

Eidos Annual Report

JULY 2024 – JUNE 2025



Penn
Nursing
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Eidos LGBTQ+
Health Initiative



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Meeting the Moment: *Mobilizing Impactful Solutions*

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

We are living through a pivotal moment—one I see as defined by challenge, but also by opportunity. Across the United States, LGBTQ+ communities are navigating rising threats to their health, dignity, and safety. In this climate, conversations around inclusion have quieted, funding streams have been disrupted, and once-promising partnerships are now stalled. The financial impact felt specifically in public health and higher education is profound. As an organization that lives at that exact nexus, we are acutely aware of these pressures.

If these trends continue unchecked, we risk losing a generation of LGBTQ+ health researchers, derailing urgently needed innovation, and further widening disparities across communities that are already pushed to the margins. In moments like this, retreat is tempting. But at Eidos, we see this as a moment not just of crisis but of responsibility—and opportunity.

And yet we continue our work in earnest. We have never believed that progress is linear, and we persist in our efforts with hope, determination, and joy. Our work is vital, and we are proud to do it.

As a social innovation hub dedicated to advancing LGBTQ+ health and strengthening public health for all, Eidos is investing in new models for resilience. We are supporting the development of data-driven interventions that are scalable, cost-effective, and grounded in lived experience. We are co-designing solutions and evaluating strategies that help multisectoral partners align equity intentions with measurable impact across academia, government, philanthropy, and industry—even when the policy winds shift.

Over the past year, I worked with my team to expand our reach, sharpen our focus, and deepen our commitment to the communities we serve. Throughout this report, you will see case studies and features that illustrate how we are translating action into evidence, building knowledge ecosystems, and helping partners strengthen their equity infrastructure.

Our work is anchored in one core commitment: to design and scale solutions that center LGBTQ+ people—not as afterthoughts but as integral to achieving health equity for all.

This work is rarely easy. But these pressures have clarified our role: we are conveners, bridge-builders, and data-informed change makers. Where others may pause, I am encouraging us to move forward—with urgency, creativity, and unwavering resolve.

At the heart of our efforts lies a simple but powerful belief: every person, regardless of background or circumstance, deserves the opportunity to live a full and healthy life. Our mission—to advance LGBTQ+ health and strengthen public health for all—requires confronting complexity, challenging complacency, and acting with intention.

The path ahead can't be forged from a single sector or solution. It will require Eidos to expand our networked approach to innovation—one that refuses to silo science, advocacy, or care. It will require bold partnerships, systems thinking, and a willingness to adapt in real time.

To the funders, partners, and change agents reading this: Now is the time to act. We need your help to survive and adapt across funding cycles and political climates. I welcome those ready to fund bold work, test new strategies, and co-create the future of LGBTQ+ health equity with us. Let's not just protect what has been built. Let's reimagine what's possible—together.

I founded Eidos, because I believe that progress is a shared endeavor—and at Eidos, we are eager to co-create what comes next.

This report is not just a reflection of what we've done—it is a declaration of where we are going. If you see opportunities within your own work, community, or institution that are ready to be tested, strengthened, or scaled, we invite you to reach out.

**WITH GRATITUDE,
JOSÉ**



**José A. Bauermeister,
PhD, MPH, FSBM**

Founding Faculty Director,
Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative

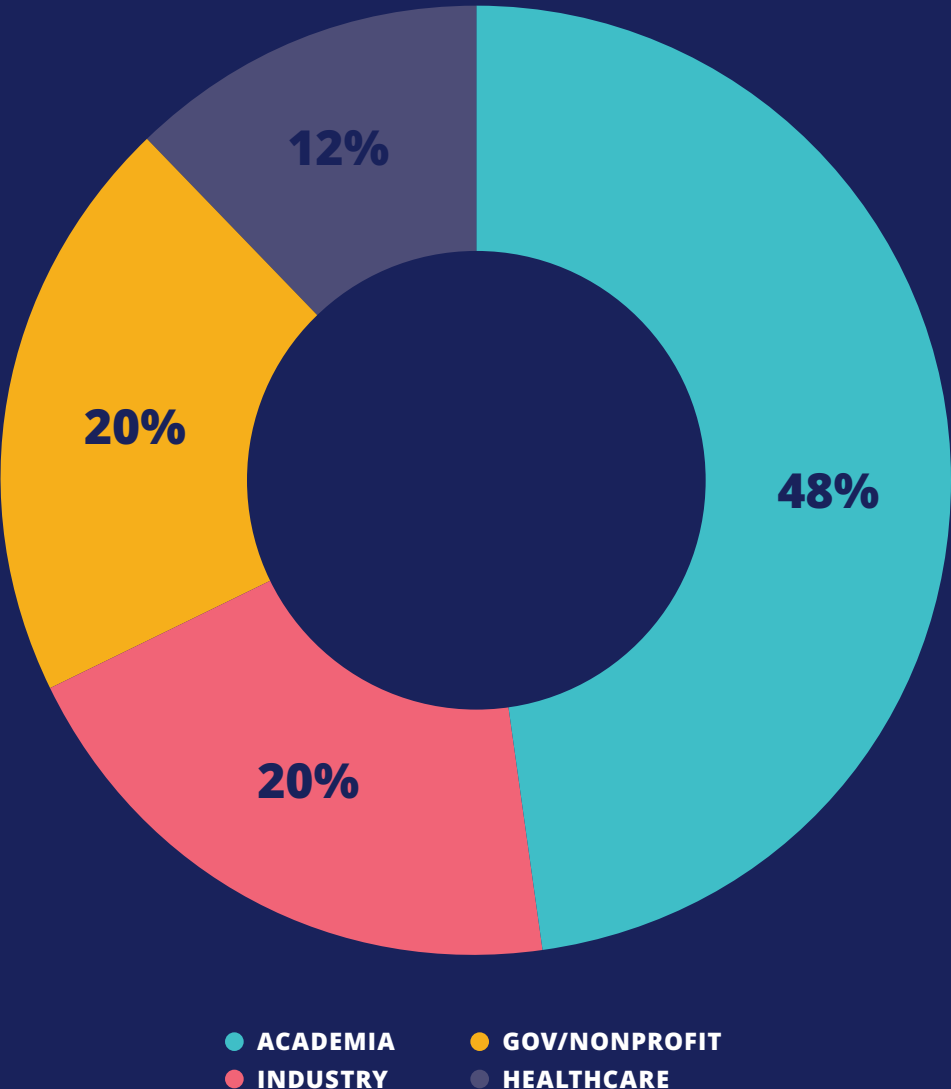
By the Numbers

Since our founding in 2022, Eidos has transformed potential into action by empowering our partners with the evidence and tools to advance health equity. Over the past three years we have worked on **76 projects** from multiple sectors, engaged with **160 partners** exploring new ideas, and shared **271 deliverables** including reports, presentations, and publications.

Project Pipeline:



Project Sectors:



Convenings:

30

EVENTS HOSTED

268

PENN STUDENTS

1019

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

22

PRESENTERS FEATURED

Knowledge Shared:

35

ACADEMIC PAPERS
PUBLISHED

5

NEWS ARTICLES

4

EIDOS GUIDES
PUBLISHED

198

GUIDES DOWNLOADED

Mission and Vision

Anchored at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing, Eidos brings together experts across all 12 Penn schools, spanning disciplines to forge novel connections. As proud stewards and practitioners of the University's strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*, we enable interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, and innovative solutions to global challenges. Our commitment to these principles ensures that our work not only advances LGBTQ+ health but also contributes to the well-being of the global community.

Mission

Eidos is dedicated to advancing LGBTQ+ health and strengthening public health for all. We convene and collaborate with experts and organizations across industries and disciplines to develop groundbreaking science, products, public policy and novel solutions that improve lives across a spectrum of social, economic, and behavioral factors.

Vision

Eidos envisions a world where every person, regardless of their background or circumstance, has the opportunity to live a full and healthy life.

Convening. Connecting. Collaborating.

Without intentional partnerships and investment, advancements to reduce health disparities will lag and stagnate. Eidos convenes and collaborates with experts and organizations across industries and disciplines to develop groundbreaking science, products, public policy, and novel solutions that elevate and advance public health for the greater good.

Our services can enhance your work and add a more integrative, humanistic approach to your ideas. We tailor our various services to our partners' needs, depending on the requirements of each project:



Discovery:

Explore together where LGBTQ+ health research and business innovation intersect to create transformative tools and programs



Advising:

Collaborate on program design highlighting key priorities, aid in capacity building, and offer technical expertise to produce high-impact programs across sectors



Education:

Provide educational support that builds tangible skills in LGBTQ+ healthcare through a wide array of speakers, workshops, and conferences



Evaluation:

Examine how existing programs and interventions improve care and well-being to assess their effectiveness and impact

Guiding Principles

Translational Engine

We move research from the lab to real-world applications, ensuring ideas directly address health challenges.

Accelerated Innovation Pipeline

We shorten the timeline from discovery to implementation to bring solutions to communities faster.

Iterative Development

We ensure that interventions are refined through testing and feedback for maximum impact.

Mission-Driven Collaboration

We blend social impact and innovative problem-solving to create sustainable solutions.

Leveraging Multisectoral Expertise

We partner with startups, private investors, healthcare providers, and academia to address systemic barriers.

Entrepreneurial Thinking

We facilitate entrepreneurial principles to meet the needs of underserved communities.

Ecosystem Building

We create infrastructure to enable sustainable, scalable interventions.

Sustainability



















We empower stakeholders to implement evidence-based practices with a focus on long-term viability and adaptability.



