

Positive Peers

A nationwide app connecting young people with HIV to each other & retaining them in care

Jennifer McMillen Smith, MSSA, LISW-S
Project Director, The MetroHealth System, Cleveland, OH

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this activity, participants will be able to:

- 1) Identify unique challenges of achieving sustained viral suppression faced by young people living with HIV.
- 2) Recognize the Positive Peers App mHealth intervention as a tool to decrease stigma perception and increase retention in care.
- 3) Use Affordance Theory to conceptualize human interaction with and via mHealth technology.

Disclosures

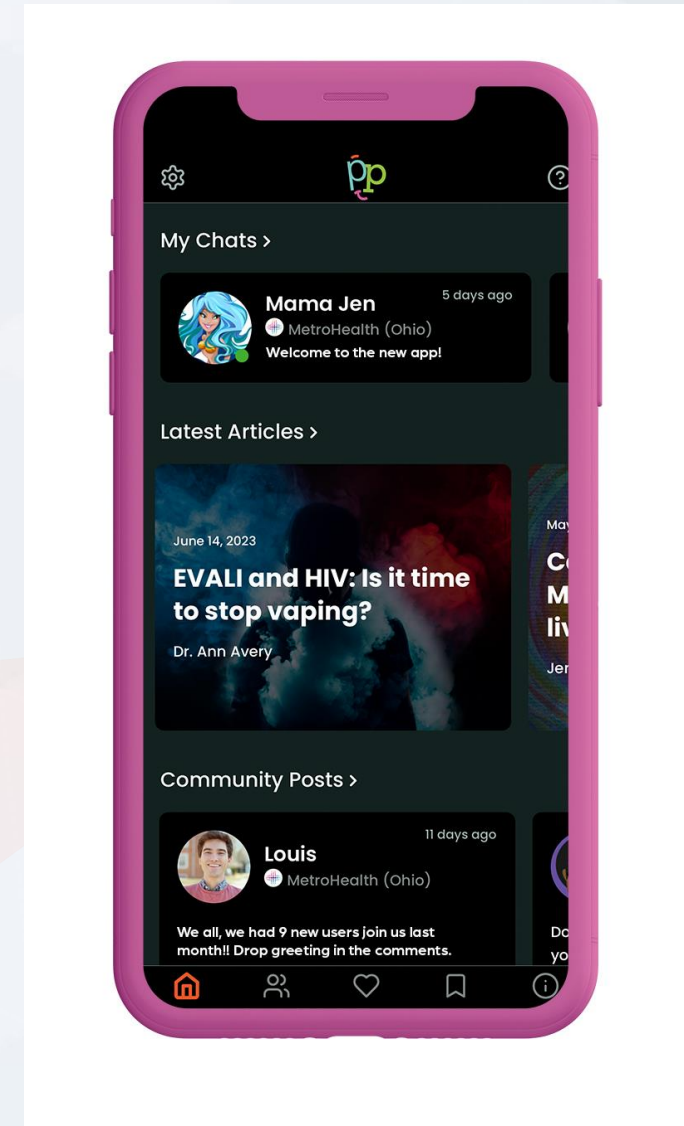
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Intervention Overview

Positive Peers is an app with companion social media and a website that aims to engage young people in HIV care and connect them to a private, stigma-free, supportive community of peers from all over the US



