

The United Republic of Tanzania



Ministry of Health
and Social Welfare

CUE CARDS

Couple HIV Counselling and Testing (CHCT)



National AIDS Control Programme

March 2009

HELPFUL TIPS FOR USING CUE CARDS

- Cue cards serve as a shared language, the shared foundation for continued learning. The cue cards are one tool we will use together to sustaining the skills of HTC. **The cue cards are your most important tool in operations for HTC.**
- Counselors all over the world have used them. At the beginning using these cards may feel awkward. **Trust the learning process and use the cards.**
- **Be patient with yourself when learning to use these cards.** Anything we learn takes time and practice before it becomes comfortable. Add some spice to your regular way of counselling. Accept the challenge.
- The cue cards will help you **remain focused** on your client's or patient's risk and successfully deliver the intervention. Remember you are the deliverer following a map (cue cards) ensuring that your passenger (client or patient) gets to his/her destination (risk reduction) **Give it a try.**
- If you commit to use the cards, you can be assured that you will deliver a consistent and effective intervention. **Every client or patient deserves to receive the same benefits of HTC. Using the cue cards will make a difference.**
- Remember that the questions have been developed to help you to achieve the objective of each component of the intervention. The questions build on each other. **Take one step at a time, one question at a time.**
- Having the questions helps you to elicit important information from your client and the scripted questions allow you to really listen to your client rather than trying to think of the next question. **Take advantage of having the questions.**
- In using the cue card, try using the questions provided. It is alright to skip a question if the client or patient already gave you the information or if it is not relevant to your client's or patient's situation. **Keep a balance between listening and asking the cue card questions. Then purposefully select your next question.** Role-playing will provide you with opportunities to practice.

- If the client or patient is silent after you have asked a question, he/she may need a moment to think, process, reflect and/or digest what has been asked or discussed. If you need to organize your thoughts or to decide on the next appropriate and relevant question take a moment of silence to do this. **The use of silence is an effective counselling skill.**
- At your site you might meet clients as a group and decide if you should modify some questions to reflect your culture and issues specific to your site. You may need to translate questions into local languages and the vernacular of your site. **Confirm with others that the questions you develop are asking what you are attempting to elicit from the client or patient.**
- Developing questions that elicit the appropriate information from the client is challenging. **Crafting effective questions requires a thoughtful and meticulous process.**
- Remember some questions are intended to help the client or patient to gain insight, reflect on alternative choices, or recognize conflicts. **Understand the purpose of each question.**
- When revising the questions, be careful to ensure that each question follows the previous one and assists in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the relevant component. **Only revise a question if another question might be better to enhance your ability to reach the objectives of the component.**
- Remember most of the cue card questions are carefully developed, counselor tested and proven to elicit important information from the client or patient. **There is no need to re-invent the wheel. If questions already work for you, keep them.**
- We strongly recommend that if you revise or translate the questions from the cue cards into another language, that you also develop a complete new set of cue cards for each counselor. **You should use the cue cards in your HTC sessions for at least the first three months following the HTC training. After that time, your supervisor may approve the use of the session guide alone if you've demonstrated consistent competence in achieving each of the intervention components in your HTC sessions.**

**Couple HIV Counselling and Testing Protocol
Initial Session**

Protocol Component: Initial Session	Time-Minutes
1. Initial Session for CHCT	2-3
2. Explore Couple's Relationship and Reason for Seeking CHCT Services	1-2
3. Discuss the Couple's HIV and Risk Concerns	1-2
4. Prepare for Testing and Discuss Positive HIV Results	2-3
Initial Session: Total Time	6-10
5. Perform Rapid HIV Test - Laboratory Space in Counselling Room	15-20

Initial Session

Initial Session for CHCT	2-3 minutes
<p>Introduce self to the couple and describe your role as a counsellor</p>	<p><i>Hello, my name is ____, and I will be your counselor today.</i></p> <p><i>I am happy to see that you have come in together for HIV counselling and testing.</i></p> <p><i>I am sure you know that HIV is a major problem in our community and I am glad to see that you are acting responsibly by getting tested.</i></p>
<p>Discuss the benefits of CHCT</p>	<p><i>There are many important benefits associated with receiving HIV counselling and testing as a couple. For most couples, getting tested together is the best way to deal with HIV infection in the family, because:</i></p> <p><i>You both learn important information about HIV.</i></p> <p><i>You can make decisions together about how to deal with HIV.</i></p>
<p>Describe the conditions for receiving CHCT</p>	<p><i>To benefit from our session today, it is important that each of you is willing to do several things:</i></p> <p><i>First, agree that you will both discuss your concerns about HIV. I want both of you to be able to express your concerns about HIV and getting tested.</i></p> <p><i>Second, agree that you will receive your test results together. This means that you will know the HIV status of your partner as well as yourself.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, you need to be mindful of how you share your HIV test result and your partner's HIV result. I would like you to agree that you will not tell anyone else unless both of you are willing. You should make decisions together about sharing your test results with other people.</i></p>

