Supplementary file 2 – Topic guides and example Safetxt messages shown to interviewees who participated in the trial intervention group

Participant views evaluating the Safetxt intervention

Topic guide for interviews – intervention group

Introductions

Aim of today / What is this research for?

You were chosen to be interviewed as you took part in the Safetxt study and you kindly agreed to be contacted again by the research team. We are interested in your views of the text messages and whether you found them helpful or not.

Interview: Approximately 45 mins - 1 hour, £20 voucher as a thank you at end.

Confidentiality:

We will keep everything confidential unless you or someone else is in danger of harm (especially for under 18s).

We will not use your name in the report or in any other information that could identify you.

Other:

Ok to stop or take a break at any time. (If phone/Skype) If you have any privacy concerns you can end the phone call at any time and either call us back right away or another time. You don’t have to answer questions you don’t want to answer. You can say you prefer not to answer to any question I ask.

There are no right or wrong answers, I am just interested in hearing about your experiences. I have not been involved in designing this project in any way, so please feel free to be as critical and honest as you want to me.

Mobile on silent if possible.

Let us know if you want to speak about anything privately at the end.

CONSENT FORM + PIS – Sign, and keep information sheet

Any questions before starting?

Recording: Okay to tape record?
A. Participant views and experiences of the intervention

1. Understanding and overall experience of the intervention

Tell me about your overall experience of taking part in the Safetxt trial
Probe: Motivation/reasons to take part?

[If not already answered] Overall, what was it like taking part in this study?
-Probe: Positive, negative, useful, neutral etc. Can you tell me more about why you feel that?

What do you think the Safetxt study was for/ what was it trying to achieve (insight to participants’ understanding of intervention)?
-Probe: What do you think the key messages are?

Who do you think the Safetxt study was for?
-Probe: Age, sexuality, relationship status, STI status.

Do you feel the messages applied to you?
-Probe: Check if messages apply to sexual orientation, relationship status, age.

-How did you feel when you received text messages?
-Probe: What was it like receiving the messages (positive/negative/neutral)? What did they make you think of?

Were there any good or bad things about taking part of the Safetxt study?
-Probe: Anything good/bad? Explain why?

Can you recall which text messages you found helpful/unhelpful and why?
-Probe: Can you give me examples? Can you tell me more about why you feel that? Any parts that are more essential than others? Any features you were unsure of?

Anything else to add?

B. Text messages about STI treatment, including 7-day abstinence

Did you get treated for an STI?

Do you remember what your treatment involved?
-Probe: Was this said at the clinic/pharmacy or did you remember from the text messages/did they help? Avoiding sex after treatment or not?

Did you take your treatment as you were instructed to?
-Probe: Why or why not?

People are often advised to not have sex for 7 days until the infection has cleared. How did you find that/ what did you think about that?
[if don’t remember: check enrollment date _____________ – try to jog memory by reminding them their enrolment date and asking how they got their treatment (clinic/pharmacy etc)]

[if still don’t remember: Don’t worry, I understand it’s been a long time, let’s try a hypothetical scenario: Imagined you are diagnosed with an STI right now and you were told to not have sex for 7 days until the infection has cleared.]

Probe: What did you understand by that? (Interpretation of instructions/ Did they think it meant all types of sex, or only penetrative sex – explore)

Probe: Did this make sense to you? Did you think it was important or not? And why was it important or not? (e.g. not to infect others or not to get re-infected themselves)

Probe: What was it like to be told not to have sex after treatment (probe by clinician/or text)?

Probe: Did you find this to be doable?/ how doable was it?

Where there any challenges?/What were the challenges, if any to avoid sex for 7 days? OR (If did not abstain) May I ask the reason you did/did not avoid sex? (If not abstained) What were the challenges (if any) and would have helped?

[If did abstain] What strategies did you use to avoid sex?/ how did you manage to avoid sex?

(If not mentioned) Do you remember being advised to avoid sex for 7 days in the text messages?

-Probe: What did you think of this message? How was it phrased? [show text messages if doesn’t remember]

Can I ask what you thought of the information provided in the text messages about treatment?

-Probe: useful, vague, not useful features etc. Did anything put you off?

If not useful, what would have made it more useful to you (more detail on exact issue, alternatives, examples how others dealt with it etc.)

Do you think the text messages made any difference to whether or not you avoided sex for 7 days after treatment?

-Probe: Would you have done this anyway?

Would you change the content of any of the messages around STI treatment and avoiding sex after treatment?

-Probe: If yes, what would you change and why?

Anything else to add?