The Eidos Team

Founded by Dr. José A. Bauermeister, the Eidos ecosystem is built on collaboration, made up of our core team, affiliated faculty across all Penn schools, and our advisory board. *These are the people who drive our mission forward.*

Affiliated Faculty

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Dolores Albarracin, PhD, MS
Professor, Annenberg School for Communication |  Dani Bassett, PhD, CPGS
School of Arts & Sciences |
|  Cedric Bien-Gund, MD
Assistant Professor, Perelman School of Medicine |  Stephen Bonett, PhD, MA, RN
Assistant Professor, School of Nursing |
|  César Briceño
Associate Professor, Perelman School of Medicine |  Ed Brockenbrough, PhD, MEd
Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education |
|  Robert Carpick, PhD
Professor, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences |  Seul Ki Choi
Research Assistant Professor, School of Nursing |
|  Katharine Baratz Dalke, MD, MBE
Associate Professor, Perelman School of Medicine |  Ryan Dew, PhD
Assistant Professor, Wharton |
|  Nadia Dowshen, MD, MSHP
Associate Professor, Perelman School of Medicine |  Dalmacio Dennis Flores, PhD, RN, FAAN
Assistant Professor, School of Nursing |
|  Ian Frank, MD
Professor, Perelman School of Medicine |  Javier Garcia-Perez, PhD, MSW
Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Social Policy & Practice |
|  Teddy Goetz, MD, MS
Resident Physician, Perelman School of Medicine |  Robert Gross, MD, MSCE
Professor, Perelman School of Medicine |
|  Abby Howe-Heyman, PhD, CNM, RN
Practice Assistant Professor, School of Nursing |  Scott Jelinek, MD, MPH, MAEd
Instructor, Perelman School of Medicine |
|  John B. Jemmott III, PhD , Professor, Annenberg School for Communication, Perelman School of Medicine |  Jonathan D. Katz, PhD
Practice Associate Professor, School of Arts & Sciences |
|  Patty Kuo, PhD
Research Associate, Perelman School of Medicine |  Marion Leary, PhD, MPH, RN
Instructor, School of Nursing |
|  Steven Meanley, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor, School of Nursing |  Raina Merchant, MD, MSHP, FAHA
Professor, Perelman School of Medicine |
|  Demond Patton, PhD, MSW , Professor, Annenberg School for Communication, School of Social Policy & Practice |  Sarah Rottenberg, MA , Executive Director, Integrated Product Design Program, Stuart Weitzman School of Design |
|  Luis E. Seija, MD
Postdoctoral Fellow, Perelman School of Medicine |  Andy Tan, PhD, MBA, MPH, MBBS
Associate Professor, Annenberg School for Communication |

Affiliated Faculty (Continued)



Jennifer Tran, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Nursing



Dovie Watson, MD, MSCE
Assistant Professor, Perelman School of Medicine



Hyunmin (David) Yu, PhD, MSN, RN, CRNP
Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Nursing



Beans Velocci, PhD
Professor, School of Arts & Sciences



Annie Wilson, PhD
Senior Lecturer, Wharton

Our Team



Cody Bangcaya Dawson, MSED
Program Coordinator



Willey Lin, MB
Project Manager



Gigi McGaughey, MSC
Project Manager



Marley Molkentin, MA
Communications Specialist



Kevin Schott, MA
Director of Engagement



Julia Votto, MIPD
Associate Director of Innovative Projects



James Wolfe, MS, NCC
Associate Director of Innovative Projects



Blake Kosciow
Qualitative Research Assistant



Lou Listerud
Project Manager



Clark McPherson
Senior Innovation Manager



Alana Richards, MA
Research Analyst



Anna Sweeney, MS
Project Manager



Jessica Webster, MS, LPC
Project Manager

Advisory Board



Asha S. Collins, PhD
Investor, Consultant



Tam Ho, MPA
Social Impact, Philanthropy



M. Dru Levasseur, Esq.
Lawyer, Consultant



John J. Rydzewski, MBA
Investor, Consultant



Patrina Sexton Topper, PhD, RN, MS
Nurse, Researcher, Educator



Emily Gallo, MBA
Healthcare Business Leader



Elli Kaplan, MBA
Startup Founder, CEO



Aiyshen Padilla, MBA
Strategic Partnerships, Communications



Martín Sepúlveda, MD, ScD
Physician, Researcher, Consultant



Antonia Villarruel, PhD, RN, FAAN, ex officio
College Dean, Researcher, Nurse

URGENT INTERVENTIONS

Translating Science into Action: Young Adult Centered Health Force Training (YACHT)

What's the Project?

The Young Adult Centered HealthForce Training (YACHT) initiative, led by Dr. Sylvie Naar (Florida State University College of Medicine), and Dr. Jose Bauermeister, was an ambitious trial focused on addressing persistent gaps in HIV prevention among young sexual minority men (YSMM) in Florida.

YACHT sought to improve provider fidelity to evidence-based practices through a combination of tailored motivational interviewing (TMI) training and real-time feedback from youth-led mystery shopper assessments. Given the disproportionate burden of HIV among YSMM—especially youth of color—this initiative represented an urgent intervention to advance the Diagnose and Prevent pillars of the Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) initiative.