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Initial Session for CHCT	(continued)
<p>Address the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the couple in CHCT</p>	<p><i>I would also like to talk about what is expected of you as individuals and as a couple during the counselling and testing session:</i></p> <p><i>First, participate equally in the discussion.</i></p> <p><i>Second, listen carefully and respond to each other.</i></p> <p><i>Third, treat each other with respect and dignity.</i></p> <p><i>Fourth, be as open and honest as possible.</i></p> <p><i>And finally, do your best to provide understanding and support to each other.</i></p>
<p>Obtain concurrence to receive CHCT</p>	<p><i>Are both of you comfortable with what I have said so far and willing to continue with the session?</i></p> <p><i>Do both of you want to be tested and receive your test results together?</i></p> <p><i>If yes, proceed.</i></p> <p><i>If no, discuss individual counselling and testing.</i></p>
<p>Give a session overview</p> <p>Include what will be covered and estimate how long the session will take</p>	<p><i>Let's talk about how we will proceed:</i></p> <p><i>First, I will ask some questions that will help me understand your relationship</i></p> <p><i>Then we will talk about your concerns about HIV.</i></p> <p><i>We will talk about possible HIV test results.</i></p> <p><i>You will receive a rapid HIV test. After about 20 minutes, the results will be ready.</i></p> <p><i>We will discuss your results, and I will answer any questions you have.</i></p> <p><i>The entire session will last about an hour.</i></p>

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Explore Couple's Relationship and Reason for Seeking CHCT Services		1-2 minutes
Establish nature and duration of the couple's relationship	<p><i>First let's talk about your relationship. I need to ask you some questions so that I can understand your life together.</i></p> <p><i>Can you please tell me about yourselves, such as your living arrangements, have you been separated because of employment, are you married, are you in a polygamous relationship, have you had sex with each other and what are your plans for the future?</i></p>	
Address family planning and child bearing issues	<p><i>Do you have children? Are you planning to have children?</i></p> <p><i>What family planning methods are you now using?</i></p>	
Review how the couple came to the decision to seek CHCT services	<p><i>How did you decide to come together for HIV counselling and testing today?</i></p>	
Assess the couple's feelings associated with receiving CHCT (Be sure to get input from both partners)	<p><i>How does each of you feel about getting tested for HIV and receiving your test results together?</i></p>	
Summarize and reflect on the couple's history and current situation	<p><i>Let me make sure I understand your situation. Summarize the couple's story.</i></p> <p><i>Is this correct?</i></p>	

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Discuss the Couple's HIV and Risk Concerns	1-2 minutes
<p>Discuss possible HIV risks in the abstract and remind the couple to focus on the present and future</p>	<p><i>Who in your life do you talk with about personal issues such as your HIV concerns?</i></p> <p><i>Who would you tell if you were to find out you were infected with HIV?</i></p> <p><i>If you were to find out you are infected with HIV who would provide you with support?</i></p>
<p>Address indicators of increased likelihood of testing HIV positive</p>	<p><i>Have you heard about positive living?</i></p> <p><i>Positive living means taking care of your health and your emotional well-being in order to enhance your life and stay well longer.</i></p> <p><i>Positive living involves good nutrition, follow-up medical care, such as TB prevention treatment, support, and sense of optimism and well-being.</i></p>
<p>Summarise the risk discussion and provide motivation and support</p>	<p><i>If you have HIV, knowing you are infected can help you to prepare for your future and for your children's future.</i></p> <p><i>If you are infected, you can protect others from becoming infected.</i></p> <p><i>If you are negative, you will be empowered to reduce your risk.</i></p> <p><i>With knowledge of your HIV status, whether infected or not, you are increasing your self-awareness and have an opportunity to encourage others in the community to do the same.</i></p>

