



Reaching Impact, Saturation, and Epidemic Control (RISE)

Individual Counseling Session Flip Chart

For adolescent clients ages 15–19 years attending voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) services

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General Instructions for Counselors

- Content for the pre-test section of this flip chart is based on the **Individual Counseling Session Cue Card** included in *The Guide for Counseling Adolescents at Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision Services* package (USAID, 2019). Content for the post-test counseling section of this flip chart is based on the **Post-HIV Test Counseling Cue Card**.
- It is recommended that counselors use the cue cards in this package to prepare for the counseling sessions, and use the flip charts during the VMMC counseling sessions with adolescents.
- Counselors should show the **image** pages to adolescent male clients at VMMC services while referring to the **content for counselors** pages. In addition to these images, counselors may use a penis model and other models/objects (such as condoms), where appropriate.

Objectives of the Individual Counseling Session

As a result of the individual counseling session, adolescent clients will:

- Understand that both VMMC and HIV testing services are **voluntary** and **confidential**.
- Have the opportunity to discuss whether they are sexually experienced or not (if they want to)
- Provide written, informed consent for VMMC and HIV testing
- Understand basic post-VMMC care, the importance of abstinence from masturbation and sexual intercourse, and strategies to comply with abstinence
- Understand the consequences of not abstaining and risk-reduction strategies if they indicate that abstinence is not possible
- Have received a condom demonstration, if desired
- Be referred to other services as needed
- Feel welcome to return to the clinic if they decline VMMC and/or HIV testing services or for any other reason

In addition, adolescent clients who consent to HIV testing will:

- Understand their HIV test result
- Feel supported emotionally as they process their test result
- **If the HIV test result is negative**, understand next steps they can take to protect themselves from HIV infection
- **If the HIV test result is positive**, understand where they can go for care, support, and treatment

Note: When parents or guardians are present, ask them to wait outside so you can have a private discussion with the adolescent client. Invite them in the room after asking permission from the adolescent and following the country requirements for the legal age of majority for HIV testing.

Brief Screening for Consent/Assent and Sexual Activity

VMMC CONSENT FORM

I _____ have consented to allow myself/my child to be circumcised by surgical method. I have been informed and understood that this surgical procedure is for my own/my child's health and there might be risks. After being given detailed information and an opportunity to ask questions, I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I am client parent guardian. By appending my signature below to indicate my consent, given freely without being coerced, I am approving of the surgical procedure to be performed on me/my child.