YACHT used a stepped-wedge hybrid design across 42 Florida Department of Health (FDOH) HIV Counseling, Testing, and Referral (CTR) agencies. During the baseline exploration phase, Eidos staff trained mystery shoppers—youth from the communities being served—to assess service delivery across key domains: LGBTQ+ visibility, inclusive medical forms, relationship context,

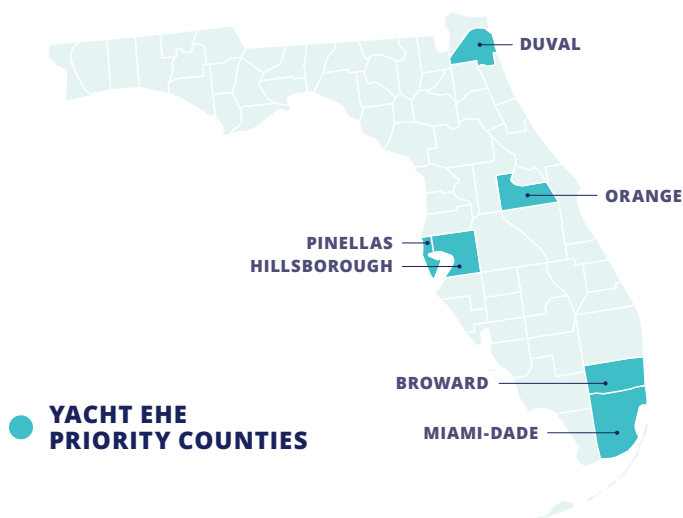
risk reduction counseling (RRC), PrEP referrals, safer sex education, perceived provider competence, and interpersonal rapport. These assessments, conducted across 39 CTR agencies located across 6 EHE-designated counties, offered a real-time view into how culturally and developmentally appropriate each site was for YSMM clients.

Who Did It Serve?

YACHT was designed to improve outcomes for both CTR providers and the YSMM clients they serve. By embedding YSMM perspectives into the evaluation process, the project ensured that site-level feedback was grounded in the lived experiences of those most affected by the HIV epidemic in Florida.

What Was Eidos' Value-Add?

Eidos helped to develop psychometrically validated assessment tools, trained the youth shopper team, and synthesized the data into actionable feedback for agency leaders. Eidos also developed site-specific reports that helped convert feedback into implementation plans, and facilitated quality management (QM) sessions to ensure continuous improvement. Our expertise ensured that



domains like cultural humility and client-centeredness became more than aspirational values—they became measurable and improvable outcomes.

What Difference Did It Make?

Baseline findings revealed substantial variability in mystery shopper site scores. For example, while some

sites excelled in interpersonal rapport and perceived provider competence, others showed notable gaps in PrEP referral, safer sex education, and LGBTQ+ visibility. Agencies with higher proportions of young clients scored better on client-centeredness, while those serving more men performed better on cultural humility. These data provided a foundation for targeted technical assistance, allowing agencies to focus on domain-specific improvements that mattered most for YSMM engagement and retention.

A guide to using the mystery shopper framework for quality improvement can be found on the [Eidos website](#).

A Note on Project Status

Despite its early success, the YACHT project was terminated as part of the recent NIH funding cuts. This curtailed the further development of the program, but the insights generated during the baseline phase offer a blueprint for how participatory, data-driven strategies can advance culturally responsive HIV prevention in real-world settings.

“Working on this project underscored how important LGBTQ+ health initiatives are, especially in a political climate that threatens to erase and silence our communities. Being forced to navigate policy restrictions and ultimately seeing this NIH project abruptly terminated only reinforced how important open, honest outreach is for real progress in HIV prevention and care.”



WILLEY LIN, PROJECT MANAGER
EIDOS LGBTQ+ HEALTH INITIATIVE

CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS

Sexual and Gender Minority Emerging Adults Eliciting Narratives (SEEN) Study

What's the Project?

SEEN (Sexual and Gender Minority Emerging Adults Eliciting Narratives), led by Eidos postdoctoral fellow Dr. Jennifer Tran, was a pilot study aimed at evaluating the feasibility of a creative narrative intervention to address mental health concerns for LGBTQ+ emerging adults of color. Creative narratives (e.g., photographs or videos) have been used as interventions to impact participants' knowledge acquisition, feelings of empowerment, coping skills, and affect community change.

SEEN asked participants to answer two prompts through photographs or videos:

- 01** *Tell about a time when you felt SEEN as an LGBTQ+ person of color*
- 02** *Tell about a time when you felt UNSEEN as an LGBTQ+ person of color*

A virtual and in-person gallery was curated to share the creative narratives of participants answering these prompts.

Who Did It Serve?

SEEN was designed to improve mental health and reduce intersectional stigma for LGBTQ+ emerging adults (ages 18-24) of color (e.g., people who self-identified as racial and ethnic marginalized identities) nationally using guided narrative creation.