Continued ⇨

Prepare for HIV Testing and Discuss Possible Results

2-3 minutes

Explain the meaning of positive and negative results	<p><i>Let's talk for a minute about the testing process and possible test results.</i></p> <p><i>A HIV positive test result means you have HIV. A HIV negative result means you do not have HIV.</i></p>
Explain that the couple could have the same results	<p><i>As a couple, it is possible that you could both be HIV-negative; that is, neither of you is infected. It is also possible that you could both be HIV-positive; that is, both of you are infected.</i></p>
Discuss discordance	<p><i>It is also possible that you may have different test results—one partner can be infected while the other is not.</i></p> <p><i>Couples frequently receive different results; that is, one is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative. Sometimes couples have been together for years and have children and still have different results. We will talk more about this when we know your test results.</i></p>
Guide the couple through the testing process and describe how the test results will be provided	<p><i>Now, I'd like to briefly explain the testing process and how the results will be provided to you:</i></p> <p><i>Your finger will be pricked and a small amount of blood will be taken for the test. A repeat finger prick maybe required if a second test is indicated.</i></p> <p><i>The results will be ready in approximately 20minutes.</i></p> <p><i>When the test results are ready, I will give you your results together.</i></p> <p><i>We will spend time talking about the meaning of the test results for you as a couple. If one or both of you are HIV-positive, we will discuss the care, treatment, and support services that are available to you. If one or both of you are HIV-negative, we will discuss how to protect yourselves from getting infected with HIV.</i></p>

Direct the client to where the HIV test is being conducted to receive the test and instruct them where to wait. If test is done by counsellor, they will wait and continue with the counselling session after testing.

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**Couple HIV Counselling and Testing Intervention Protocol
Second Session A
Concordant Negative Test Results**

Protocol Component: Follow-up Session – Concordant HIV Negative	Time-Minutes
6. Provide Concordant HIV Negative Test Results	2-3
7. Discuss Risk Reduction Plan	4-6
Second Session A: Total Time	6-9

Provide HIV Test Results - Concordant Negative		2-3 minutes
Inform couple that their test results are available	<i>You HIV test results are ready now. Do you have any questions? Let me make sure that counselling will continue to be available in order to help you with important decisions.</i>	
Provide a simple summary of the couple's results	<i>Both of your test results are negative. This means that neither of you has HIV (If available, show the test results or test strips to the couple).</i>	
Ask if the couple understands their results	<i>Do you understand your test results? What do these results mean to you? Do you have any questions?</i>	
Explore the couple's reaction to their results	<i>How does it feel to hear you are both HIV-negative?</i>	
Discuss results in the context of any recent risks outside of their relationship	<i>There is an extremely small chance that this test did not detect HIV if you were infected very recently. If one of you had sex with someone else whose HIV status is unknown in the last three months and you did not use a condom, you should get another test in about three months from now.</i>	

Continued ➡

Discuss Risk Reduction Plan

4-6 minutes

Address the risk associated with other partners

Now let's talk about how to make sure you both stay HIV-negative.

The most effective way to stay HIV-negative and to protect each other from HIV is by being faithful to each other. This means you will only have sex with each other.

If you have other partners or a co-wife, these test results do not mean that they are also HIV-negative just because you are both HIV-negative.

If either of you has sex with a person whose HIV status is not known and you do not use a condom, you are at very high risk of getting HIV and bringing it into your relationship.

The most effective way to assure that you both stay negative is to have sex only with each other.

Do you anticipate any problems of being faithful to each other?

Would travelling or working away from home be cause for concern?

Do you think that the use of alcohol will influence your ability to be faithful?

Are there other circumstances that would make being faithful difficult for you?

Discuss couple's specific HIV concerns or risks, based on pre-test discussion (if applicable)

During the pre-test session we talked about some of your specific HIV concerns.

Now that we know you are both HIV-negative, let's talk some more about why you thought you were at risk for HIV and what you will do as a couple to stay HIV-negative.

What are some steps you would like to take protect your relationship from HIV?

Continued ⇨

Discuss Risk Reduction Plan**(continued)**

Emphasize that condoms must always be used if either partner has sex outside the relationship

If either of you do choose to have sex outside this relationship with another partner, you should ALWAYS USE A CONDOM to protect yourself and to keep from spreading HIV to your family.

If you do not use a condom, you are putting yourself and your family at risk for HIV.

Here is some information on proper use of condoms, but again, I want to emphasize that the most effective way to remain negative is to only have sex with each other.

Explore skills required to reduce risk

All couples have stressful and challenging times. It is best to work through these times together. How can you ensure open communication about your HIV issues and concerns?

Can we all agree on your plan for protecting your relationship from HIV? How will you remain committed to this plan?

Encourage the couple to openly communicate with each other about risk reduction and to stay faithful

I encourage you to always talk to each other about protecting your relationship and your family from HIV and to remain faithful.

Convey confidence in the ability of the couple to complete the plan and to protect each other

You have taken a big step today by receiving HIV counselling and testing as a couple.

