

CHECKLIST FOR ADHERENCE COUNSELING

Adherence to ARVs is the cornerstone to successful therapy. The approach of the counselor should help the patient effectively take charge while on therapy. Measuring adherence is very subjective; for better results, consult with the patient in a specific way:

Assessment:

>90% =	Excellent (GOAL)
70-90% =	Good
50-70% =	Fair
<50% =	Poor

Principles to follow:

- Be sincere, accessible, available
- Be caring, accepting
- Be creative, have humor
- Look, listen, learn
- Provide facts about HIV prevention, care, treatment
- Offer emotional and psychological support
- Maintain confidentiality
- Questions should be open-ended, non-judgmental, patient-centered
- Help patient find solutions to adherence problems

Check last clinic appointment—is patient adherent to appointments?

Bring:

- ARV medication card (with pictures of pills)
- ARV treatment goals card
- Your contact information
- ACTION adherence brochures
- ACTION medication charts
- ACTION community teaching modules
- Pill boxes (AM/PM; 7-day; octagonal; one day)
- Educational brochures

Questions to ask:

What does the patient know about HIV?

- + Provide factual information about infection, immune system, etc.
- + Encourage safer sexual practices and breastmilk alternatives, where appropriate

What does the patient know about ARV medications?

- + Educate patient on need for strict adherence
- + Educate on side effects

Which ARV drugs is patient taking?

- + Encourage patient to learn the names

What is the patient's daily routine?

How do the medications fit into the routine?

What time does the patient take his/her medication?

- + ARVs must be taken at the same time, same dose, as agreed with providers

Where does the patient keep his/her medication?

- + Should be kept cool (under 25° C)

Does patient share his/her medication?

- + Patients should never share medication

Is patient comfortable taking medication in public/in front of family?

What happens if patient misses or forgets a dose?

What side effects is the patient experiencing?

How is the patient managing these side effects?

Does the patient have trouble refilling ARVs (cost, transport)?

Is the patient taking any traditional medications?

- + Many traditional medications can interfere with ARVs

How does patient feel about ARVs? Does s/he feel healthier?

What are the patients circumstances (job, housing, family)?

Does patient take alcohol?

****REMEMBER**** Never rush to treat—adherence preparation is vital. Always assess carefully. If you feel that patient is not yet ready to start ARV therapy, discuss this with the client and provider and book for another session. Perhaps more information and counseling is required or other issues need to be addressed prior to treatment commencement.