positivepeers.org
@PositivePeers4U

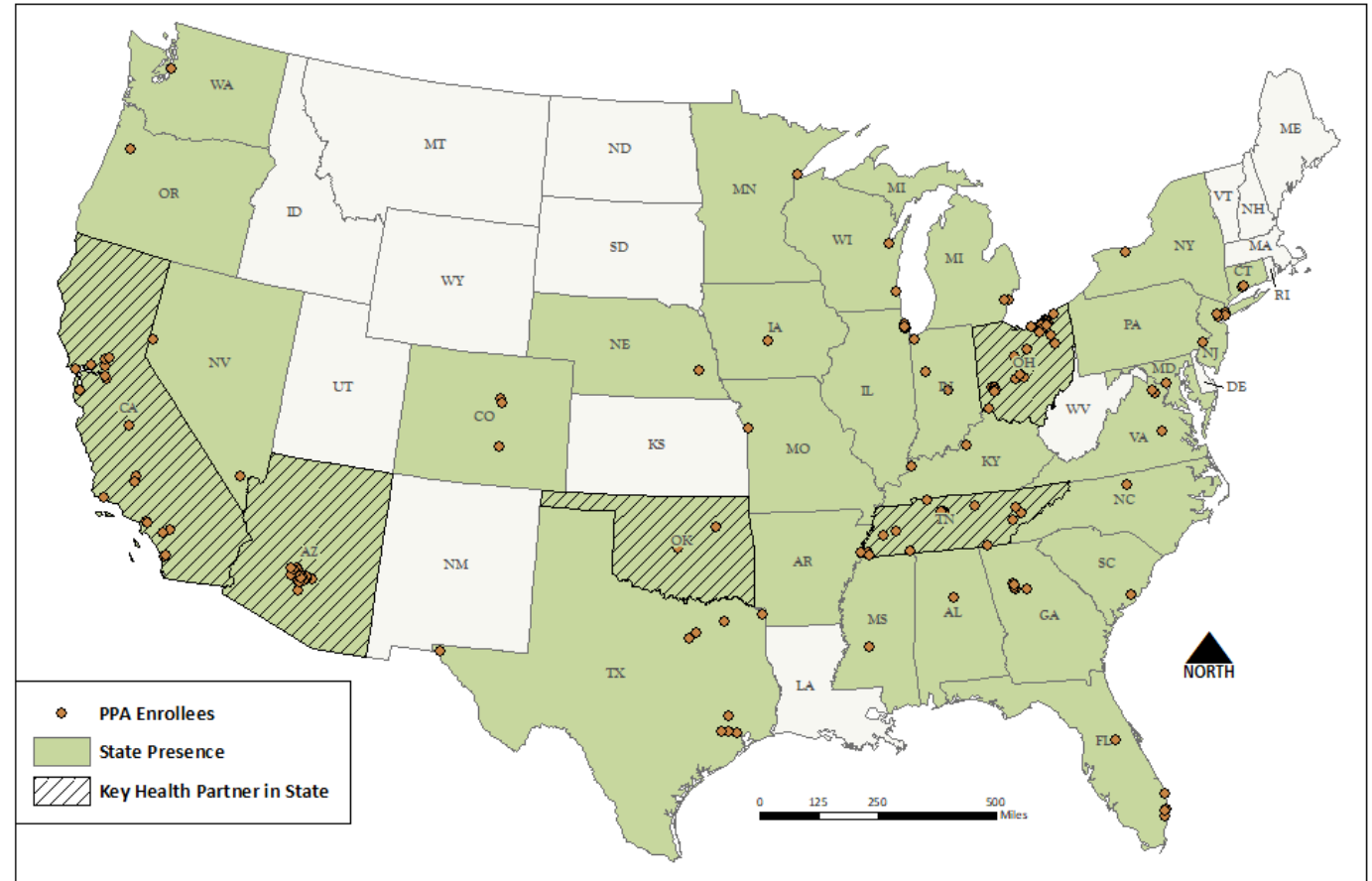


Demographic Overview

Positive Peers is always free for young people with HIV and has users from all over the United States

Positive Peers Application (PPA) Enrollment

As of June 2023



Author: PPA Team
Data Sources: PPA Enrollment Log; 2010 U.S. Census

What are the top 2 ways you usually use your favorite social app?

1. Connect with family and friends
2. Meet new people
3. For news / current events
4. To learn things
5. Be aware of the cool things going on in my area (cultural events, new restaurants, etc)
6. Following the latest trends and celebrities
7. Watch funny videos
8. View other peoples' drama / lurk / troll