Encourage the couple to become ambassadors for testing, particularly for couple services

I hope you will encourage other couples in your community to learn their HIV status together.

Provide needed referrals for services such as those for STIs, family planning, care during pregnancy, or support

Give couple referral information.

Final

Couple HIV Counselling and Testing Intervention Protocol
Second Session B
Concordant Positive Results

Protocol Component: Follow-up Session – Concordant HIV Positive	Time-Minutes
6. Provide Concordant HIV Positive Test Results	3-5
7. Discuss Coping and Mutual Trust	4-10
8. Discuss Positive Living and HIV Care and Treatment	3-5
9. Discuss Healthy Living	3-5
10. Discuss Risk Reduction	0-5
11. Discuss Children, Family Planning and PMTCT Options	3-5
12. Discuss Disclosure and Getting Support	3-5
Second Session B: Total Time	19-40

Provide Test Results - Concordant HIV Positive	3-5 minutes
Inform the couple that their results are available	<i>Your test results are now ready. Do you have any questions? Let me make sure that counselling will continue to be available in order to help you with important decisions.</i>
Provide a simple summary of the couple's results	<i>Both of your test results are positive. This means that you both have HIV.</i>
Allow the couple time to absorb the meaning of the results	<i>Take your time. We have plenty of time to talk about these test results.</i>
Ask if the couple they understand the results	<i>I want to be sure you understand the results. Do you understand these results? What do these results mean to you?</i>
Encourage mutual support and diffuse blame	<i>HIV is common; and we do not know how long each of you has had HIV. I encourage you to deal with this together and to support each other.</i>

Continued ⇨

Discuss Coping and Mutual Trust	4-10minutes
Invite both partners to express their feelings and concerns	<p><i>Could each of you tell me how you are feeling?</i></p> <p><i>What questions do you have?</i></p>
Validate and normalize the couple's feelings and acknowledge the challenges of dealing with a positive result	<p><i>These feelings are a normal part of hearing your positive HIV test results. I encourage you to focus on how best to support each other now rather than blame each other.</i></p> <p><i>It can be stressful at first to hear that you have HIV.</i></p> <p><i>You will probably have many strong feelings about your status and each other.</i></p> <p><i>It is normal to feel upset or angry but also feel love and concern for your partner.</i></p> <p><i>Many couples with HIV-positive results express similar feelings.</i></p> <p><i>Let's take this one step at a time.</i></p>
Ask how the partners can best support each other	<p><i>You came here today to deal with HIV as a couple.</i></p> <p><i>Now, how can you best support each other through this?</i></p>
Recall the couple's strengths Convey optimism that the couple will be able to cope and adjust to living with HIV	<p><i>You may need some time to adjust to this, but in time and with each other's support, you will have a better chance of coping and continuing with your life together.</i></p> <p><i>You have dealt before with difficult and rough times in your lives, and remembering this will help you to get through this.</i></p>
Address the couple's immediate concerns	<p><i>There is a lot we need to talk about. But first, do you have any questions?</i></p>

Continued ⇨

Discuss Positive Living and HIV Care and Treatment

3-5minutes

Discuss positive living	<p><i>Positive living means taking care of yourself in order to improve the quality of your life and to stay well longer.</i></p> <p><i>There are many people who have HIV and are living well.</i></p> <p><i>There is hope for you and your family.</i></p> <p><i>You will need to take several steps, however, to stay healthy. I will give you information about the HIV clinic where you can go to get help.</i></p> <p><i>Paying attention to your medical care is an important part of living positively.</i></p> <p><i>Let's talk about this.</i></p>
Address the need for preventive health care	<p><i>It is very important that you get medical care as soon as possible.</i></p> <p><i>You will need to go to a CTC clinic for HIV treatment.</i></p> <p><i>We will give you a referral letter to take with you when you seek care and treatment.</i></p> <p><i>Effective treatment for HIV is becoming more available in our community, and you may be eligible for this treatment.</i></p> <p><i>You need to be evaluated to determine what is the best treatment for you.</i></p> <p><i>The medical provider at the CTC clinic will examine you and do tests to determine what drugs, if any, you need at this time.</i></p>
Encourage the couple to access appropriate care and treatment services	<p><i>I encourage you both to get medical care as soon as possible.</i></p> <p><i>HIV care and treatment can keep you from getting sick and protect you from other illnesses.</i></p> <p><i>It will make a big difference in how you feel.</i></p>
Provide needed referrals to the HIV clinic and other services Identify and problem-solve obstacles	<p><i>Here is a list of the HIV care and treatment services we have discussed and the locations where you can receive these services.</i></p> <p><i>Do you have concerns about going to a CTC clinic?</i></p> <p><i>Here is your referral letter to give to the clinic medical providers.</i></p>