What Was Eidos' Value-Add?

Eidos played a central role in the funding, design, implementation, and analysis of SEEN. We designed and implemented the study; recruited and interviewed participants; developed and coordinated a virtual and in-person gallery.

What Difference Did It Make?

Participants reported that SEEN was feasible, acceptable, and appropriate as an intervention to address their mental health concerns. In follow-up interviews, participants reported that they enjoyed creating narratives and having the opportunity to share their experiences with researchers and to the public within the gallery.

Baseline findings revealed that participants on average had moderate depression (a mean score of 12.80 (SD=3.47) on the PHQ9) and moderate anxiety (a mean score of 10.87 (SD=4.27) on the GAD7). Preliminary findings revealed that participants had significant decreases in anxiety and depression symptoms after SEEN. These data show the preliminary potential in the use of creative narratives to address mental health concerns of LGBTQ+ emerging adults of color.

“Thank you for holding spaces for stories like mine. Being truly seen isn’t something that I take for granted. And I hope that by sharing this people see that trans people are just people and we all deserve to be seen. Not just for who we’ve been but who we’re still becoming.”

SEEN PARTICIPANT

“For me, *SEEN* highlights the power of art in impacting mental health, influencing social change, and inspiring community connection. I truly believe that LGBTQ+ mental, physical, and behavioral health perseveres, and art, creativity, and community are the tools we can use to thrive.”



DR. JENNIFER TRAN
EIDOS POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

HELPING HOSPITALS

How Might HEI Inform Care?

What's the Project?

At Eidos, we believe that equitable healthcare is a fundamental right. Our work with the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) data provided by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) exemplifies this commitment by evaluating and supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion in hospitals. Through data analysis and reporting, we provided actionable insights into how LGBTQ+ inclusive policies impact nurse job outcomes, care quality, and patient satisfaction. Our research has revealed that hospitals with high levels of LGBTQ+ inclusion not only report lower nurse burnout and reduced job dissatisfaction but also improved care quality and patient satisfaction, demonstrating the creation of safer, more inclusive and affirming environments benefits both employees and patients, whether they are queer or not.

Who Did It Serve?

Our project served two primary groups: healthcare professionals and patients.

What Was Eidos' Value-Add?

Our project involved analyzing data from the HRC and the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research (CHOPR). Eidos facilitated collaboration with HRC and CHOPR, including obtaining data and providing resources to analyze and synthesize HEI data. Our expertise in analyzing healthcare data and translating it into practical recommendations helped drive strategic improvements across healthcare facilities.

What Difference Did It Make?

Our analysis demonstrated that LGBTQ+ inclusive policies are not merely symbolic but transformative. For healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, inclusive environments are associated with greater job satisfaction and lower rates of burnout. For patients, hospitals with high levels of LGBTQ+ inclusion report higher levels of satisfaction for all patients, not just those who identify as LGBTQ+. By building a business case for hospitals' inclusion efforts for diverse populations with impactful research evidence, we enabled hospitals to prioritize LGBTQ+ inclusivity in their organizational policies.

“Working on the HEI project has shown me that inclusion is not just about checking boxes; it’s about transformative change. When hospitals actively prioritize LGBTQ+ inclusivity, it reshapes the entire work culture and patient experience for the better. This project has made it clear that real progress in healthcare comes when policies are not just written, but truly lived.”



DR. DAVID (HYUNMIN) YU
EIDOS POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW



EMPOWERING BUSINESS FOUNDERS

Investing in Entrepreneurial Pipelines

What's the Project?

Business ownership can be a pathway to self-determination and a means of addressing community needs for LGBTQ+ individuals. Yet structural barriers and systemic inequities continue to limit access to entrepreneurial opportunities, especially for those with multiple marginalized identities. **Less than 0.5% of venture capital funding goes to LGBTQ+ founders**, with even greater disparities for LGBTQ+ racial and gender minorities.

StartOut, the largest nonprofit organization supporting LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs in the U.S., partnered with Eidos to investigate equity and representation in its founder pipeline. Despite its reach and impact, disparities persisted in who progressed through its pipeline. The project aimed to diagnose why certain groups—particularly BIPOC, women, and transgender and gender-expansive founders—were being lost at critical stages, and to identify actionable strategies to ensure more inclusive and equitable access to entrepreneurial opportunity.

Who Did It Serve?

This project served LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs across the U.S., particularly those navigating systemic barriers related to race, gender, and identity. It also supported StartOut's leadership team and programming staff, who

were seeking to understand and improve the reach and impact of their services.

What Was Eidos' Value-Add?

Eidos brought deep expertise in intersectional data analysis, equity-driven program evaluation, and LGBTQ+ health equity framing. Our team conducted a comprehensive pipeline analysis using StartOut's own program data, revealing where and for whom drop-offs in participation occurred. By highlighting representation rates at each phase—from initial outreach to accelerator acceptance—we made the leaky pipeline visible in ways that could be acted upon. Eidos also provided tailored, evidence-based recommendations grounded in structural change, not individual deficits.