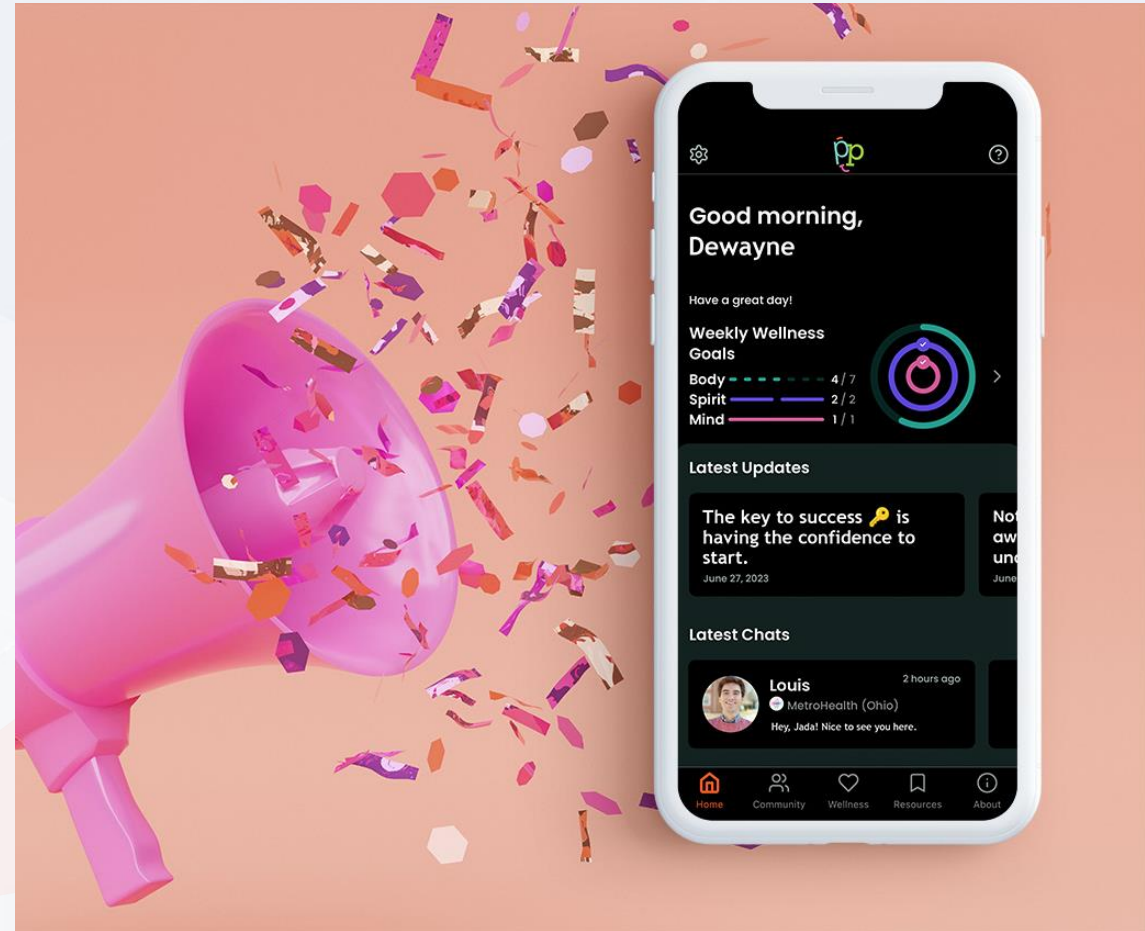
Media Affordance Theory

- Positive Peers is based on Media Affordance Theory
- *Affordances* are **features of user/technology** interaction that offer gratification of perceived needs
- *Affordances* **emerge from interaction** with technologies (Leonardi, 2011)
 - Experimentation and adaptation shape user's perceptions of how technology can work for them
 - Relational actions occur among users with technologies (Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Faraj & Azad, 2012)



App 2.0

- Positive Peers 2.0 launched on 8/15/2023
- Now ANYONE can download the app for a guest version
- Only 13-34 year olds with HIV and living in the US are eligible to register for full use of the app



Why restrict registration to 13-34 year olds?

- The younger a person is, the less likely they are retained in HIV care and achieving sustained viral suppression. Nationwide in 2019, just 63% of people in the youngest age range, 13-24, were virally suppressed.

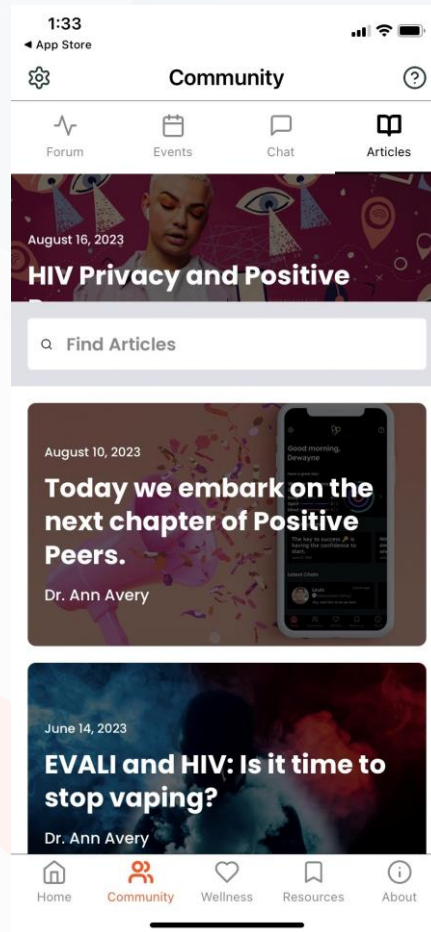
CDC. [Monitoring selected national HIV prevention and care objectives by using HIV surveillance data—United States and 6 dependent areas, 2019](#). *HIV Surveillance Supplemental Report* 2021;26(2).

Young people with HIV (YPWH) are very likely to be at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities (LGBTQIA), minoritized and disenfranchised communities (BIPOC) and often experience compounding stigma, isolation and social drivers of health-related barriers to HIV care, overall health and longevity.