Continued ⇨

Discuss Healthy Living	3-5minutes
<p>Discuss with the couple the need to live a healthy lifestyle</p> <p>Discuss things that they can do right away to keep healthy</p>	<p><i>In addition to seeking care at the clinic, there are several important things you need to do at home to keep healthy.</i></p> <p><i>Positive living tips: ways to stay healthy including exercises and proper nutrition, treatment and support system.</i></p>
<p>Discuss the importance of having safe drinking water to prevent diarrhea</p> <p>Inform the couple about where to get more information or obtain supplies</p>	<p><i>To prevent diarrhea, you should boil drinking water or use a safe water vessel with [name of bleach solution] added to the vessel.</i></p> <p><i>Here is some information about keeping your drinking water supply safe for you.</i></p>
<p>Discuss the importance of using bed nets to prevent malaria (when applicable)</p> <p>Inform couple about where to get more information or obtain supplies</p>	<p><i>You should sleep under a bed net to keep mosquitoes from biting you at night.</i></p> <p><i>This will prevent malaria. Here is some information about where you can obtain a bed net.</i></p>
<p>Discuss the importance of good nutrition</p> <p>Inform couple about where to get more information</p>	<p><i>Good nutrition is also very important.</i></p> <p><i>Here is some nutritional information (and if applicable, how to obtain food supplements).</i></p>

Continued ⇨

Discuss Risk Reduction

0-5minutes

Discuss the importance of being faithful and not having sex with outside partners

Since you both have HIV, we need to talk about how you can protect each other from other illnesses.

You can best protect each other by having sex only with each other and not having sex with other partners.

If you have sex with others, you can get other infections from them that can make you sick and could make your HIV disease worse. You could give these infections to your partner who could get sick as well.

Inform couple of the need to protect partners if they choose to have sex outside their relationship

In addition to making you and your partner sick, you could give HIV to these outside partners.

Provide condom demonstration

If either of you has sex with other partners, these partners should also be tested for HIV.

Just because you are positive does not mean they are infected. I encourage you to refer any other partners to a clinic or VCT site for HIV testing.

Again, the most effective way to protect yourselves is to be faithful to each other.

But if you choose to have sex outside your relationship, YOU MUST ALWAYS USE A CONDOM, so that you do not give HIV to others and so you do not get any infections from them that could make you sicker.

Now I will demonstrate for you how to use a condom correctly.

Continued ➡

Discuss Children Family Planning and PMTCT Options

3-5minutes

Discuss the issue of HIV testing of children

In addition to staying healthy for you and your family, there are things you need to do to be sure your children stay healthy.

If you have young children, they should be tested to see if they have HIV so they can also get the care they need.

You need to have your children tested for HIV here or at a Maternal Child Health (MCH) clinic.

Revisit the couple's intentions concerning having children

Discuss the couple's reproductive options

You may be planning to have more children. You should know that HIV can be transmitted to your baby.

Therefore, you should think about whether you still want to have more children now that you know you have HIV.

The most effective way to prevent transmission of HIV is to choose not to have additional children.

There are many family planning methods that you can use to prevent pregnancy—condoms, pills, and injectables for example.

Address the benefits and issues associated with the use of multiple contraceptive methods, such as condoms and oral contraceptives, to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and STI/HIV transmission.

I will give you a referral to a family planning clinic before you leave today.

What are your thoughts about getting pregnant in the future?

How would you choose to prevent pregnancy if you decide not to have more children?

Continued ⇨

Discuss Children, Family Planning and PMTCT Options**(continued)**

Describe PMTCT programs and services and identify where the couple can access services	<i>If you do get pregnant, it is important that you get care during your pregnancy because there are important steps you can take to decrease the chances of transmitting HIV to your baby.</i> <i>Currently, _____ (name of clinic) offers services to HIV-infected women who become pregnant.</i>
Address the couple's questions and concerns regarding PMTCT services	<i>What questions do you have?</i>

Continued ➞

Discuss Disclosure and Getting Support

3-5minutes

Explain the benefits for the couple to disclose their HIV status to others

As we have discussed, it is very important for you to support each other. However, there are a lot of issues to deal with.

It may be helpful to have someone else than each other to give you support and help you make decisions.

Trusted friends or family can support you in dealing with HIV and can also help you to get HIV care and treatment.

