

# A NEW TOOL FOR ADOLESCENT CONTRACEPTION COUNSELING DEVELOPED BY YOUNG PEOPLE USING HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN

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## OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Within the polarized landscape of sexual and reproductive health in the United States, many young people:

- Do not know their legal rights to access confidential sexual health care, which is often available for free or low cost.
- Do not receive medically accurate information about their bodies, contraceptives, and positive relationships.
- Are counseled in judgmental ways, and are characterized as “at risk” for teen pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.
- Have limited autonomy by virtue of being minors who need to be in school, lacking their own time, money, or transportation.

Moreover, young people of color living in under-resourced communities face additional structural barriers to health and wellness that are evident in proximity to grocery stores, school segregation, drop-out rates, and incarceration.

These challenges are further compounded in the current context of care as many healthcare providers who young people see:

- Do not know the legal rights young people have to receive confidential care.
- Are not trained to deliver sexual and reproductive health care, especially quality, confidential care to adolescents.
- Sometimes do not counsel on all contraceptive methods.
- Often impart their own ideas about the appropriateness of specific methods thus limiting information about a range of methods that might fit their needs.

Given the current landscape, a key opportunity exists to directly involve adolescents in creating their own model of sexual health care using human-centered design.

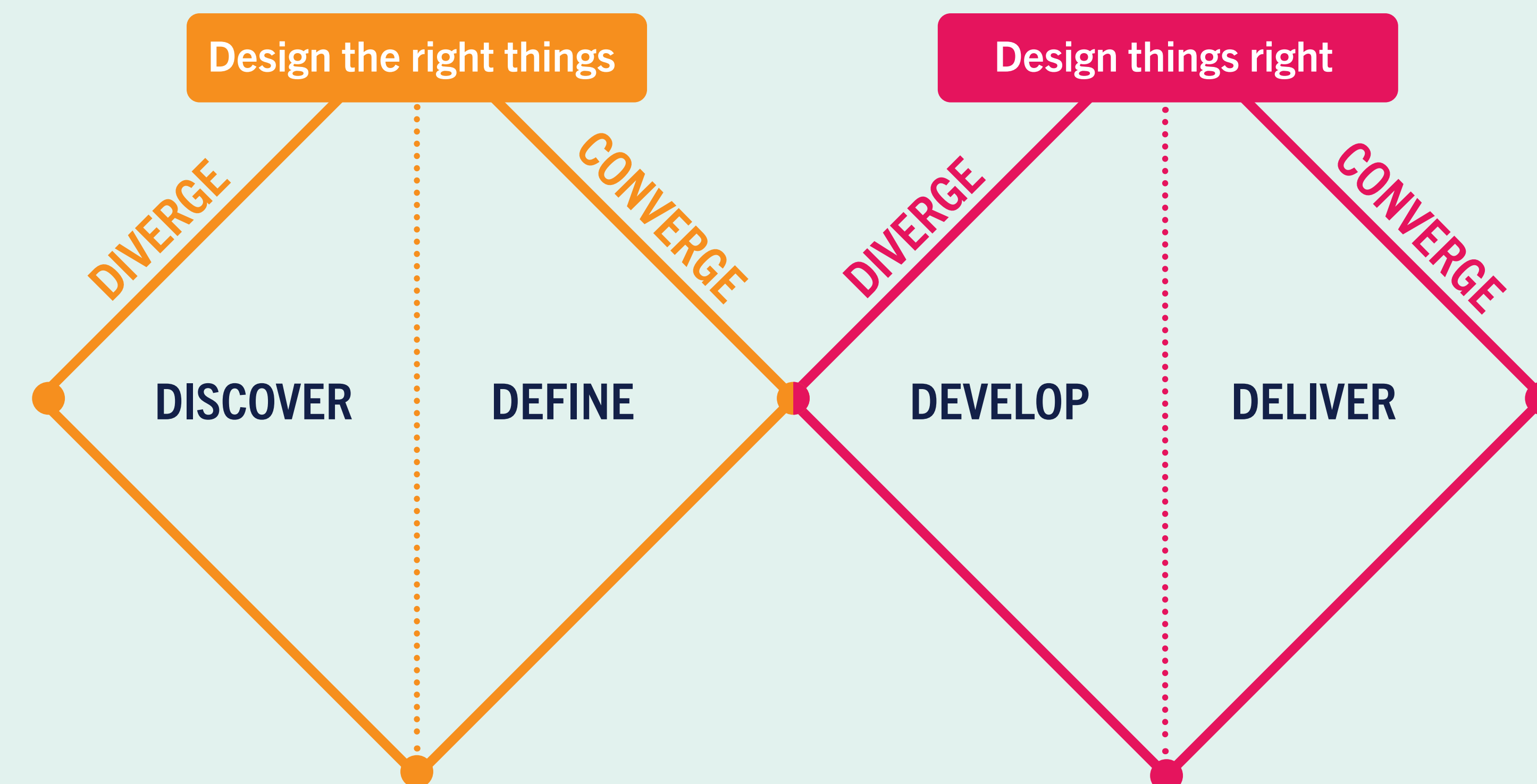
## HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN

Human-centered design (HCD) is a creative problem-solving process focused on the needs of people. It enables the development of innovative solutions and implementation strategies informed by a systems view. HCD demands the constraints, opportunities, and interactions of an existing ecosystem are considered. It can complement and bridge traditional research approaches by creating a more nuanced understanding of the context of people’s needs and behaviors with the implementation of effective solutions.

The design process generally maps two primary cycles of divergent and convergent thinking. In the first cycle, you seek to **discover** a broad understanding of a problem from the perspective of affected people and systems. This contextual inquiry fosters insights that help **define** opportunities to address the problem in a way that works best for people, helping to ensure the right things will be designed.

In the second cycle, research insights inform structured ideation processes to **develop** many ways to potentially solve a problem. Next, prototyping methods are used to make new ideas tangible and to learn through making. Then, iterative prototype testing helps to refine the design of a tool, product, service, or intervention. It also helps to determine which ideas to **deliver** by prioritizing those that are most effective, desirable, and sustainable.

This process is best visualized in the **Double Diamond design model**:



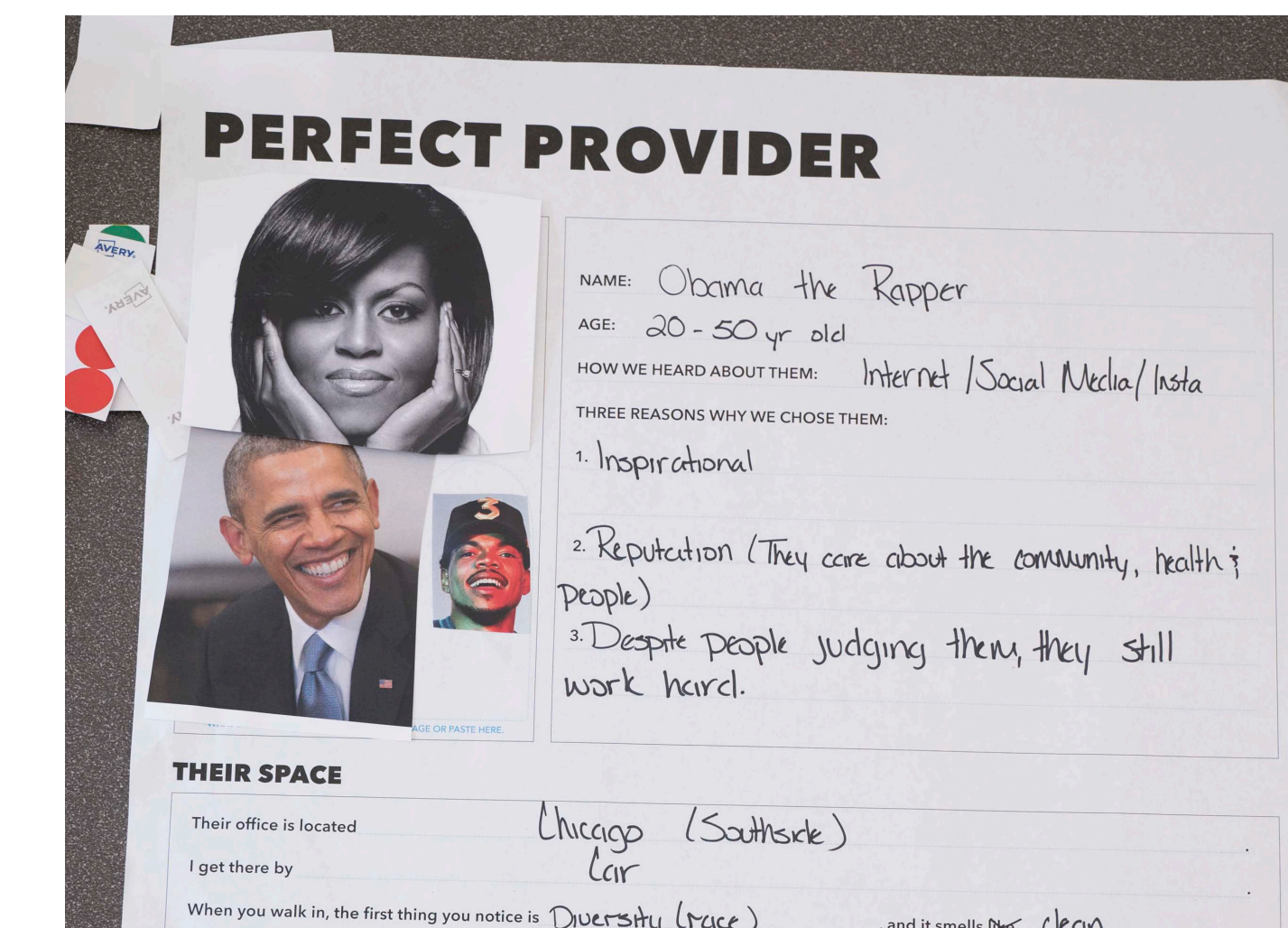
Model developed by the British Design Council.

## CO-DESIGNING CARE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The below section illustrates the human-centered design process we used to improve adolescent sexual health care. We recruited 31 young people, ages 14 to 20, from the South Side of Chicago, to participate in a five-week series of HCD workshops. This finding and resultant tool has implications for the structure and practice of contraception counseling by healthcare providers that are currently being explored in a clinical study.

### DISCOVER

Young people explored how the current context of care affects their access to sexual health care on Chicago’s South Side.



By creating ‘perfect providers,’ young people communicated how they envisioned their ideal patient experience.

### DEFINE + DEVELOP

Insights gathered from contextual inquiry inspired the generation of a variety of new ideas to improve sexual health care.



After analyzing the data collected, young people identified opportunities to improve the overall adolescent patient visit.

