



*Hearsay* is a storytelling card game about contraception and safer sex. It's also a game about relationships, emotions, and social networks. Playtesters have compared it to collaboratively writing a soap opera out loud.

The Game Changer Chicago Design Lab made *Hearsay* for high school sex ed classrooms to prompt discussions about birth control and safer sex as part of everyday life. Taking turns, players tell a story about a randomly chosen protagonist in their first year of college, weaving together the characters, events, and feelings they've been dealt. Winning the game entails maneuvering to place yellow cards into the narrative, each of which describes a form of contraception or STD prevention, including PrEP, IUDs, condoms, and abstinence.

*Hearsay* aligns with [Game Changer Chicago](#)'s work toward reproductive justice through the destigmatization of reproductive health care and improved sexual health education. *Hearsay* aims not to over-determine the stories its players are telling, and to work with a sex ed curriculum that allows students think through how contraception fits into their own lives and the lives of people around them—not as something taboo and scary, but as something normal, healthy, and worth discussing.

We've also been using *Hearsay* as a tool to teach the fundamentals of game design. In workshops, we've had students and teachers re-skin the game to be about superheroes, park rangers in the Wild West, monsters in love, and more. As an analog game—that is, no computers or phones required—it's easy to reprint, repackage, and distribute. We're working on developing a *Hearsay* toolkit that will walk teachers through every step of the redesign process. Stay tuned!