Explore the couple's feelings about sharing their results with a trusted friend, relative, or clergy

How do you feel about sharing your HIV test results with someone you trust?

Who do you feel could be a best support to two of you as you cope and adjust to living with HIV?

What concerns do you have about having someone to know you have HIV?

I would like to hear from each of you about your feelings on this.

Continued ⇨

Discuss Disclosure and Getting Support

(continued)

Discuss disclosure basics

After you identify someone with whom you would like to talk about your HIV status, think about what you would like to say to that person.

Think of a private place and time to talk, and ask them to keep the discussion confidential and not to tell anyone else.

Sometimes it is helpful to practice what you would like to say ahead of time and imagine how this person will react.

Who do you think you might want to tell about your HIV status? How do you think you would like to tell this person?

When would you talk with them? What would you say? How do you think he or she would react?

Let's imagine that I'm that person. Tell me about your results and I'll respond.

Reinforce that the decision to disclose is mutual

As we discussed, your decisions about sharing your results have to be made together.

Continued ⇨

Discuss Disclosure and Getting Support

(continued)

Explore the possibility of participating in a support group and additional counselling sessions

There is support available. Would you be interested in talking with other couples in your situation?

Here is a list of post-test clubs, support groups for couples, and resources for additional counselling.

Answer remaining questions and provide support Summarise

We have talked about a lot today. Let's review the important steps you need to take:

Go to the HIV clinic and give the referral letter to the provider.

Be sure to drink water that is safe.

Be sure to eat healthy foods.

Be sure to use a bed net.

Bring your children in for testing.

Talk about whether or not you want to have more children.

Use condoms if you choose to have sex outside the relationship.

Seek out support from friends, family, and support groups within your community.

Please share with me any remaining questions you may have.

It is a challenge to deal with having HIV, and another challenge to deal with having different results.

However, you are not the only couple that is dealing with being HIV positive and with time and mutual support you will have a better chance of adjusting and living positively.

Final

Couple HIV Counselling and Testing Intervention Protocol
Second Session C
Discordant Test Results

Protocol Component: Follow-up Session – Discordant HIV Positive	Time-Minutes
6. Provide Discordant HIV Positive Test Results	3-5
7. Discuss coping and Mutual Trust	4-10
8. Discuss Positive Living and HIV Care and Treatment	3-5
9. Discuss Healthy Living	3-5
10. Discuss Protecting the HIV Negative Partner from HIV	4-5
11. Discuss Children, Family Planning and PMTCT Options for Discordant Couples	3-5
12. Discuss Disclosure	3-5
Second Session C: Total Time	20-40

Provide Test Results - Discordant HIV Positive

3-5 minutes

Inform the couple that their results are available

Your test results are now ready. Do you have any questions? Let me make sure that counselling will continue to be available in order to help you with important decisions.

State that the couple has received results that are different

Pause briefly for the couple to absorb the implications of the results

Your test results are different.

(Pause)

_____, your test result is negative. This means you do not have HIV.

_____, your test result is positive. This means that you have HIV.

(Pause) *Take your time. We will have plenty of time to talk about this.*

Convey support and empathy

It can be difficult knowing that one of you has HIV. There is a lot to think about and deal with. It will help to take this one step at a time.

Ask the couple if they understand their results

First, I want to be sure that you both understand the results. Could you tell me what these results mean to you?

Review the explanation of how couples can have different results

Let's talk again about what it means for a couple to have different HIV test results:

It is very common for couples to have different test results.

Couples can be together for many years and have different results.

It does not necessarily mean that your partner has been unfaithful during your relationship. He or she could have been infected before you became a couple.

It is very important that you do not blame your partner for having HIV. He or she will need your support to cope and get care.

It is very important to protect _____ from becoming infected.

What questions do you have about your test results?

Continued ➡

Discuss Coping and Mutual Trust

4-10 minutes

Invite both partners to express their feelings and concerns

Let's first talk about how you are coping with knowing that you each have different test results.

Could each of you tell me how you are feeling?

What are your concerns for your partner?

Validate and normalize the couple's feelings and acknowledge the challenges of dealing with different results

It is normal to feel a sense of loss or to feel overwhelmed by this. These feelings are a normal part of hearing your HIV test results are different.

I encourage you to focus on how best to support each other now rather than blame each other.

It can be stressful at first to hear that one of you has HIV.

You will probably have many strong feelings about your status and each other.

It is normal to feel upset or angry but also feel love and concern for your partner.

Many couples with different test results express similar feelings.

Let's take this one step at a time.

Ask the uninfected partner how he or she could best support his or her partner

How best can you support your partner and help him or her to cope with being HIV-positive?