### DELIVER

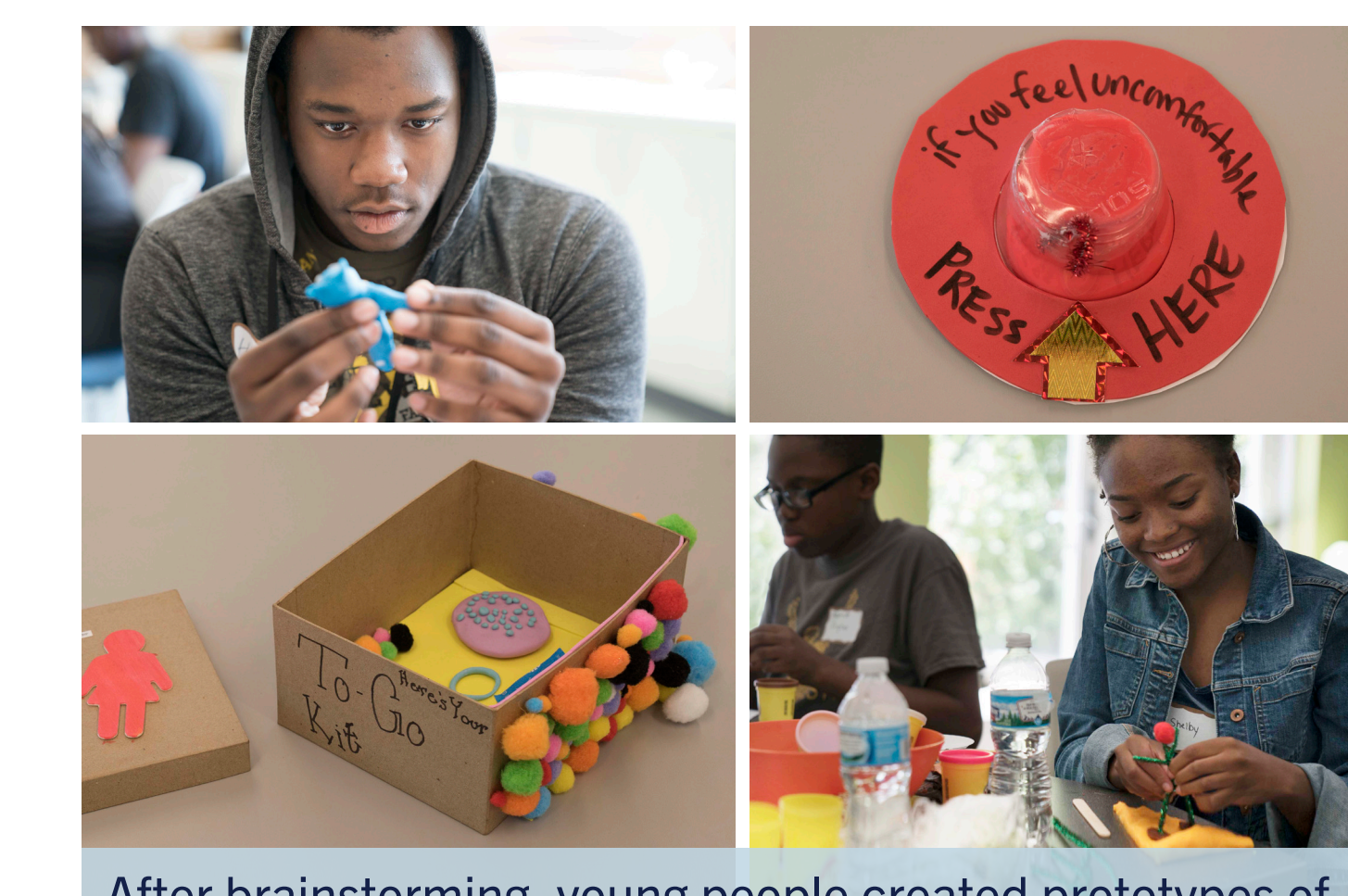
Testing out different versions of the tool demonstrated what worked or failed, until a final design was achieved.