C. Text messages about telling partner

Can you remember being advised in the text messages to tell your partner(s) about your infection?
-Probe: What did you think of these message (show content here)? How did you find the advice on the messages? Any particularly helpful/unhelpful messages?

Did you tell your partner(s) about your infection?

Did you tell any current or past partners about your infection? Did you ask them to get tested?
  - Probe: (If told partner(s)) Were you able to discuss sexual health testing with your partner(s)? If yes, what helped you achieve this?

(if told partner) Can you tell me about when you told your partner about your infection?
  Probe: What were you feeling before, how did you feel after?

How useful have the text messages been, in terms of preparing you for telling partners about an infection?
  -Probe: Useful, not useful, neutral. If useful, how did they help? Any barriers?

Do you think the text messages made any difference to whether or not you told your partner about your infection?
  -Probe: Would you have done this anyway?

Would you change the content of any of the messages?
  -Probe: If yes, what would you change and why?

Anything else to add?

**D. Text messages about condom use**

How easy or difficult did you find it to use a condom with a partner?
  -Probe: Different situations, challenges, access to condoms, relationship status, overall consistency of use.

Did you learn anything new from the text messages about condoms?
  -Probe: How did the messages help you understand the importance? Were you more likely to use condoms?

Have the text messages changed anything about your condom use?
  -Probe: Were you more likely to remember them? Have they affected/changed your confidence in using condoms or not? If yes, which messages helped with this? How did they help?

(If not already answered) Do you think the text messages made any difference to whether or not you used condoms?
  -Probe: Would you have done this anyway?

(If used condoms) Will you continue using condoms now that you no longer receive these text messages?
  -Probe: Why or why not?
Did you share and discuss your messages with your partner(s)? What discussions did that lead to?
- Probe: Did it help you negotiate condom use?

Would you change the content of any of the messages?
- Probe: If yes, what would you change and why?

Anything else to add?

**E. Text messages about STI testing**

Have you gone for STI testing since joining the study? (exclude study self testing)
- Probe: Why or why not. Challenges, facilitators, clinic accessibility/opening hours, hassle, confidentiality.

If you have had any new partners since joining the study, did your partner get tested before beginning a sexual relationship?
- Probe: Challenges, facilitators, clinic accessibility/opening hours, hassle, confidentiality.

Have the text messages changed anything about your understanding of STI testing?
- Probe: Are you more likely to get an STI screening?

Have you discussed sexual health testing with a new partner? If yes, what helped you achieve this?
- Probe: Did your partner attend any sexual health screening? If yes, what helped you achieve this?

(If not already answered) Do you think the text messages made any difference to whether you went for STI testing or would you have done this anyway?

(If says more STI testing) Will you continue regular STI testing now that you no longer receive these text messages?
- Probe: Why or why not? (relationship status)

Would you change any of the messages?
- Probe: If yes, what would you change and why?

Anything else to add?

**F. Re-infection with an STI**

Re-infection with an STI is very common. Since joining the study have you been re-infected with another STI?

If you don’t mind me asking, do you think you know how you came to pick up STI? Explore.

If re-infected: Would you have wanted additional messages following re-infection? If so what kind of messages? Change frequent/timing of messages?
**G. Testing kit**

For you, what part did the home testing kit play in the study?

Would you have taken part in the study if we hadn’t sent you a home STI testing kit?

Probe: Do you think this study needs to have a testing kit to work well or would it work just as well without the home testing kit? Do you think the testing kit was a valuable part of this study?

**H. Did the text messages impact behavior, information/knowledge, attitudes, (understanding how the intervention produces change)**

1. **Changes in knowledge / prompting reflection**

As a result of taking part in the study, have you learned anything new? (that you haven’t mentioned already). Do you think this impact was short-lived or will it be sustained?

-Probe: More detail.

2. **Changes in behavior**

As a result of taking part in the study, has any aspect of your life changed (that you haven’t mentioned already).

-Probe: Reduction of stigma, increased confidence, addressing fears, intention formation for partner notification and/or condom use.

As a result of taking part in the study, has any of your behavior changed?

Do you think this change was short-lived or will it last?

What do you think are the main reasons that encouraged you to make these changes?

-Probe: More detail and why.

How easy/difficult was it to adopt these changes?

-Probe: More detail. Barriers/challenges and facilitators/opportunities to behavior change. Access to condoms, clinic opening hours/appointments, confidentiality concerns, personal motivation, relationship changes, etc.

(If not already answered) Do you think the text messages made any difference to your behavior or would you have done this anyway?

(If the former) Would you continue these behaviours once you stop receiving these text messages?

