

*Empathways* is an empathy-building card activity developed to support health care providers' counseling interactions with young clients. This version of *Empathways* has been adapted for PrEP service delivery for LGBTQIA+ people.

## Introduction

*Empathways* takes participants on a journey from thinking about their own experiences to understanding their partner's experiences, and then working together to improve Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) service delivery for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other people with diverse sexual orientations/gender identities (LGBTQIA+).

The objective is to forge greater empathy between providers and LGBTQIA+ people, and for providers to apply this empathy to improve PrEP and other sexual and reproductive health service delivery to this population.

This adaptation of *Empathways* was developed for use in CATALYST provider training. It is designed for use by pairs of LGBTQIA+ people and HIV/family planning service providers.

*Empathways* includes three rounds with one card deck for each round:

- Round 1: **OPEN UP** - To help participants develop rapport.
- Round 2: **DISCOVER** - To explore the factors that impact providers' attitudes and PrEP service delivery for LGBTQIA+ people.
- Round 3: **CONNECT** - To reflect on service delivery scenarios and invite providers to commit to improving PrEP service delivery to LGBTQIA+ people.


## Facilitation

Light facilitation is recommended, particularly to ensure respectful conversations, keep the activity to time, introduce and conclude sessions, and share experiences between each of the three rounds. When planning, think about how participant literacy, age, and gender dynamics might impact the activity. During the session, pay attention to body language to ensure participants feel safe and comfortable - and that facilitators are prepared to intervene if needed to ensure participant well-being.

All information shared within the context of this activity will be kept confidential, and remain between the facilitator and participants.

## Participants

All participants – providers and LGBTQIA+ people – reserve the right to stop or pause participation at any time. Participation is voluntary and solely intended to be a learning exercise to help improve service delivery by establishing the importance of empathy in providing stigma-free services.



This card deck is designed to be used with LGBTQIA+ people who are somewhat familiar with HIV prevention and family planning services and with providers who are interested in better understanding LGBTQIA+ clients. When conducting *Empathways* with LGBTQIA+ people, it is especially important to choose LGBTQIA+ participants who are comfortable sharing their identities as part of the activity, and who will be able to access support after the activity if needed. For this reason, it is recommended that you reach out to local organizations that work with LGBTQIA+ people to help you plan the activity and invite interested LGBTQIA+ program participants to take part, and even co-facilitate sessions with you.

## Card Review

When planning your session, consider your participants' needs and readiness to talk about reproductive health, HIV & AIDS, HIV prevention interventions including PrEP.

Review all cards in the deck and consider if any will be counterproductive to your activity. If you wish to skip or remove any cards, consider using the printable version of the deck to tailor the cards according to your needs.

## Room Setup

*Empathways* is designed for use between pairs of LGBTQIA+ people and providers. Placing a small table between the LGBTQIA+ person and the provider might make each feel more comfortable and focused; this will give them somewhere to lean, personal space, and somewhere to put their belongings. Each pair should be spaced far enough away from other pairs to allow for some privacy.

See attached Facilitator's Guide (Deck).

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