Reisner SL, Jadwin-Cakmak L, White Hughto JM, Martinez M, Salomon L, Harper GW. Characterizing the HIV prevention and care continua in a sample of transgender youth in the US. *AIDS Behav* 2017 Dec;21(12):3312-3327 [doi:10.1007/s10461-017-1938-8]

Senn TE, Braksmayer A, Coury-Doniger P, Urban MA, Rossi A, Carey MP. Development and preliminary pilot testing of a peer support text messaging intervention for HIV-infected black men who have sex with men. *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr* 2017 Feb 01;74(Suppl 2):S121-S127 [doi: 10.1097/QAI.0000000000001241]

Positive Peers provides health information



- Accurate, easy-to-understand HIV health and wellness education information in nearly 400 articles written at a 6th grade level
- [Medical News Today](#) named Positive Peers one of the top 10 best blogs on HIV/AIDS in 2018
- [MyTherapy](#) listed Positive Peers among the top 10 Best HIV and AIDS Blogs in 2019
- [FeedSpot](#) named Positive Peers one of the Top 50 HIV Blogs, Websites and Influencers in 2019 and 2020
- [Verywell Health](#) named Positive Peers one of the 7 Best HIV Support Groups of 2021
- [WebMD](#) lists Positive Peers as a support app for PWH

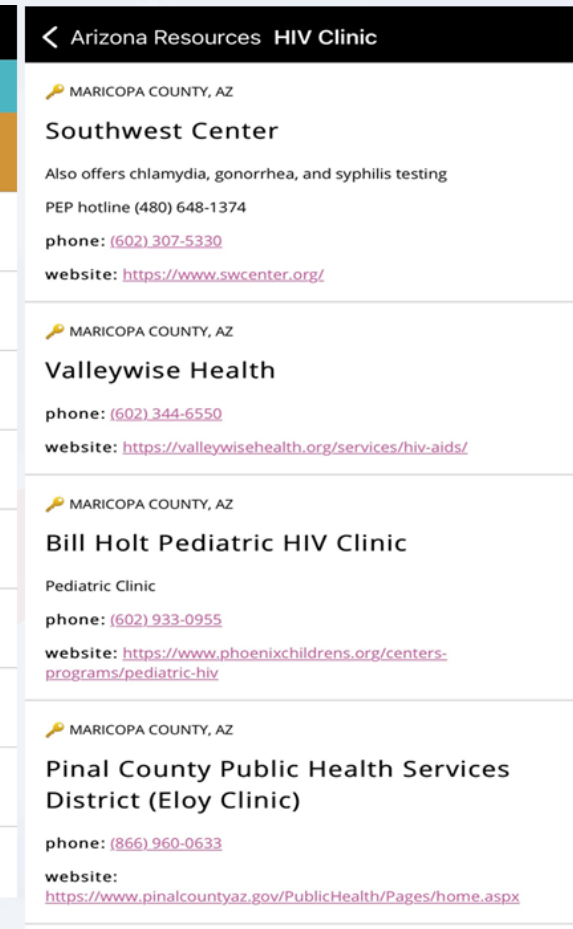
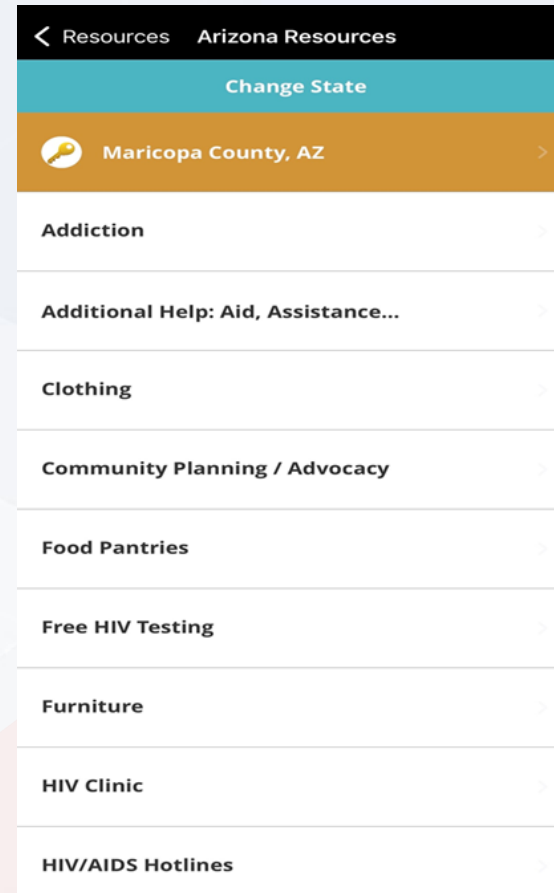
Tales of Triumph



