



Prevention, Care and Treatment Access for South African Educators

Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) – Counselors Guide –



Tshepang Trust Hotline: 0860 888 4673

The information on this card is to help counselors remember all the things they need to discuss with a client who wants an HIV test.

A Counseling session should not be less than 1 hour.



- **Introduction**
 - Introduce yourself, explain your role and the VCT process.
 - Discuss confidentiality.
- **Motivation for testing and risk reduction**
 - Explore reasons for testing and client's history.
 - Discuss client's sexual risk behaviour and risk reduction options.
 - Advantages and disadvantages of testing.
 - Window period and its impact on results.
 - Check client's understanding of the above.
- **Basic HIV / AIDS education**
 - Explain and discuss: what HIV and AIDS are, HIV transmission, prevention, safe sex, symptoms and myths.
- **Results – Implications**
 - Discuss feelings about possible results.
 - Discuss imagined consequences of a positive/negative result.
- Discuss and identify possible supportive people.
- Discuss legal rights (including discrimination, employment, safety).
- Discuss disclosure.
- Referral, wellness and support options.
- **Testing procedures and readiness to test**
 - Discuss type of test eg. rapid/laboratory.
 - What it measures.
 - Accuracy.
 - How and when result will be given.
 - Discuss readiness to test.
 - Immediate plans after test.
 - Immediate potential support.
 - Referral options.
- **Consent**
 - Make sure client understands completely what the test means and what will happen to them in their own terms, not yours.

Preparing client for result

- Re-introduce yourself and confirm personal details of client.
- Confirm that client is ready to receive HIV test result.
- Clarify meaning of positive versus negative results.
- Clarify how the client wants to find out their results: read out by counselor, or self read.
- Give HIV result to client.

IF HIV NEGATIVE

- Explore client's reaction to the test result.
- Review meaning of result. Does client understand?
- Help client to consider result in terms of most recent risk exposure and remind about window period.
- Suggest follow up test date.
- **Re-visit HIV / AIDS education**
 - Explain and discuss: What HIV and AIDS are, HIV transmission, prevention, safe sex, symptoms and myths.
- **Risk reduction and staying HIV negative**
 - Emphasise importance of planning to reduce risk.
 - Explore practical risk reduction.
 - Discuss disclosure issues and partner status.

EMPHASISE PREVENTION

IF HIV POSITIVE

- Follow client's reaction, do not control or lead discussion.
- Be there on client's terms. Don't rush.
- Allow client to absorb result.

- Review meaning of result. Does client understand?
- Acknowledge challenges of dealing with a positive result.
- Consider if client is able to absorb the following details.
- If not, arrange follow up.

● Medical Issues

- Recommend visit to doctor and offer appropriate referrals.
- Introduce idea of a health plan.
- Explain relevance of CD4 test and viral load.
- Discuss ARV's and how to access them.
- Introduce adherence.
- Counselor should offer the directory as a resource.

● Behaviour Issues

- Risk reduction.
- Immune compromising behaviour including smoking, heavy drinking, lack of exercise, bad diet and re-exposure to virus.

● Personal Support

- Discuss impact of disclosure.
- Identify and discuss people who can offer support.

● Follow up

- Encourage and arrange a follow up session when necessary.
- Assess client's immediate risk potential and refer as necessary.
- Discuss immediate plans.