What Difference Did It Make?

Our analysis found that, despite StartOut's success in connecting with a broad ecosystem of founders, there were stark representation gaps at critical junctures, underscoring how structural barriers persist even in programs designed with inclusion in mind.

With these findings, Eidos equipped StartOut with tangible strategies to address these disparities—ranging from tailored support programs and identity-specific outreach to revised selection processes and expanded intersectional data collection.

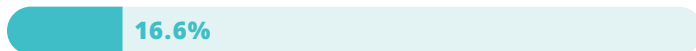
What Comes Next?

StartOut is now implementing many of the recommendations from the report. Eidos is excited to remain a thought partner as these shifts take root, and help shape future conversations about equity

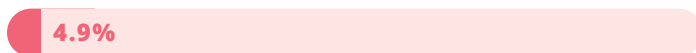
in entrepreneurship. The long-term goal is not only to diversify who gets access to StartOut's flagship programs, but to expand the field of LGBTQ+ health innovation by supporting founders whose lived experiences fuel novel, equity-centered solutions.

AFRICAN AMERICAN / BLACK FOUNDERS

COMPRISED OF **16.6%** OF INITIAL PARTICIPANTS

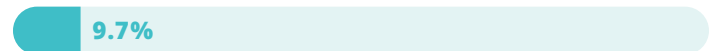


BUT MAKE UP ONLY **4.9%** OF THE ACCELERATOR STAGE



NON-BINARY FOUNDERS

COMPRISED OF **9.7%** OF REGISTERED FOUNDERS



BUT MAKE UP ONLY **2.5%** OF THE ACCELERATOR STAGE

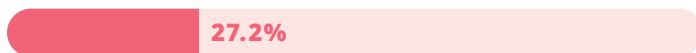


FEMALE FOUNDERS

COMPRISED OF **41.3%** OF INITIAL PARTICIPANTS



BUT MAKE UP ONLY **27.2%** OF THE ACCELERATOR



AVERAGE DECLINE AMONG ALL THREE GROUPS:

48%

“Working with Eidos on understanding the leaky pipeline has been an exceptional experience. We are deeply grateful for this partnership and the opportunity to study a never-reported aspect of the LGBTQ+ entrepreneurship pipeline—insights that will help us better support LGBTQ+ founders navigating startup accelerator programs.”



IRENE TANG

STARTOUT DIRECTOR OF DATA AND INSIGHTS

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Speaker Programs Summary

What's the Project?

Eidos is proud to continue presenting our signature Connecting Conversations series. These virtual gatherings host changemakers in LGBTQ+ health from different sectors to address pressing needs.

Last year we hosted multiple conversations that explored mental health, convening panels of experts working outside the typical academic silo. These guests included a trans-affirming physical therapist, a figure skating coach, and an app creator, among others with distinctly valuable experiences and insights. Hosting these voices from across sectors of work, our audience connected to a more complex and nuanced understanding of these topics.

In addition to these events, we initiated Eidos Grand Rounds this year. Our inaugural gathering featured Dr. John Pachankis, co-author of the *Handbook of Evidence-Based Mental Health Practice with Sexual and Gender Minorities* to share his research into LGBTQ+ informed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Who Did It Serve?

These events attracted over 200 attendees, including career researchers, startup founders, and college students.

What Was Eidos' Value-Add?

Eidos has cultivated a diverse community of allies, friends, and partners throughout the health ecosystem.

Our unique network of universities, corporations, nonprofits, and community-based organizations allows us to identify trends across sectors and bring in experts from many fields.

What Difference Did It Make?

Survey data shows that **77% of attendees found the content engaging** and understandable and **98% of said they would recommend our panel discussions to their peers.**

What Comes Next?

We have already begun reaching out to our network to identify trends for a challenging year. Themes have emerged around the loss of momentum, history, and data as federal sources begin removing information and resources.

“It was helpful to have people of different upbringings and careers talk about sports and the LGBTQ community so we could have various perspectives.”

**“MENTAL HEALTH AND OUR BODIES”
WEBINAR ATTENDEE**



“Queer communities are diverse by every possible measure: age, race, religion, education, income, so no one knows it all. All of our speakers have incredible things to share, but each one has only a piece of the puzzle. I’ve learned that there is so much wisdom and inspiration out there when we move outside our lane.”



KEVIN SCHOTT
DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT AT EIDOS

YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

Supporting Transitions to Adulthood and Reducing Suicide (STARS)

What's the Project?