-Probe: Why or why not? Explore: condoms use, STI testing, partner notification.

As a result of taking part in the study, have you experienced any other unexpected changes?

Probe: More detail. Other impacts? Adverse events?
I. Understanding engagement with the intervention

(If not yet told/ or ask in addition to the above) Did you discuss the content of the messages with anyone?
-Probe: Who with? Was this helpful or unhelpful? Did it make it easier/were you more open to discuss sexual health?

Did you ever look at any of the links of videos in the text messages?
-Probe: If so, which ones? Why or why not? Were they useful or not?

You had the option of texting a number to hear more about a particular message. Did you every make use of this option?
-Probe: If so, was it useful? Did you like having this option? Would you have liked more?

J. Text message delivery and timing

The text messages you received were initially sent more frequently and then became less frequent. What did you think of the timing of the text message?
-Probe: Did the timing of text messages make any difference to changing any aspect of your life? Days of the week and times during the day.

How would you prefer to receive the text messages?
-Probe: Timing of messages. Would you prefer to have some control over how often and when text messages are sent?

Did you opt for turning any text messages off?
-Probe: If yes, why? Did you turn them back on?

K. Future recommendations for the study

If we were to continue this text messaging study and make it available to others, who should it be available for?
-Probe: Any particular groups it would work well or not so well for? Age, relationships status, people with or without diagnosis of an STI

Would you add or change anything?
-Probe: (if not already covered) timing and frequency of messages, control over messages, opt out or opt in (or back in at a later date)?

Anything else?

Is there anything else you would like to say about the Safetxt study that I have not asked you?

End of interview:

Stop tape recording.
Thank participant. Ask if any questions?

Give participant voucher incentive.

**Potential follow-up interview:**

Your feedback today has been very helpful. We will soon have the results of the study. We may have additional questions in the future to help us understand the results. Would you be interested in a future chat to help us explain the results?

**Dissemination:**

Once we have finished the Safetxt study we would like to present our findings to everyone that has taken part. We are currently looking for participants to help us decide how best to communicate these findings. As always, your involvement would be completely anonymous and you can be as involved as you would like to be. This is something that you could add to your CV if you like, and we can help you with phrasing this in a way that is acceptable to you.

If this is something you might be interested in please let me know either now, or you can get in touch with me by text or email (give them a text and/or email).

**Reflexivity:**

Write up observational notes from the interview if they are relevant.
Example text messages (example for heterosexual or bisexual female participants) shown during interviews to participants who had been in the intervention group

Looking at these messages, were there any that were particularly helpful/ not helpful? Why?

Treatment and 7-days abstinence after treatment

1. You made the right decision to get a test. Getting treated quickly means you are less likely to have any problems.

1. To treat the infection, take the tablets and then don’t have sex (oral, vaginal and anal) for 7 days while the infection clears.

2. It’s common to get re-infected. To avoid getting another infection, the next steps are: 1) get treated 2) tell the person you’re having sex with to get treated 3) don’t have sex for 7 days (oral, vaginal or anal) after you and your partner(s) have been treated.

Telling partner (after initial diagnosis)

A) General

1. Most people who have an infection don’t know. Your partner(s) could be infected so it’s important to tell them that they need treatment too.

2. It’s common to get re-infected. To avoid getting another infection tell the person you’re having sex with to get treated...

B) Examples of how to tell a partner

2. There are lots of other ways of telling the person you are having sex with that they need treatment. Here are some examples of how some people started the conversation: “I said that if I didn’t respect you I wouldn’t be telling you this. It’s awkward to tell people but it’s not right not to, is it? They may not know. You can’t just let them walk round with an infection.”

2. “I just couldn’t tell some partners so the clinic offered to do it for me. It was good because they kept my name out of it.” Text 17 to hear more.

2. “I told them getting tested and treated is free, you won’t need an examination.”
Condom use

A) General

5 You can make sure you don’t get another infection by using condoms every time you have sex...

8 Think back to a time (or times) when you had sex without a condom. Think about why you didn’t use one. Ask yourself how you could you do things differently next time.

11 Having condoms with you makes it more likely you’ll use one. Find a time to put a few in your purse. You could also keep a supply in places where you have sex (bedroom, partner’s house, car).

12 If you want a quick refresher on the best way to put a condom on, check out this LINK, https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/condoms

B) Talking to a partner about condoms

40 When you just start seeing someone, it can be awkward to bring up condoms. Most people are happy to talk about condoms though.

40 More than likely they’re thinking the same thing and will be relieved that you brought it up first. It can help to think about what you’ll say beforehand.