- Personal stories of real young people living with HIV

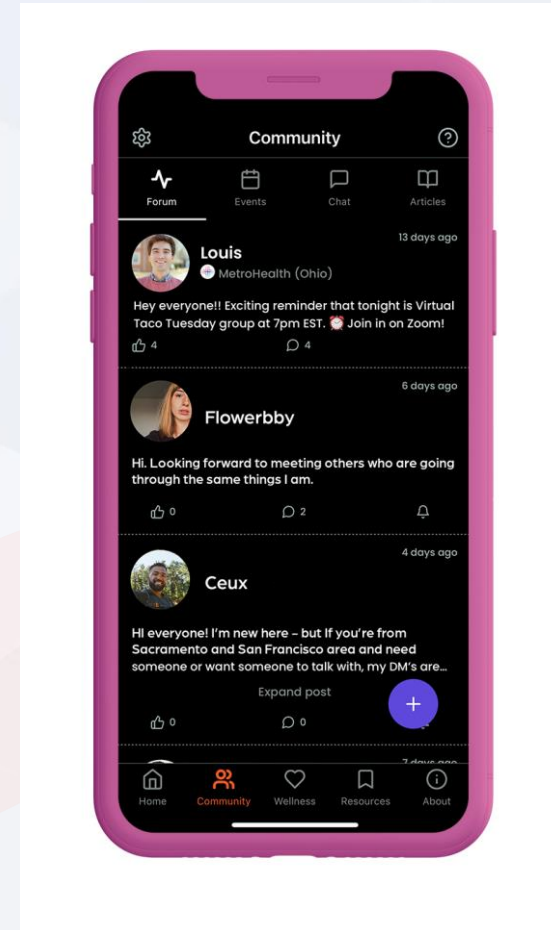
Resources

Positive Peers provides curated community resources that can be customized and maintained by Key Health Partners



Community Connection

Positive Peers provides **human connection in a virtual space** through social networking in a community conversation and private chats



Community Forum

Similar to posting on Facebook or an online forum

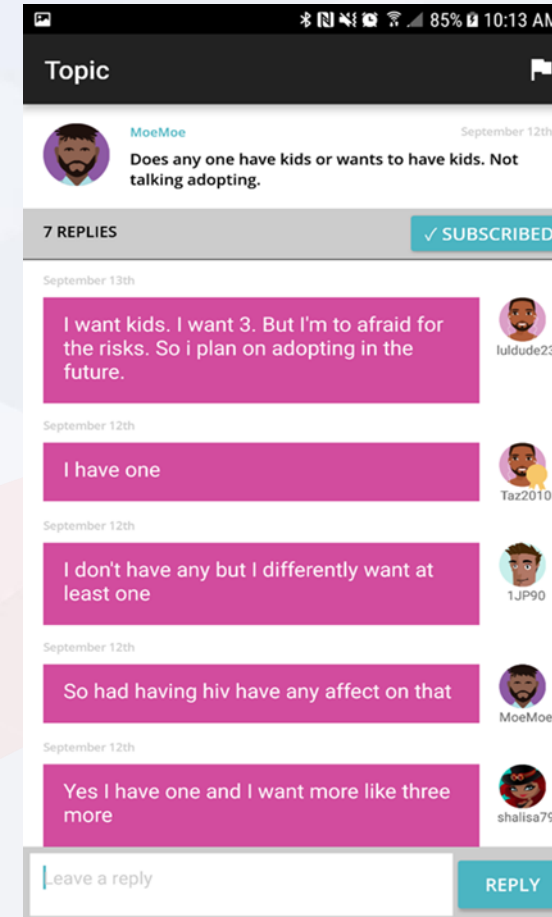
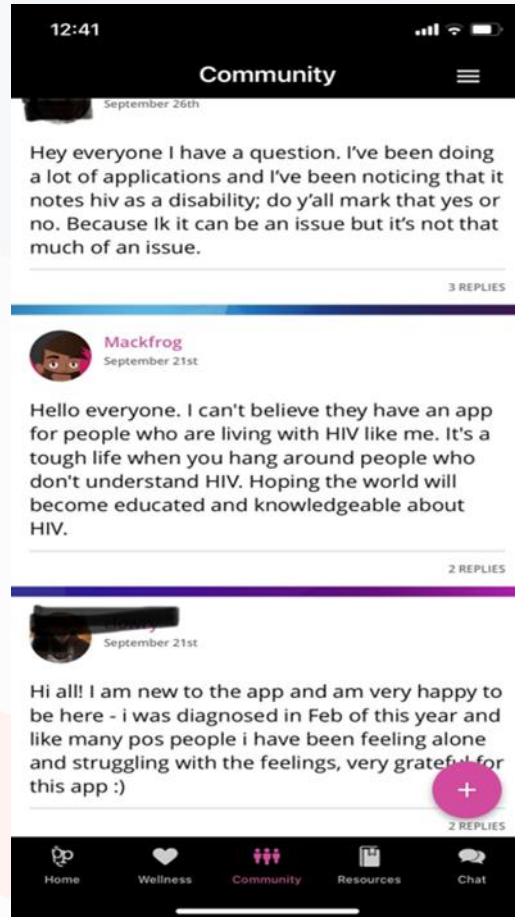
Everyone can see and reply to posts

