



# COUNSELING THE HIV/AIDS PATIENT

ACTION PROJECT  
IHV - NIGERIA



# OBJECTIVES



1. Highlight the fundamentals of counseling
  - a. What it is
  - b. What it is not
2. Discuss skills and responsibilities for the HIV/AIDS counselor

- **HIV Counseling**

- Confidential discussions between an individual and their health care team to examine HIV risk factors and explore HIV testing
- Enables client to
  - \* cope with challenges, stressors
  - \* make informed personal decisions and be responsible for own actions
  - \* be more adherent to medications

# WHAT IS COUNSELING?



- *Process or therapeutic relationship* between a counselor and a client or clients
- Help for a client to cope with stressful situations
- *Interaction* where a counselor offers time, attention, and respect to explore and clarify ways of living positively
- *Interaction* where counselor gives client correct information to make informed decisions

**Requires right skills, attitude, environment**

## WHAT COUNSELING IS NOT ....



- **Not advice** — not a one-way exchange or expression of opinion.
- **Not praying.**
- **Not a conversation** — not people exchanging information and opinions.
- **Not an interrogation** — not questioning the client to find out the truth.
- **Not a confession** — not judging, pardoning, or absolving the patient.
- **Not coercion nor a dictated plan of action.**

- Beginning stage: build a relationship
- Middle stage: information gathering
- Concluding stage: coping, problem solving
- End stage: final interview





# WHO NEEDS HIV COUNSELING?



- Those engaged in unprotected sex or whose lifestyles are at high risk for HIV/AIDS
- Those who **want to know** their HIV status
- Those with HIV and their partners
- **Family, friends, colleagues** of the infected
- Those in the process of marrying
- Women seeking antenatal care
- Those who are **physically unwell and suspect** their HIV status



# WHY OFFER HIV/AIDS COUNSELING?



- Provide **factual information** on the prevention, care, treatment of HIV
- Provide **psychological support** to those infected and affected by HIV
- Offer **social support** to those infected and affected by HIV
- **Prevent** the spread of HIV

## Trained and skilled persons

- Attends to and listens
- Shows immediacy
- Uses appropriate language level
- Employs impersonal statements
- Asks open-ended questions
- Uses a non-directive approach
- Clarifies
- Para-phrases
- Re-frames
- Reflects patient's feelings
- Repeats information
- Summarizes
- Probes
- Confronts if needed

Knowledgeable and experienced about HIV: care, treatment, prevention



# HIV/AIDS COUNSELORS



- Ideal characteristics: **Positive Attitude**
  - Attitude determines how we **respond** or **react** towards others.
  - Enables us to help others in a non-judgmental, non-prejudiced way towards people of different cultures and life-styles



# HIV/AIDS COUNSELORS



- Ideal characteristics: **Caring**
  - Help by being approachable
  - Show interest in person
  - Be warm, trustworthy, honest, reliable
- Ideal characteristics: **Empathy**
  - Try to understand what client is experiencing
  - Imagine their process, ordeal; not sympathize

- Ideal characteristic: **Maintain Confidentiality**
  - MUST not share anything that a person has told you - or that you know about - to anyone else without the consent of that person
- Ideal characteristic: **Accepting**
  - Accept client as is
  - Do not be moralistic, judgmental, prejudiced
  - Show respect and neutrality to all clients



# HIV/AIDS COUNSELORS



- Ideal characteristics: **Self - Aware**
  - Feels uncomfortable with a client or a particular subject area
  - Aware of own avoidance strategies
  - Honest with client
  
  - Ability to be self-critical
  - Uses both positive and negative feedback

# WHERE CAN COUNSELING BE OFFERED?

- A place that provides:
  - Privacy and confidentiality
  - Comfortable setting and adequate space
  - Quiet, no distractions
  - Attentive, good eye contact
    - \* Listen more, talk less
    - \* Paraphrase clients story to clarify issues
    - \* Summarize to ensure you are together
  - Give correct information when needed
  - Do not be judgmental or use negative language
  - Have empathy



# QUESTIONS?



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