STI testing

201 Regular check-ups & check-ups with new partners mean infections can be treated before they cause problems.

4 Here are how others felt when they found out that their test was positive: “I didn’t know who to talk to at first so I just looked it up on the Internet. It was like the clinic told me- really common and easy to treat.”

Talking about sex

75 Do you have difficulty talking about sex? Follow this link: LINK http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Talkingaboutsex/Pages/Talkingtoyourpartner.aspx
Participant views evaluating the Safetxt intervention

Topic guide for interviews – control group

Introductions

Aim of today / What is this research for?

You where chosen to be interviewed as you took part in the Safetxt study and you kindly agreed. We are interested in your experiences of being in the study.

Interview: Approximately 30-40 min, £20 as a thank you at end.

Confidentiality:

We will keep everything confidential unless you or someone else is in danger of harm (especially for under 18s).

We will not use your name in the report or in any other information that could identify you.

Other:

Ok to stop or take a break at any time. (If phone/Skype) If you have any privacy concerns you can end the phone call at any time and either call us back right away or another time. You don’t have to answer questions you don’t want to answer. You can say you prefer not to answer to any question I ask.

There are no right or wrong answers, I am just interested in hearing about your experiences. I have not been involved in designing this project in any way, so please feel free to be as critical and honest as you want to me.

Mobile on silent if possible.

Let us know if you want to speak about anything privately at the end.

CONSENT FORM + PIS – Sign, and keep information sheet

Any questions before starting?

Recording: Okay to tape record?
A. Participant views and experiences of the intervention

2. Understanding and overall experience of the intervention

Tell me about your overall experience of taking part in the Safetxt trial
Probe: Motivation/reasons to take part?

[If not already answered] Overall, what was it like taking part in this study?
-Probe: Positive, negative, useful, neutral etc. Can you tell me more about why you feel that?

What do you think the Safetxt study was for/ what was it trying to achieve (insight to
participants’ understanding of intervention)?
-Probe: What do you think the key messages are?

Who do you think the Safetxt study was for?
-Probe: Age, sexuality, relationship status, STI status.

Before you started the study, were you told that you had an equal chance of getting assigned
to one of two groups, either the so-called ‘intervention group’, where people got lots of text
messages or the so-called ‘control group’, where people did not really receive many
messages, other than from the questionnaires and the STI test kit at the end.

[If not already mentioned:] Do you know which group you were assigned to?
Probe: When/ at what point did you find out? How did you feel when you found out?

Did you receive any text messages at all?
If so: Probe: How did you feel when you received these text messages? What was it like
receiving the messages (positive/negative/neutral)? What did they make you think of?

Were there any good or bad things about taking part of the Safetxt study?
-Probe: Anything good/bad? Explain why?

Has anyone you know also signed up for the Safetxt study?
[If so: Do you know whether they were assigned to the text message intervention group or the
no text message control group? probe for contamination.]

Did you tell anyone that you were in the study?
Probe: Partners, family, friends. If told partner(s), do you think that this changed anything
about your sexual behavior? Probe: safer sex behavior, STI testing, etc.

Anything else to add?

B. Text messages about STI treatment, including 7-day abstinence

Did you get treated for an STI?

Do you remember what your treatment involved?
-Probe: Was this said at the clinic/pharmacy? Avoiding sex after treatment or not?
Did you take your treatment as you were instructed to?  
-Probe: Why or why not?

People are often advised to not have sex for 7 days until the infection has cleared. How did you find that/what did you think about that?

[if don’t remember: check enrollment date ___________ – try to jog memory by reminding them their enrolment date and asking how they got their treatment (clinic/ pharmacy etc)]

[if still don’t remember: Don’t worry, I understand it’s been a long time, let’s try a hypothetical scenario: Imagine you are diagnosed with an STI right now and you were told to not have sex for 7 days until the infection has cleared.]

Probe: What did you understand by that? (Interpretation of instructions/Did they think it meant all types of sex, or only penetrative sex – explore)

Probe: Did this make sense to you? Did you think it was important or not? And why was it important or not? (e.g. not to infect others or not to get re-infected themselves)

Probe: What was it like to be told not to have sex after treatment (probe by clinician/or text)?

Probe: Did you find this to be doable?/how doable was it?

Where there any challenges?/What were the challenges, if any to avoid sex for 7 days? OR (If did not abstain) May I ask the reason you did/did not avoid sex? (If not abstained) What were the challenges (if any) and would have helped?

[If did abstain] What strategies did you use to avoid sex?/how did you manage to avoid sex?