Admins can add in links to external or in-app content

Everyone can use emojis 😊 and GIFs

Participants cannot upload and share pictures or videos

Real talk in the community

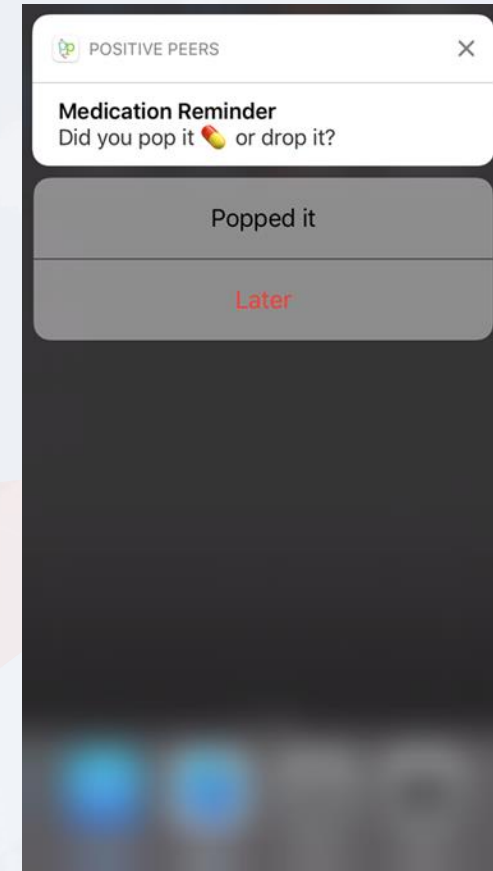
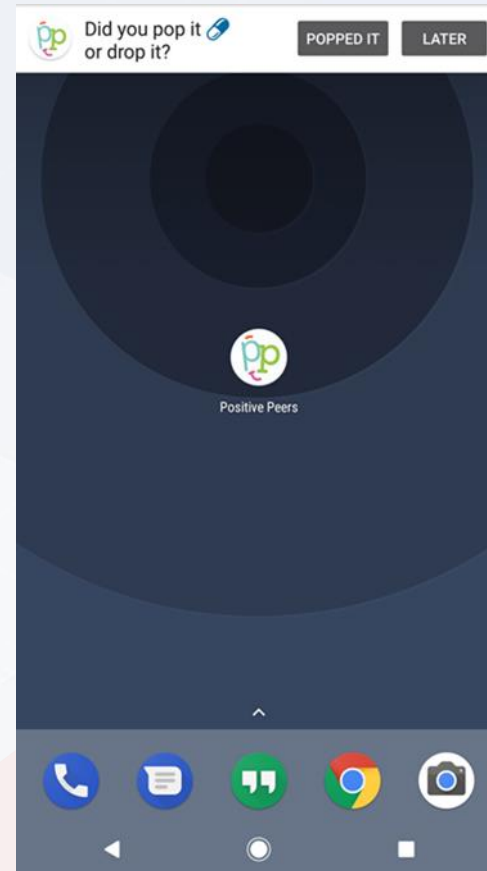


