

# CHARISMA Mobile: Developing a Digital Resource for Empowerment Counseling



Community Health clinic model for Agency in Relationships and Safer Microbicide Adherence

Harmful dynamics in relationships with male partners and exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) are two of women's greatest challenges to effective use of oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and other antiretroviral-based HIV prevention methods. The four-part CHARISMA intervention is designed to help women overcome those challenges through a relationship assessment and tailored counseling, support, and service referrals.

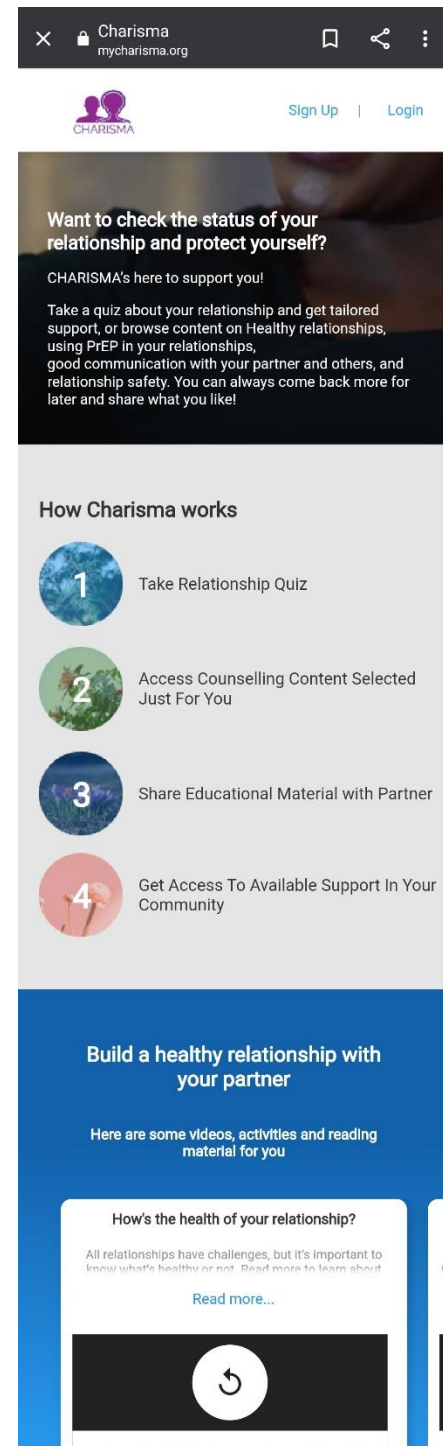
This intervention, piloted and evaluated in Johannesburg, provides counseling above and beyond standard IPV responses by also offering counseling on understanding relationship dynamics, improving communication with partners, and disclosing use of HIV prevention.

Despite global recognition of the importance of screening for and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) in PrEP programs, no specific tools are available to support effective screening, counseling, and referrals. CHARISMA can help fill this gap.

The new [CHARISMA toolkit](#) provides resources to support integration of the intervention into PrEP programs. CHARISMA aims to expand the reach of this comprehensive intervention by developing a mobile version.

## Why mobile?

Because the intervention relies on trained lay counselors, CHARISMA will need to be adapted



Screenshot of CHARISMA Mobile



to accommodate time and human resource constraints in many settings. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these constraints while highlighting the need for and accessibility of mobile resources for public health, such as counseling materials and videos.

A mobile version of the CHARISMA content, enabling self-administration of some or all components of the intervention, could:

- Extend the support resource-constrained public health programs can provide for IPV response, PrEP disclosure, and healthy communication.
- Offer an important alternative for women who are at risk of or are experiencing violence and are unable to travel to clinics or social service agencies.
- Provide an option that some key populations, including adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), might prefer over in-person counseling for many reasons, including anticipated stigma and time constraints.

## The plan

The CHARISMA team plans to develop a mobile version of the intervention’s counseling materials that could be self-administered through platforms sponsored by the South African National Department of Health (NDOH), such as [B-wise](#) or [myprep.co.za](#).

### Step 1: Adapt the CHARISMA intervention counseling materials.

CHARISMA will hold two multi-day participatory workshops with target audience members, using human-centered design principles to adapt the relationship assessment tool; convert other CHARISMA materials into digital content; and address safety and ethical considerations about mobile security and IPV response.

One-on-one user feedback on the intervention content and prototypes developed during the workshops will then be gathered from up to 24 women who are current or former PrEP users to inform refinement of the content.

### Step 2. Develop and beta test the usability and feasibility of the adapted CHARISMA content.

*CHARISMA Mobile* will be beta tested in Johannesburg among about 80 women, including 50 AGYW ages 18 to 24 and 30 women ages 25 to 45. Facilitators will lead participants in one-on-one beta testing sessions, asking for feedback on each feature, including what participants like and do not like and what they think might be missing. Key insights from these sessions will guide revisions and, ultimately, decisions about whether and how to proceed with development.

### Step 3. Evaluate the acceptability of CHARISMA Mobile.

Finally, an evaluation conducted among 160 women ages 18 to 45 will assess the acceptability of the CHARISMA content and the feasibility of using the mobile versions in “real-world” settings where connectivity can be problematic. Participants will self-administer *CHARISMA Mobile* from a smartphone in a location of their choice. Afterwards, they will complete a survey. Google analytics will be used to compliment user feedback.

The evaluation results will identify any design modifications that need to be made before the formal launch or integration of *CHARISMA Mobile* into NDOH sponsored websites or other platforms.