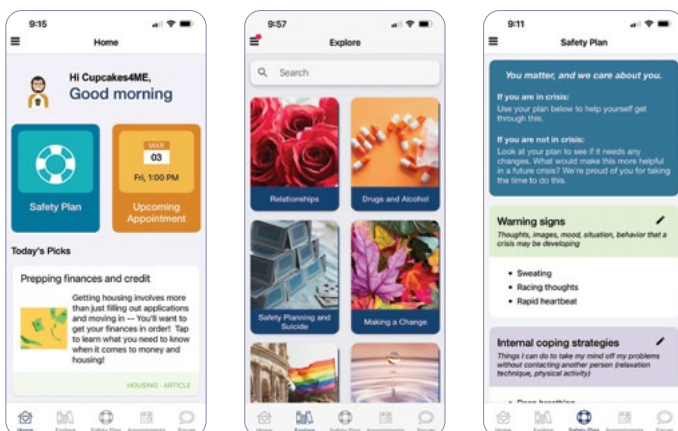
Supporting Transitions to Adulthood and Reducing Suicide (STARS) is a hybrid digital intervention designed to address the alarming rates of suicide among sexual and gender minority (SGM) emerging adults. Developed at the University of Pennsylvania, STARS pairs a mobile app that features life skills and crisis planning tools with six virtual peer mentoring sessions, delivered by trained mentors who share community and lived experience with participants. STARS builds on the Safety Planning Intervention (SPI)—an evidence-based strategy to reduce suicide risk—by enhancing it with ongoing digital engagement and personalized peer support. This integration aims to overcome well-documented barriers that SGM youth face in accessing and using conventional mental health care.

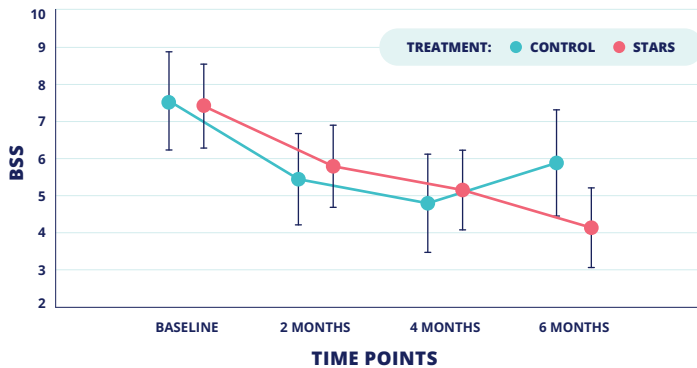
Who Did It Serve?

The STARS pilot engaged 64 young adults in the Philadelphia metro area who identified as LGBTQ+ and reported suicidal ideation in the previous month. Many had a history of suicide attempts, and a significant proportion identified as racial or ethnic minorities. Participants were randomized to receive either SPI alone or the full STARS intervention. Those in the STARS group received the safety planning protocol and ongoing access to a mobile app and peer mentorship. This dual approach provided culturally affirming, accessible mental health support to a group with limited engagement in traditional services.

What Was Eidos' Value-Add?

Eidos provided core funding for development, pilot testing and strategic consultation on the integration of digital health equity, implementation science, and LGBTQ+ community engagement. The support enabled high-quality training of peer mentors, weekly supervision by licensed clinicians, and the refinement of app content using real-time feedback from participants and mentors. Eidos' credibility also helped attract interdisciplinary collaborators across psychiatry, nursing, and biomedical informatics at Penn, fostering a truly transdisciplinary research environment.





What Difference Did It Make?

The STARS project made a meaningful impact on the lives of LGBTQ+ young adults at risk of suicide. Participants who used the STARS app and met regularly with a peer mentor showed not only early improvements in their mental health, but they continued to feel better over time—even after the formal sessions had ended. In contrast, those who only received the standard safety planning support started to struggle again between the fourth and sixth month of the study.

One of the clearest signs of STARS' success was in reducing suicidal thoughts. Young people in the STARS group had significant improvements in suicidal ideation that continued improving over time on the Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS) compared to those who didn't receive the peer support and app. By the end of the six-month period, no one in the STARS group had reported a suicide attempt, while two participants in the other group had. Importantly, the more LGBTQ+ young people used the STARS app—especially the

safety plan feature—the more their suicidal thoughts decreased. On average, participants opened the app nearly 30 times and used their personalized safety plan about 15 times. The app helped them stay connected to tools and strategies that worked for them, and the regular conversations with peer mentors gave them a safe space to talk about what they were going through.

Overall, STARS showed that combining digital support with human connection can help LGBTQ+ young adults feel safer, more supported, and more hopeful about the future.

What Comes Next?

The promising results from the pilot have positioned the STARS team to pursue funding opportunities to embed and test the program within the health system. In preparation, the team is refining the program's flexibility to better balance protocol fidelity with individualized responsiveness using generative AI and near-real time feedback.

“It was rewarding to be able to feel like I’m imparting something useful to the peer mentees. So, it was nice when we would have a fruitful discussion that felt like it was something that was helpful and that they could use in their real life and use to make changes that were helpful to them.”

PEER MENTOR

“This project taught me about the need to think flexibly about how to support the LGBTQIA+ community in navigating suicidal crisis. Participants educated me about the variety of resources that feel safe, and those that do not. I was also blown away with the skill of the peer mentors – I would trust my own family to get paired with the mentors any day.”