Chat



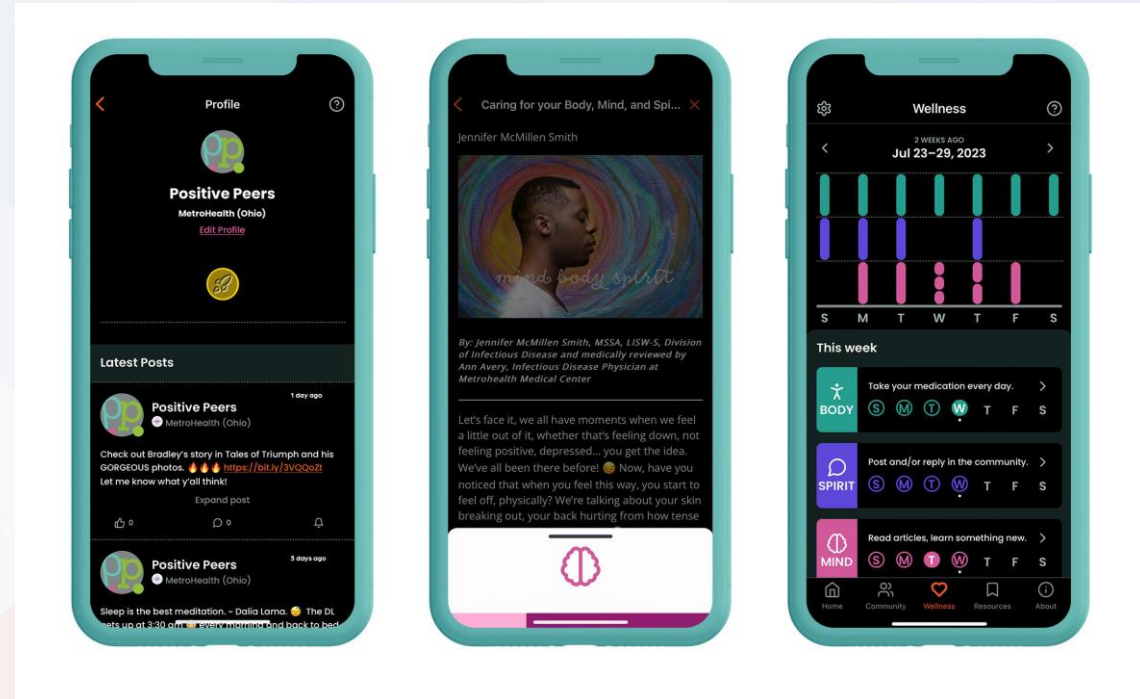
Health Management Tools

Positive Peers provides health management tools, such as our customized medication reminder

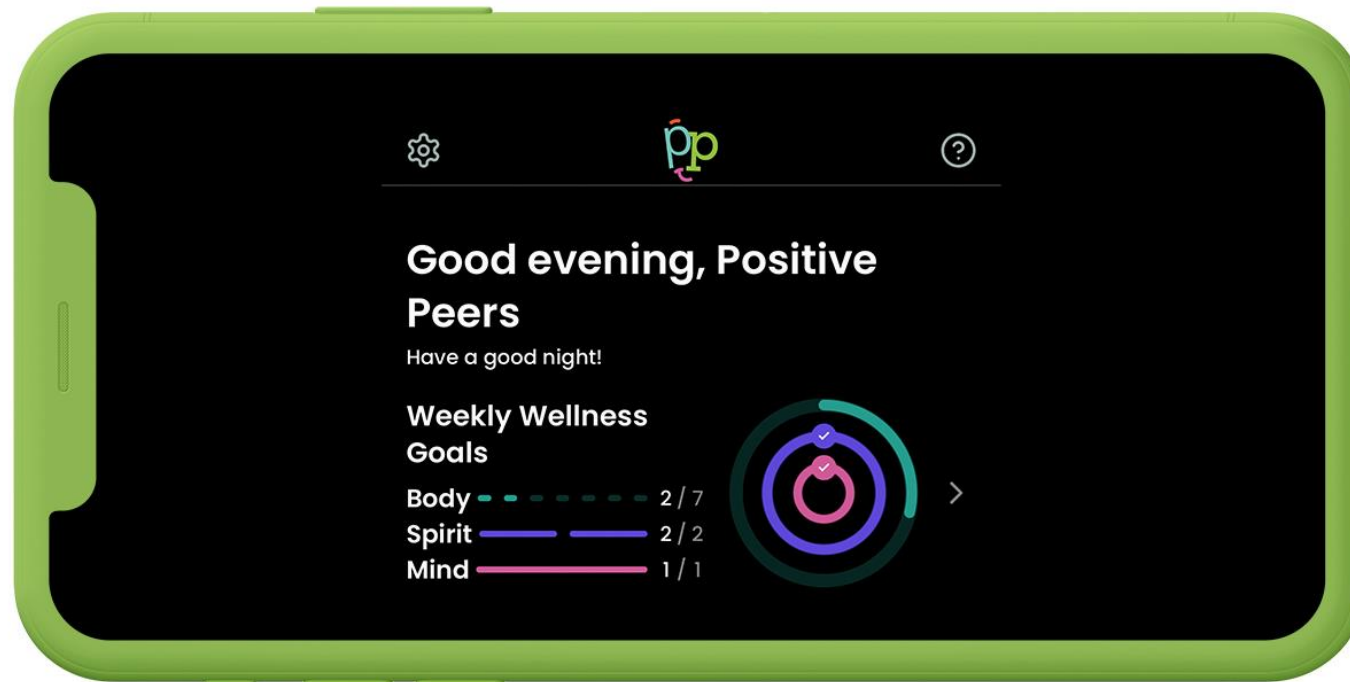


Wellness Tracker

Positive Peers provides a Wellness Tracker where users can accumulate daily points in mind, body, and spirit



Weekly Wellness Goals



Enrollment

Positive Peers Provides:

- **FREE** and easy online enrollment
- Option to upload proof of age and status or choose to allow Key Health Partner to verify eligibility

Getting started is simple, safe and discreet.