Recall the couple's strengths

Convey optimism that the couple will be able to cope and adjust to the situation

You may need some time to adjust to this, but in time you will have a better chance of coping and continuing with your life together.

You have dealt before with difficult and rough times in your lives, and remembering this will help you get through this.

Address the couple's immediate concerns

There is a lot we need to talk about. But first, do you have any questions?

Continued ⇨

Discuss Positive Living and HIV Care and Treatment

3-5minutes

Discuss positive living and the importance of getting care for the HIV-infected partner

Now that you have received your results and are starting to deal with this news together. Let's talk about how to keep both of you and your family as healthy as possible.

(Name of infected partner), your well-being directly affects the well-being, welfare, and future of your family.

Discuss positive living

Positive living means taking care of yourself in order to improve the quality of your life and to stay well longer.

There are many people who have HIV and are living well.

There is hope for you and your family. You will need to take several steps, however, to stay healthy.

I will give you information about the CTC clinic where you can go to get help.

Paying attention to your medical care is an important part of living positively.

Let's talk about this.

Address the need for preventive health care

Dispel myths about treatment eligibility

It is very important that you get medical care that will help you stay as healthy as possible.

You will need to go to a CTC clinic.

We will give you a referral letter to take to the HIV clinic.

Effective treatment for HIV is becoming more available in our community and you may be eligible for this treatment.

You need to be evaluated to determine what is the best treatment for you.

Not everyone who has HIV needs treatment right away, but you need to be evaluated to determine whether you will need treatment now.

The medical provider at the CTC clinic will examine you and do tests to determine if you are at a stage in which you need treatment and if so, what drugs you may need at this time.

Continued ⇨

Positive Living and HIV Care and Treatment

(continue)

Encourage the infected partner to access appropriate care and treatment services

I encourage you to follow-up with these services as soon as possible. HIV care and treatment can keep you from getting sick and protect you from other illnesses.

It will make a big difference in how you feel.

Do you have any questions?

Encourage the uninfected partner to serve as an advocate for the infected partner

Question directed to the uninfected partner:

How can you support your partner with care and treatment and living positively?

Provide needed referrals to the HIV clinic and other services Identify and problem-solve obstacles

Here is a list of the HIV care and treatment services we have discussed and the locations where you can receive these services.

Take this referral letter to the clinic.

Do you have concerns about going to the HIV clinic?

Here is your referral letter to give to the clinic's medical providers.

Continued ➡

Discuss Healthy Living**3-5minutes**

Discuss with the couple the need to live a healthy lifestyle
Discuss things that they can do right away to keep healthy

In addition to seeking care at the clinic, there are several important things you need to do at home to keep healthy.

Positive living tips: ways to stay healthy including exercises and proper nutrition, treatment and support system.

Discuss the importance of having safe drinking water to prevent diarrhea
Inform couple about where to get more information or obtain supplies

To prevent diarrhea, you should boil drinking water or use a safe water vessel with [name of bleach solution] added to the vessel.

Here is some information about keeping your drinking water supply safe for you. This can also benefit your entire family.

Discuss the importance of using bed nets to prevent malaria (when applicable)
Inform couple about where to get more information or obtain supplies

You should sleep under a bed net to keep mosquitoes from biting you at night.

This will prevent malaria.

Here is some information about where you can obtain a bed net.

Discuss the importance of good nutrition
Inform couple about where to get more information.

Good nutrition is also very important. Here is some nutritional information (and if applicable, how to obtain food supplements).

Continued ⇨

Discuss Protecting the Negative Partner from HIV

4-5minutes

Address risk reduction within the couple

Explore long-term measures to reduce the risk of HIV transmission to the uninfected partner

Since you have different test results, it is important that we talk about preventing the transmission of HIV between the two of you.

If you continue to have sex without a condom, your partner is at very high risk of becoming infected with HIV.

You can eliminate the risk of transmitting HIV to your partner by not having sexual intercourse.

Some couples initially choose not to have intercourse, but this frequently changes over time.

Some couples explore alternative ways to satisfy each other.

*If you do continue to have sex, **you must use condoms every time you have sex.***

Assess condom-related issues

Have you ever used condoms?

Do you know how to use a condom?

Now I will demonstrate for you how to use a condom correctly.

Address regular HIV testing for HIV-negative partner

It is recommended that the HIV-negative partner get an HIV test about once every year.

This means that next year around (today's date) you, (name), should get an HIV test.

However, if you are concerned about a recent exposure to your infected partner you can return for a repeat test after 3–4 weeks.