Do you think that the fact that you were in the study (even if you were in the control group only) made any difference to whether or not you avoided sex for 7 days after treatment?

-Probe: Would you have done this anyway?

Anything else to add?

**C. Telling partner**

Can you remember being advised to tell your partner(s) about your infection?  
-Probe: By whom? How did you find the advice?

Did you tell any current or past partners about your infection? Did you ask them to get tested?

- Probe: (If told partner(s)) Were you able to discuss sexual health testing with your partner(s)? If yes, what helped you achieve this?
(if told partner) Can you tell me about when you told your partner about your infection?
Probe: What were you feeling before, how did you feel after?

Do you think that the fact that you were in the study made any difference to whether or not you told your partner about your infection?
-Probe: Would you have done this anyway?

Anything else to add?

**D. Condom use**

How easy or difficult did you find it to use a condom with a partner?
-Probe: Different situations, challenges, access to condoms, relationship status, overall consistency of use.

Do you think that the fact that you were in the study made any difference to whether or not you used condoms?
-Probe: Would you have done this anyway (especially following STI diagnosis)?

(If used condoms) Will you continue using condoms now that you are no longer participating in the study?
-Probe: Why or why not?

Anything else to add?

**E. Text messages about STI testing**

Have you gone for STI testing since joining the study? (exclude study self testing)
-Probe: Why or why not. Challenges, facilitators, clinic accessibility/opening hours, hassle, confidentiality.

If you have had any new partners since joining the study, did your partner get tested before beginning a sexual relationship?
-Probe: Challenges, facilitators, clinic accessibility/opening hours, hassle, confidentiality.

Have you discussed sexual health testing with a new partner? If yes, what helped you achieve this?
-Probe: Did your partner attend any sexual health screening? If yes, what helped you achieve this?

Do you think the fact that you were in the study made any difference to whether you went for STI testing or would you have done this anyway?

(If says more STI testing) Will you continue regular STI testing now that you are no longer in the study?
-Probe: Why or why not? (relationship status)

Anything else to add?
F. Re-infection with an STI

Re-infection with an STI is very common. Since joining the study have you been re-infected with another STI?

If you don’t mind me asking, do you think you know how you came to pick up STI? Explore.

(If re-infected) Would you have liked to get more support following re-infection? If so what kind of support and from whom?

I. STI testing kit

How did you find getting a home STI testing kit in the study?

Would you have taken part in the study if we hadn’t sent you a home testing kit?

Probe: Do you think the testing kit was a valuable part of this study?

Did knowing you were going to receive a testing kit influence your behavior in any way?

F. Behavior, information/knowledge, attitudes, (understanding whether/how being in study produced change)

3. Changes in knowledge / prompting reflection

Since taking part in the study, have you learned anything new from anywhere? -Probe: More detail.
-Probe: More detail.

4. Changes in behavior

As a result of taking part in the study, has any aspect of your life changed (that you haven’t mentioned already).
-Probe: Reduction of stigma, increased confidence, addressing fears, intention formation for partner notification and/or condom use.

As a result of taking part in the study, has any of your behavior changed?

Do you think this change was short-lived or will it last?

What do you think are the main reasons that encouraged you to make these changes?
-Probe: More detail and why.

How easy/difficult was it to adopt these changes?
-Probe: More detail. Barriers/challenges and facilitators/opportunities to behavior change. Access to condoms, clinic opening hours/appointments, confidentiality concerns, personal motivation, relationship changes, etc.
Do you continue these behaviours even now that the study has ended?
-Probe: Why or why not? Explore: condom use, STI testing, partner notification.

As a result of taking part in the study, have you experienced any other unexpected changes?
Probe: More detail. Other impacts? Adverse events?

**Anything else?**

Is there anything else you would like to say about the Safetxt study that I have not asked you?

**End of interview:**

Stop tape recording.

Thank participant. Ask if any questions?

Give participant cash/voucher incentive.

**Potential follow-up interview:**

Your feedback today has been very helpful. We will soon have the results of the study. We may have additional questions in the future to help us understand the results. Would you be interested in a future chat to help us explain the results?

**Dissemination:**

Once we have finished the Safetxt study we would like to present our findings to everyone that has taken part. We are currently looking for participants to help us decide how best to communicate these findings. As always, your involvement would be completely anonymous and you can be as involved as you would like to be. This is something that you could add to your CV if you like, and we can help you with phrasing this in a way that is acceptable to you.

If this is something you might be interested in please let me know either now, or you can get in touch with me by text or email (give them a text and/or email).

**Reflexivity:**

Write up observational notes from the interview if they are relevant.