Let's start with a few simple questions.

Fields marked with an * are required



- between the ages of 13 and 34 years old
- a resident of the United States

- a functioning iOS or Android smartphone
- a current email address

Don't worry!

We take your privacy **very** seriously and will never share your information with anyone. Read our [Privacy Policy](#).



Intervention Successes

After initial SPNS grant period ended and Positive Peers was well received, MetroHealth used local and internal resources to fund a scale-up strategy to bring the app to all eligible young people with HIV in the US for FREE



As of the end of 2022, we have Key Health Partnerships in 5 different states:

Maricopa County Ryan White, AZ	Sacramento County Ryan White, CA	Tennessee Department of Health, TN	Equitas Health, an ASO in OH	Oklahoma State Department of Health, OK
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Published Outcomes – JMIR 2022

Positive Peers app use and viral suppression

- One year after enrollment in the study, app users on average experienced more optimal health outcomes than the comparison group
- App users overall were 1.66 times more likely to attend office visits than those who did not use the app
- The youngest group, ages 13-24, were 2.85 times more likely to obtain HIV laboratory tests and were **4.22 times more likely to achieve HIV viral suppression** than the comparison group

Published Outcomes – HPP 2020

Positive Peers app use and stigma

Specific stigma measures included: overall stigma, personal stigma, disclosure stigma, self image stigma, and perceived public attitudes

- Black participants reported less stigma than other participants both at baseline and over time
- Overall stigma and public attitudes stigma lessened for all participants over all time points
- Participants who were under 25 years old reported less disclosure stigma over time ($p=.06$; $p=.03$)
- Participants who were 30 years and older reported less public attitudes stigma over time ($p=.01$)
- There is a trending inverse relationship for broad use of the app and disclosure stigma ($p =.09$)

Positive Peers App Benefits

**Meet
young
people
where
they
are**

Young people see their phones and social media as their most important means of communicating and socializing. Positive Peers is a way to meet them where they are.

Young people often change their addresses, phone numbers, and even email addresses. They typically do not change social media handles—so once a person is registered for Positive Peers, you have another way to reach them and (re)engage them in care if needed.

Positive Peers App Benefits (cont')

Promotional materials and training

- Spread awareness of the app within your community with available posters, marketing handouts, promotional pins, and stickers provided by the interventionist.
- Admin training

Positive Peers App Benefits (cont')

Admins can:

- Post and reply to all Positive Peers users
 - Post + push
- Send private chats
- Create events where users in the jurisdiction get reminded
- Curate community resources listings
- Share success stories about local YPWH in Tales of Triumph
- Get local, aggregate data

References

The Positive Peers Monograph and Implementation Manual located under the SPNS Social Media Initiative Demonstration Site website (Target HIV): Click on this link and scroll down to “Positive Peers Application (PPA) - Mobile App”: <https://targethiv.org/library/spns-social-media-initiative-demonstration-site-resources>

“Positive Peers”: Function and Content Development of a Mobile App for Engaging and Retaining Young Adults in HIV Care: <https://formative.jmir.org/2020/1/e13495/>

Positive Peers Mobile Application Reduces Stigma Perception Among Young People Living With HIV: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1524839920936244>

The Use of Positive Peers Mobile App to Improve Clinical Outcomes for Young People With HIV: Prospective Observational Cohort Comparison: <https://mhealth.jmir.org/2022/9/e37868/>

More resources plus a cool video featuring PI Ann K. Avery, MD: [Positive Peers | TargetHIV](#)

Thank you! Q & A

PI: Ann K. Avery, MD
aavery@metrohealth.org

Project Director: Jen McMillen Smith, MSSA, LISW-S
jmsmith@metrohealth.org

Visit & Follow:
positivepeers.org
@PositivePeers4U

AETC Program National Centers and HIV Curriculum

- **National Coordinating Resource Center** – serves as the central web –based repository for AETC Program training and capacity building resources; its website includes a free virtual library with training and technical assistance materials, a program directory, and a calendar of trainings and other events. Learn more: <https://aidsetc.org/>
- **National Clinical Consultation Center** – provides free, peer-to-peer, expert advice for health professionals on HIV prevention, care, and treatment and related topics. Learn more: <https://nccc/ucsf.edu>
- **National HIV Curriculum** – provides ongoing, up –to-date HIV training and information for health professionals through a free, web –based curriculum; also provides free CME credits, CNE contact hours, CE contact hours, and maintenance of certification credits. Learn more: www.hiv.uw.edu