DR. LILY BROWN

DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR THE TREATMENT AND STUDY OF ANXIETY

GLOBAL IMPACT

Health mPowerment in South Korea

What's the Project?

HealthMpowerment (HMP) is a digital, mobile-enabled platform originally designed to reduce sexual risk and support HIV prevention among young Black men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women in the U.S. Through more than 15 years of development and testing HMP has demonstrated significant success—reducing condomless anal intercourse and improving outcomes like HIV testing and viral suppression.

This new initiative, led by Dr. Seul Ki Choi in partnership with Ewha Womans University in South Korea, aims to culturally adapt and pilot test HMP for young Korean MSM—a population facing sharply rising HIV rates and profound stigma related to homosexuality. Over a two-year period, the team will complete three phases: qualitative data collection on stigma and barriers to care, design and community validation of tailored digital content, and a pilot randomized trial to assess feasibility and acceptability. The adapted intervention will incorporate culturally specific features and language to support HIV testing, PrEP uptake, condom use, and peer engagement.

Who Will It Serve?

The project focuses on Korean men who are underserved by existing health systems due to intersecting sexual and HIV-related stigma. By directly involving these young men in every stage, the project ensures the intervention reflects their lived experiences and priorities.

What Will Be Eidos' Value-Add?

Eidos is not only the primary matching funder but also a strategic partner, enabling the team to hire and train student researchers, facilitate in-person workshops, and fund a robust evaluation of the intervention's early-stage impact. More importantly, Eidos' role strengthens the intellectual backbone of the project by supporting cross-disciplinary collaboration between Penn Nursing, the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and global partners like Ewha.



“This cross-cultural project not only addresses stigma and health disparities in Korea but also models inclusive digital health innovation. I believe it will inspire more Korean health researchers to engage in LGBTQ+ health and ultimately contribute to advancing global health equity.”

DR. SOOK JUNG KANG
EWhA WOMANS UNIVERSITY

What Difference Will This Project Make?

This project will deliver the first culturally adapted digital HIV intervention for MSM in South Korea, a setting with rising infection rates and limited LGBTQ+-affirming services. It will also set a model for similar adaptation efforts globally—particularly in high-stigma, low-resource environments.

What Comes Next?

The team will analyze outcomes related to HIV testing and behavior change, as well as intervention feasibility and acceptability, to ensure its effectiveness prior to scaling it nationwide. Plans also include developing a training pipeline for future LGBTQ+ health scholars through Penn-Ewha collaborative exchanges.

“I am honored to initiate this project with Eidos support. Through this opportunity, I hope to *promote global health equity* among marginalized communities and lay the groundwork for broader dissemination and *sustained impact* of LGBTQ+ health equity.



DR. SEUL KI CHOI
EIDOS DIRECTOR OF SCIENCE

Eidos Post Doc Report

Four Postdoctoral Positions Supported



DR. APRIL ANCHETA
PERELMAN SCHOOL
OF MEDICINE



DR. JAVIER GARCIA-PEREZ
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL
POLICY & PRACTICE



DR. JENNIFER TRAN
SCHOOL OF NURSING
(SEE PAGE 11)



DR. DAVID (HYUNMIN) YU
SCHOOL OF NURSING
(SEE PAGE 13)

Cohort Achievements

7

PUBLICATIONS

23

MANUSCRIPTS

1

GALLERY
EXHIBITION

5

GRANT
PROPOSALS

1

DEGREE CONFERRED
(MSPH)

10

PRESENTATIONS

“With the financial and professional support of Eidos I was able to prioritize my personal and professional growth and reach key milestones.”



DR. JAVIER GARCIA-PEREZ

“I sincerely thank Eidos for providing funds to help me conduct research that I am passionate about and that is important to school health, school nursing, and LGBTQ+ youth.”



DR. APRIL ANCHETA

Student Spotlight

This year, Eidos was pleased to work with Penn Nursing student **Connor Egan** for research and writing support. Welcoming, collaborating, and training the next generation of experts is a central part of our work at Eidos.

“Working with Eidos has impressed upon me the need for informed providers across every specialty. All providers must make considerations for this population and be prepared to address queer- and trans-specific needs—improving health outcomes is a collaborative effort that requires action from every angle!”



CONNOR EGAN
PENN NURSING, CLASS OF 2027

Cross-School Collaborations





Our work at Eidos would not be possible without the support of an amazing community of researchers, advocates, donors, and creators. We thank all of you for contributing to the inspiration, momentum, guidance, and critique that energizes Eidos.

We are passionately committed to our mission and grateful for your support.

Keep up with our progress next year by subscribing to our [newsletter](#) or following us on social media. ([LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#))

Visit us as: www.penneidos.org

Donations to our vital work are greatly appreciated and welcome through our [giving page](#).

Want to know more? Looking for a project partner? Have something to say? Reach out to us at eidos@nursing.upenn.edu



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Eidos LGBTQ+
Health Initiative