

Pleasure is Prevention

“Risky Behaviours”: Co-designed, pleasure-centred sexual health campaigns for LGBTQ+ communities in the ACT

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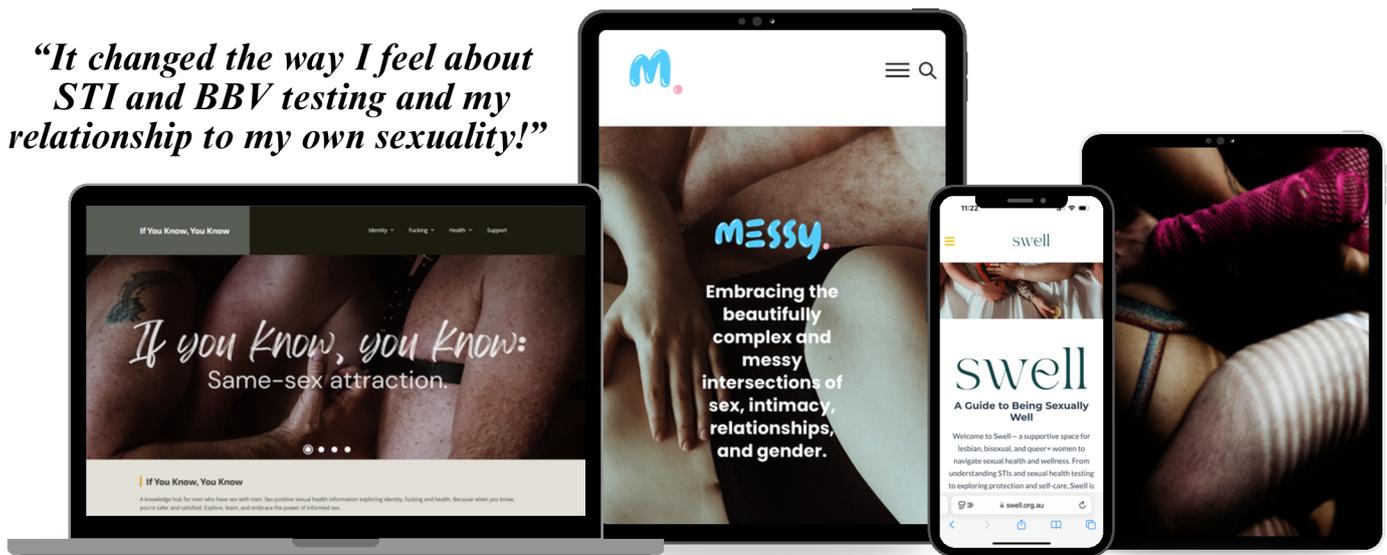
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Disclosure of Interest:

This project was funded by ACT Health.

ACT Health provided funding to Meridian to reduce the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and blood-borne viruses (BBVs) through early detection and treatment, and to improve the health outcomes of LGBTQ+ communities in Canberra under the *Risky Behaviours Grant*. Specifically, targeted communities included disengaged men who have sex with men (MSM), trans and gender-diverse people (TGD), and lesbian, bisexual and queer+ women (LBQW). Three campaigns were developed: If You Know You Know (MSM), Messy (TGD), and Swell (LBQW). Each was co-designed with community members who informed the language, tone, content, and visual identity.

“It changed the way I feel about STI and BBV testing and my relationship to my own sexuality!”



If You Know You Know, Messy, and Swell are community-driven resources. These are some of the voices who shaped them:

Representation

“I really appreciate the choice of photos which beautifully represents the diversity within the community, showcasing a wide range of identities and experiences in a way that feels both authentic and celebratory.”
- Man, Bisexual, Queer, 25-34

Accessibility

“These resources are easy to digest and meet me where I’m at.”
- Transmasculine, Queer, 35-44

Impact

“I think this is an incredibly valuable resource that has the potential to make a big difference to transgender and gender diverse people here in the ACT.”
- Transgender Man, Gay, 25-34

Inclusivity

“[I enjoy] the thoroughness and attention to detail. I find most sexual health resources alienating to trans people due to wording choices.”
- Genderqueer, Asexual, Bisexual, Queer, 18-24

Community

“It feels great to have been able to play a part in such an incredible and meaningful resource to support my community.”
- Woman, Lesbian, 25-34

Centring Pleasure

Exploring sexuality through pleasure supports confidence, connection and wellbeing. We used pride, pleasure, grit, and peer voices to make safer sex, sexy. Pleasure helps us combat fear-based messaging, making safer sex something people *want*, not just *should do*.

Community Voices

Each campaign was co-designed with community members who informed the language, tone, content, and visual identity. Stylised boudoir photography featured real community members as models, showcasing their identities and sexuality, intentionally avoiding the medicalised view of ‘risk’.

Not Just Risk

Our goal was to build a campaign broader than a test-and-treat message, allowing space for people to explore the many ways sex can be made safer and more affirming. All three resources looked beyond testing and treatment to a more holistic view of sexual health.

From Risk to Joy

The campaigns were well received for reflecting lived experience and community identity. Participants felt represented, affirmed, and more open to sexual health conversations. By centring joy, bodies, and community voices, Risky Behaviours reframed sex as something to explore and enjoy safely through pleasure, care, and connection.

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Supported by



If You Know
You Know



Messy



Swell