths' questions and seek needed information in partnership with the youth. Youth-supporting professionals should avoid trying to "know everything" when discussing sexual and reproductive health with youth.

# What can Marina do?

- Review Activate's [Using Trauma-Responsive, LGBTQ+ Affirming Care to Connect Young People to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services](#)

## Using Trauma-Responsive, LGBTQ+ Affirming Care to Connect Young People to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Emma Pliskin, MPH, Asari Offiong, PhD, MPH, Julia Tallant, BA, Melissa Kull, PhD, MS

### Introduction

This resource is designed for youth-supporting professionals—especially case managers—who provide direct care services to young people who experience the child welfare or justice systems, homelessness, or disconnection from school and work. (Throughout this resource, we refer to this group of youth simply as “young people.”) Case managers are critical gatekeepers to information about sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for these young people and are responsible for making referrals and helping them access SRH services and resources.

Researchers estimate that about 30 percent of young people in the child welfare system, 25 percent of young people experiencing unstable housing, and 20 percent of young people in the juvenile justice system identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+), compared to about 11 percent of youth in the general population.<sup>1,2</sup> Many of these young people have experienced trauma.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes this trauma is a direct result of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, such as when a young person becomes homeless due to family rejection after revealing a LGBTQ+ identity.<sup>4,5</sup>

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# What can Marina do?

- Review Activate's [Key Concepts to Guide Professionals Working with LGBTQ+ Youth](#)

## Key Concepts to Guide Professionals Working with LGBTQ+ Youth

This document briefly reviews gender and sexual identities and provides foundational knowledge and key terms specific to working with LGBTQ+ youth. We recommend that youth-supporting professionals review this information before reading the resource titled "[Using Trauma-Responsive, LGBTQ+ Affirming Care to Connect Young People to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services](#)." This product is not meant to be all-encompassing—there are many ways that people in the LGBTQ+ community, across cultures, relate to and understand gender and sexual identities. There is also a glossary along with additional resources and citations for more information.

**LGBTQ+ affirming care** is an approach to care that is respectful, supportive, empowering, and informed by the unique needs and experiences of individuals who identify as LGBTQ+,<sup>1</sup> a population that encompasses multiple expressions of gender and sexuality.

There are many different genders and ways in which people see and relate to their gender. **Gender** begins as an identifier assigned at birth that determines someone's social and legal status and determines how they are organized and treated in different settings, including but not limited to family, school, and doctors' offices. People are taught different behaviors and expectations based on their assigned gender very early on in life, which can make it difficult for them to disentangle their gender identity from their assigned gender.<sup>2</sup>

**Gender identity** is an internal sense of self that helps people situate themselves in a world with varying expectations for each gender. Someone's gender identity can align with a binary gender (man or woman), be outside the binary (non-binary), shift between different genders (genderfluid), or be something else altogether.<sup>23</sup> Gender identity is different from **sexual identity**, which refers to who someone is sexually and/or romantically attracted to.<sup>123</sup> Sexual identities may include identities like **lesbian**, **gay**, **bisexual**, **pansexual**, **queer**, and **asexual**. People with different gender expressions may have any sexual identity. You should avoid assuming all young people with whom you engage are straight, engage in particular types of sex, have the same sexual and reproductive health needs, or live their lives the same way.

# Key Takeaways

Use the Birth Control Methods Guide to:

- Assess your readiness to talk with young people about choosing a birth control method.
- Become comfortable talking to a young person about birth control.



**For more information, contact Activate at**

**[activatecenter@childtrends.org](mailto:activatecenter@childtrends.org)**

The tutorial was developed by the following Activate team members:

Amanda Griffin, Colleen Schlecht, Erin Carreon,  
Asari Offiong, & Amy Dworsky

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