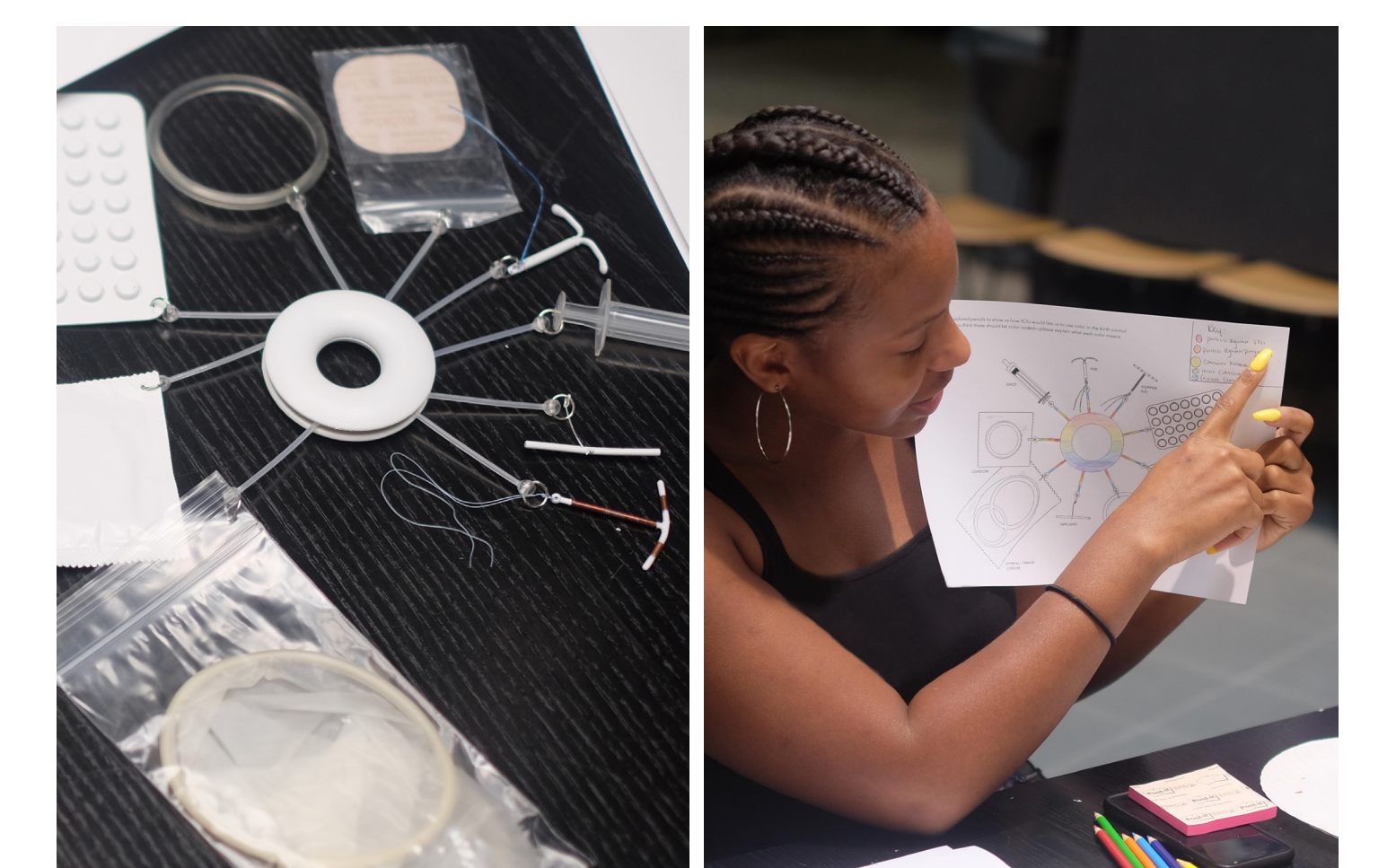
By conducting expert interviews, mock consultations, and feedback sessions, we engaged providers and young people to further understand current contraception counseling practices and how the tool might support them.



By interviewing their peers, public health experts, and providers, young people developed insights about the current context of adolescent health and wellness.



After brainstorming, young people created prototypes of the most compelling ideas to improve patient experiences. Popular interest resulted in the ‘tangible contraceptive counseling tool prototype’ moving forward into development.