Inform couple that condoms must always be used with outside partners

Address the possibility that any other partners should be tested for HIV

(Name of negative partner), *if you have sex with other partners you should always use condoms to protect yourself from HIV.*

(Name of positive partner), *if you have sex with other partners you should always use condoms to prevent transmitting HIV.*

If either of you have sex with other partners, these partners should also be tested for HIV.

I encourage you to refer any other partners to a hospital or VCT site.

Continued ⇨

Discuss Children Family Planning and PMTCT Options for Discordant Couples

3-5minutes

Revisit the couple's intentions concerning having children

Address the risk to the uninfected partner should the couple decide to have a child

Now let's talk about how HIV might affect your family.

How does knowing that one of you has HIV influence your feelings about having (more) children?

You may be planning to have more children.

If you decide to have a baby, it is possible that your partner and the baby will become infected with HIV.

Therefore, you should think about whether you still want to have more children now that you know one of you has HIV.

Discuss the couple's reproductive options

What are your feelings about this?

The most effective way to prevent transmission is to choose not to have additional children.

There are many family planning methods that you can use to prevent pregnancy—condoms, pills, and Injectables for example.

I will give you a referral to a family planning clinic before you leave today.

What are your thoughts about getting pregnant in the future?

How would you choose to prevent unintended pregnancy?

Describe the country's PMTCT programs and services and identify where couples can access services

If you do get pregnant, it is important that you get care during your pregnancy because there are important steps you can take to decrease the chances of transmitting HIV to your baby.

Currently, _____ (name of clinic) offers services to HIV-infected women who become pregnant.

Continued ⇨

Discuss Children, Family Planning and PMTCT Options

(continued)

Discuss the issue of HIV testing of children. If the woman is positive

If woman is HIV-positive:

In addition to staying healthy for you and your family, there are things you need to do to be sure your children stay healthy.

If you have young children, they should be tested to see if they have HIV so they can also get the care they need.

You need to have your children tested for HIV here or at an MCH clinic.

Provide needed referrals

Family planning

ANC clinics (if woman is pregnant)

MCH clinic (if woman has young children, is breastfeeding, or both)

Here is a list of family planning clinics and clinics where you can get care during pregnancy.

Continued ➡

Discuss Disclosure**3-5minutes****Explain the benefits for the couple to disclose their HIV status to others**

As we have discussed, it is very important for you to support each other through this. However, there are a lot of issues to deal with. It may be helpful to have someone else than each other to help you weigh options and make decisions.

Trusted friends or relatives can support you in dealing with your HIV status and can also help the HIV-positive partner with his or her HIV care and treatment.

Explore couple's feelings about sharing their results with a trusted friend, relative, or clergy
Identify who could provide additional support
Address confidentiality and disclosure concerns

How do you feel about sharing your HIV test results with someone you trust?

Who do you feel could be a best support to two of you as you cope and adjust to living with HIV?

What concerns do you have about telling someone that you have HIV?

I would like to hear from each of you about your feelings on this.

Discuss disclosure basics

After you identify someone to whom you would like to disclose, think about what you would like to say to that person.

Think of a private place and time to talk, and ask to keep the discussion confidential and not tell anyone else.

Sometimes it is helpful to practice what you would like to say ahead of time, and imagine how this person will react.

Who do you think you might want to tell about your HIV statuses? How do you think you would like to tell this person? When would you talk with them? What would you say? How do you think he or she would react?

Let's imagine that I'm that person. Tell me about your results and I'll respond.

Continued ⇨

Discuss Disclosure**(continued)****Reinforce that the decision to disclose is mutual**

As we discussed, your decisions about sharing your results have to be made together.

Explore the possibility of participating in a support group and additional counselling sessions

There is support available. Would you be interested in talking with other couples in your situation?

Here is a list of post-test clubs, support groups for couples, and resources for additional counselling.

Answer remaining questions and provide support
Summarise

We have talked about a lot today. Let's review the important steps you need to take:

Go to the HIV clinic and give the referral letter to the provider.

Be sure to drink water that is safe.

Be sure to eat healthy foods.

Be sure to use a bed net.

(If woman is HIV-positive) Bring your children in for testing.

Talk about whether or not you want to have more children.

Protect yourselves by not having sex or by wearing condoms.

Use condoms if you choose to have sex outside the relationship.

Seek out support from friends, family, and support groups within your community.

Please share with me any remaining questions you may have.

It is a challenge to deal with having HIV, and another challenge to deal with having different results.

However, you are not the only couple that is dealing with being discordant, and with time and mutual support you will have a better chance of adjusting and living positively.

Final

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