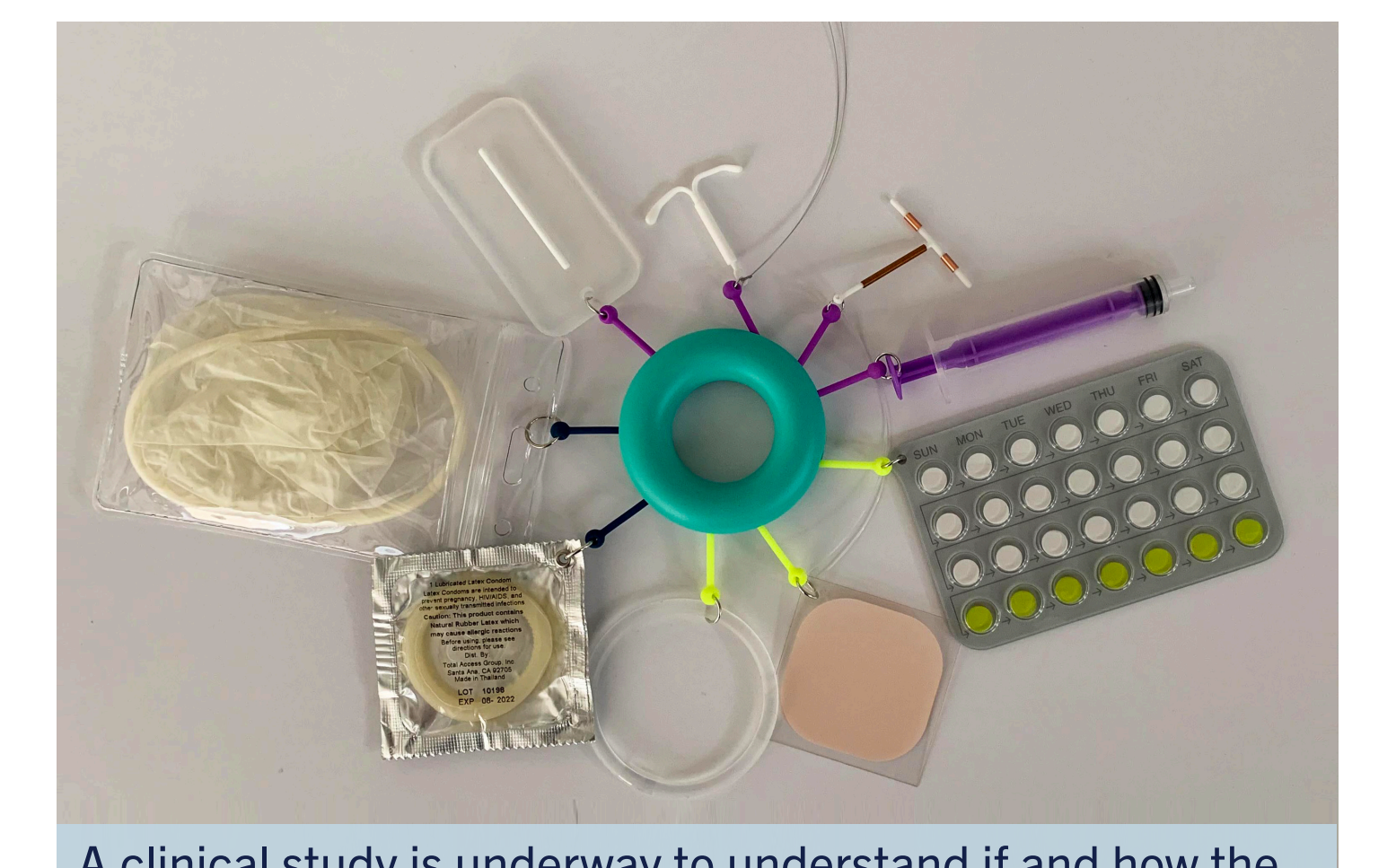
By iteratively testing a variety of form factors and color coding methods with providers and young people, we finalized the tool’s design.



By simulating patient visits with providers in clinic, young people explored sexual health concerns and documented what worked and did not work during provider interactions.



The ‘tangible contraceptive counseling tool prototype’ showed all available methods in no particular order, allowing a patient to see actual sizes, touch them, understand how they work, and reduce provider bias.



A clinical study is underway to understand if and how the tool changes provider practices when counseling adolescents and young adults on contraceptive methods. After the study is completed, the tool will be publicly available.

## ABOUT CI3 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Ci3 envisions a world in which all youth emerge into adulthood with agency over their bodies and futures. We are committed to empowering young people, conducting innovative research, and uncovering opportunities for policy and systemic change. Recognizing the complex interplay of systems and structures, Ci3’s creative interdisciplinary approach strives to make significant improvements in the health and well-being of vulnerable communities. Ci3 has designed a sexual health service platform with young people, known as Hello Greenlight. To learn more, visit: <https://hellogreenlightpro.org>