Client's signature parent guardian _____

Provider's/counsellor's name and signature _____

Date _____



Brief Screening for Consent/Assent and Sexual Activity

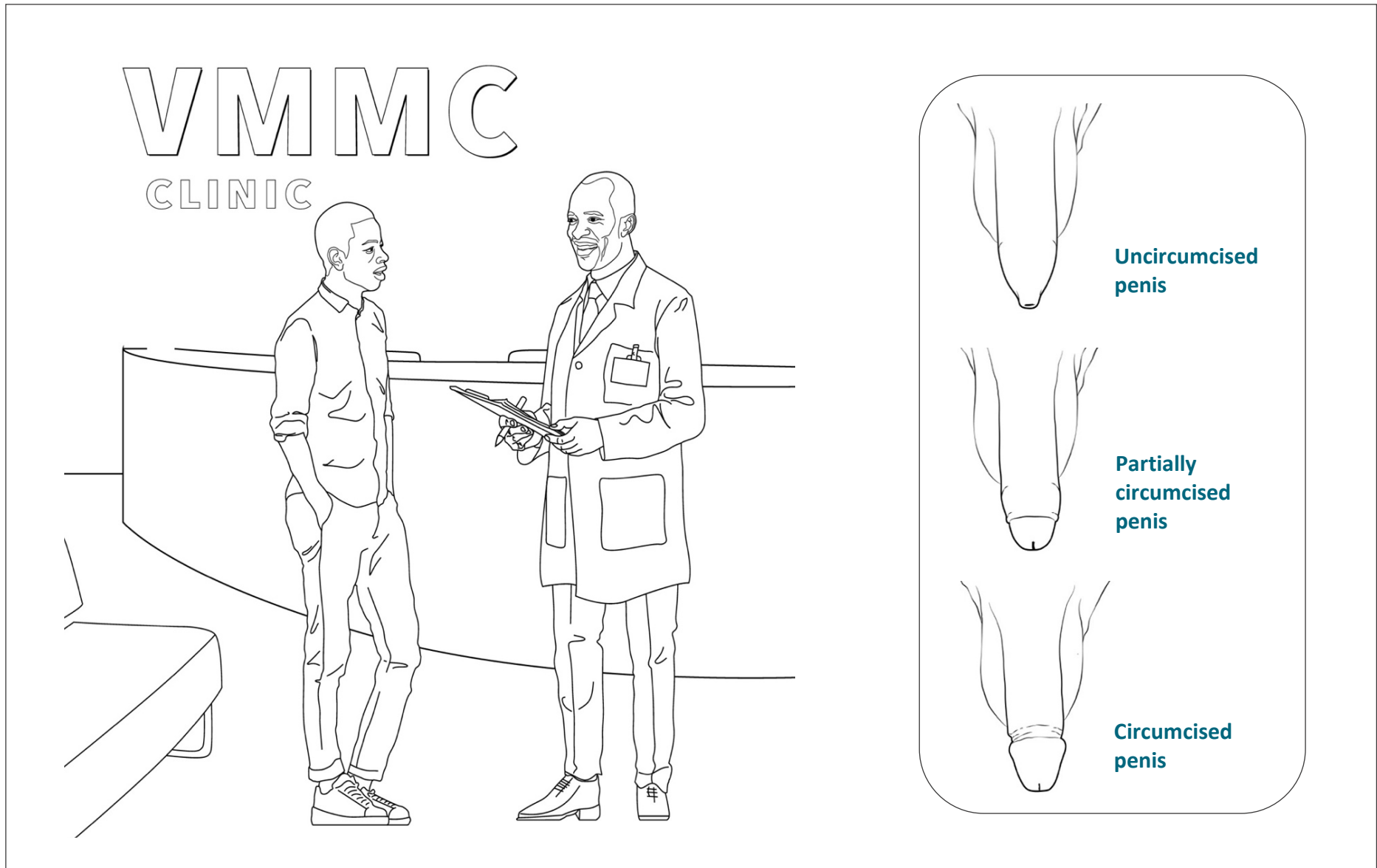
Content for Counselors

- VMMC is voluntary and requires your written consent/written consent from your parents/guardians (if the client is under the legal age of majority) AND your indication that you want to go through with the VMMC procedure.

Note: Ask for assent and ensure consent form is appropriately signed, if one is needed per local regulations.

- I am a professional counselor and everything we discuss is fully confidential, meaning that I will not share it with anyone unless you give permission.
- The information we will discuss is to help you take care of your health. Please don't feel embarrassed or shy. Feel free to ask questions. I am here to help. If there is a question you do not want to answer, please say so and we will move on.
- Do you have any questions about what you learned about sex and masturbation during the group session?
- I am going to ask you a personal question to guide our conversation: Are you in a relationship now, or have you been before?
 - If the answer is no, assume the adolescent has never had sex and go to the next page.
 - If the answer is yes, ask: Have you ever had sex? Are you having sex now?

VMMC Basic Facts for Adolescent Clients



VMMC Basic Facts for Adolescent Clients

Content for Counselors

- VMMC involves removal of the foreskin, the fold of skin that covers the head (the glans) of the penis.
- VMMC partially reduces the risk of female-to-male transmission of HIV.
- After the VMMC procedure, be sure to use clean water when cleaning/caring for the wound.
- Do NOT use home remedies (herbs, ash, animal dung) on the wound, as they can increase the risk of infection.
- It is important to abstain from masturbation and sexual intercourse for six weeks after VMMC to ensure full healing.

Note: Emphasize that VMMC is **voluntary**: “Your choice!” using the local language.

If the client has not had sexual intercourse before VMMC:

- You should not start having sex during the six weeks after VMMC because it will interfere with healing and puts you at higher risk of acquiring HIV.

If the client is sexually experienced/active:

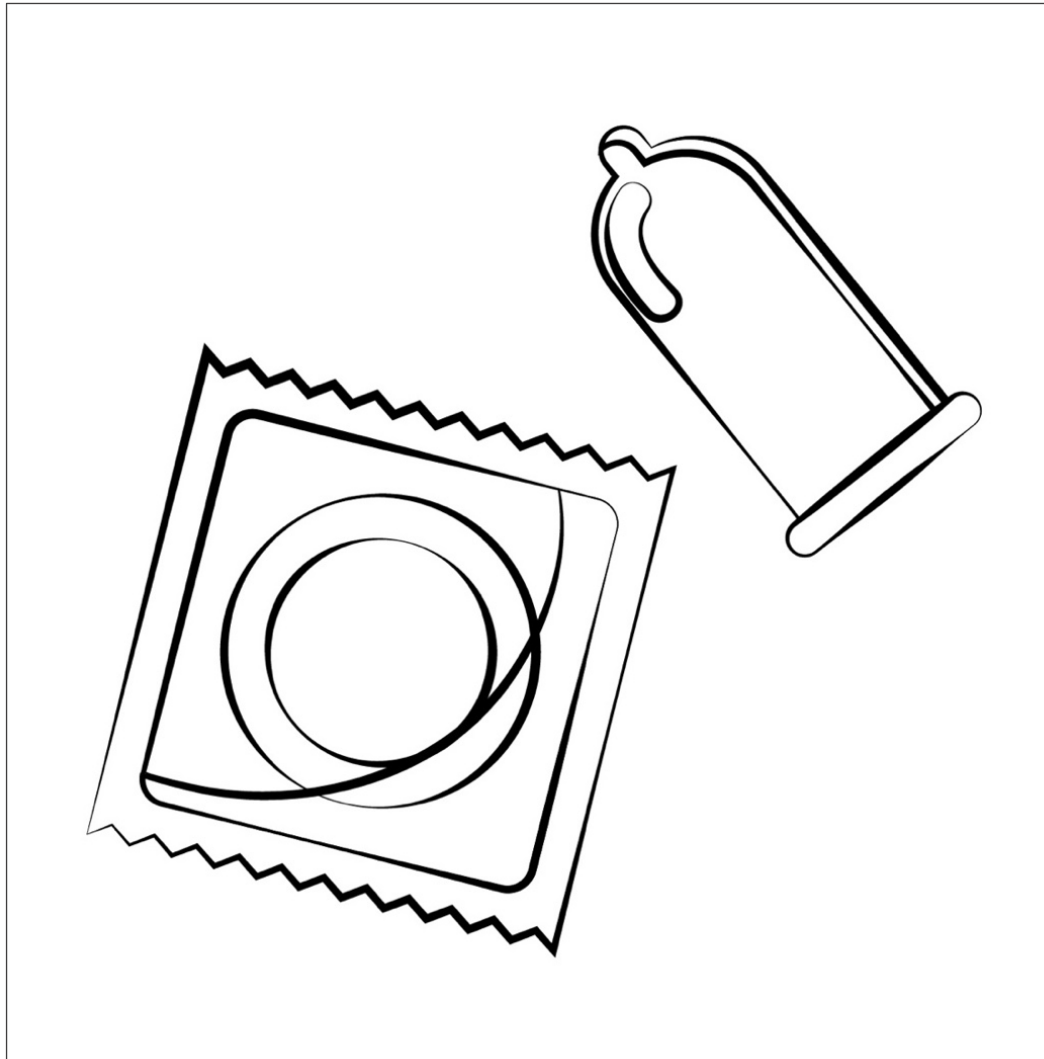
- It is important to abstain from sexual intercourse during the six weeks after VMMC because it will interfere with healing. Resuming sex before the wound is healed also increases your risk of acquiring HIV from a partner who is HIV-positive.
- VMMC provides only **partial** protection against HIV. After VMMC, you still need protection from HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), so be sure to use condoms correctly and consistently when having sex.
- In the group session, you learned strategies for abstaining. Do you have any questions? Do you think you will be able to abstain?

If the client indicates he will NOT be able to abstain:

- Masturbation poses less risk than sexual intercourse, although it may result in a longer healing time.
- There are other ways to express physical intimacy that do not involve intercourse.
- If you do go against the recommendation and have sexual intercourse in the six-week healing period, you must use a condom. This is very important because during the six weeks after VMMC you will have a wound on your penis, which makes it easier to get HIV.

Note: Provide condoms to the client before discharge.

Condom Demonstration



Condom Demonstration

Content for Counselors

- If you are interested, I will now give a condom demonstration and discuss relevant information about sex.
- The condom demonstration is NOT meant to encourage you to start having sex. Rather, it will build your awareness and skills so that when you are ready to have sex, you will know how to use a condom and understand why it is important to use one.
- The demonstration is **optional**. There is no problem if you choose not to see it.
- Can I proceed with the demonstration?

Before the condom demonstration, we need to talk about sex:

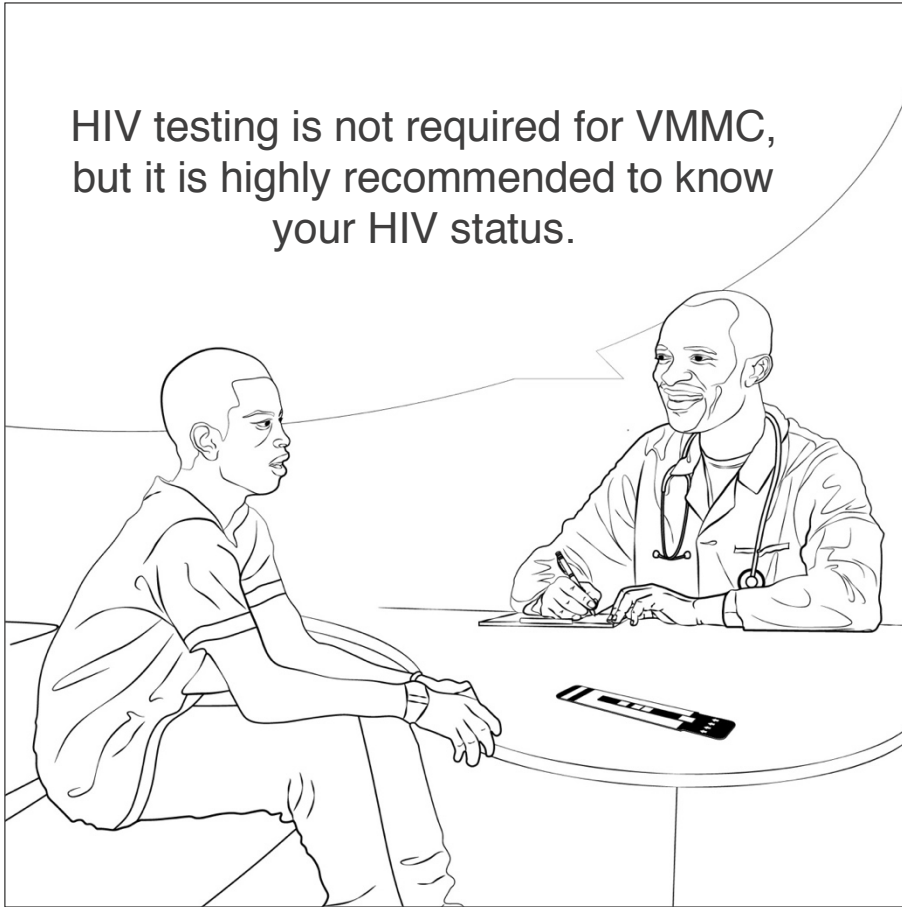
- Sex, sexual activity, and physical affection include hugging, kissing, touching genitals (your private parts), and sexual intercourse, which includes:
 - Vaginal sex is when a man puts his penis into a woman's vagina.
 - Anal sex is when a man puts his penis into the anus, or rectum, of his sexual partner.
 - Oral sex is when one partner puts their mouth or tongue on their partner's penis or vagina.
- Reasons people have sex include:
 - To feel closer to or express love for their partner
 - Because they like how it feels, or to feel more grown up
 - To have children
 - For things they need to survive, such as money or food, or for gifts
 - Because someone forces/pressures them to (this is a violation of their human rights)
- Sex is a normal part of life. Yet, adults often warn young people NOT to have sex until they are ready. Why?

Note: Allow participants to brainstorm answers. If they do not mention that (1) you can get someone pregnant or (2) you can get HIV and other STIs or diseases, bring these answers up yourself.

- These are some good reasons to wait to have sex until you feel you are ready.
- I will now conduct the condom demonstration.

HIV Testing and Counseling

HIV testing is not required for VMMC, but it is highly recommended to know your HIV status.



We can complete a rapid HIV test today.



HIV Testing and Counseling

Content for Counselors

- HIV testing is not required for VMMC, but it is highly recommended to know your HIV status.
- **If the HIV test result is negative**, you can put in place strategies to stay negative.
- **If the HIV test result is positive**, you can start treatment immediately to control the virus and stay healthy:
 - People who are HIV-positive but have little virus in their bodies are less likely to transmit HIV to others and can live healthy lives.
 - It is important that you use condoms with your sexual partners and/or support your partners to access pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, a medicine that will prevent them from getting HIV.
 - You can still move forward with VMMC if the clinician agrees.
- HIV test results are confidential. It's up to you to share your results. We can assist you if you would like.
- The HIV test will be done by _____ (indicate type of test: ELISA, rapid, etc.)
- Do you have any questions about anything you learned in the group counseling? For example, modes of HIV infection, your individual risk factors, or HIV risk-reduction strategies.
- Would you like to proceed with an HIV test?

Note: Follow all the appropriate processes and procedures for HIV testing, including ensuring that you have received testing consent from a parent/guardian if the client is under the legal age of majority, per national guidelines. Also, follow World Health Organization testing guidelines.

_____ If the client agrees, administer the HIV test.

_____ If the client declines to test, see **If the Client Declines HIV Testing**.

While Waiting for the Test Result (in Case of Rapid Test)



While Waiting for the Test Result (in Case of Rapid Test)

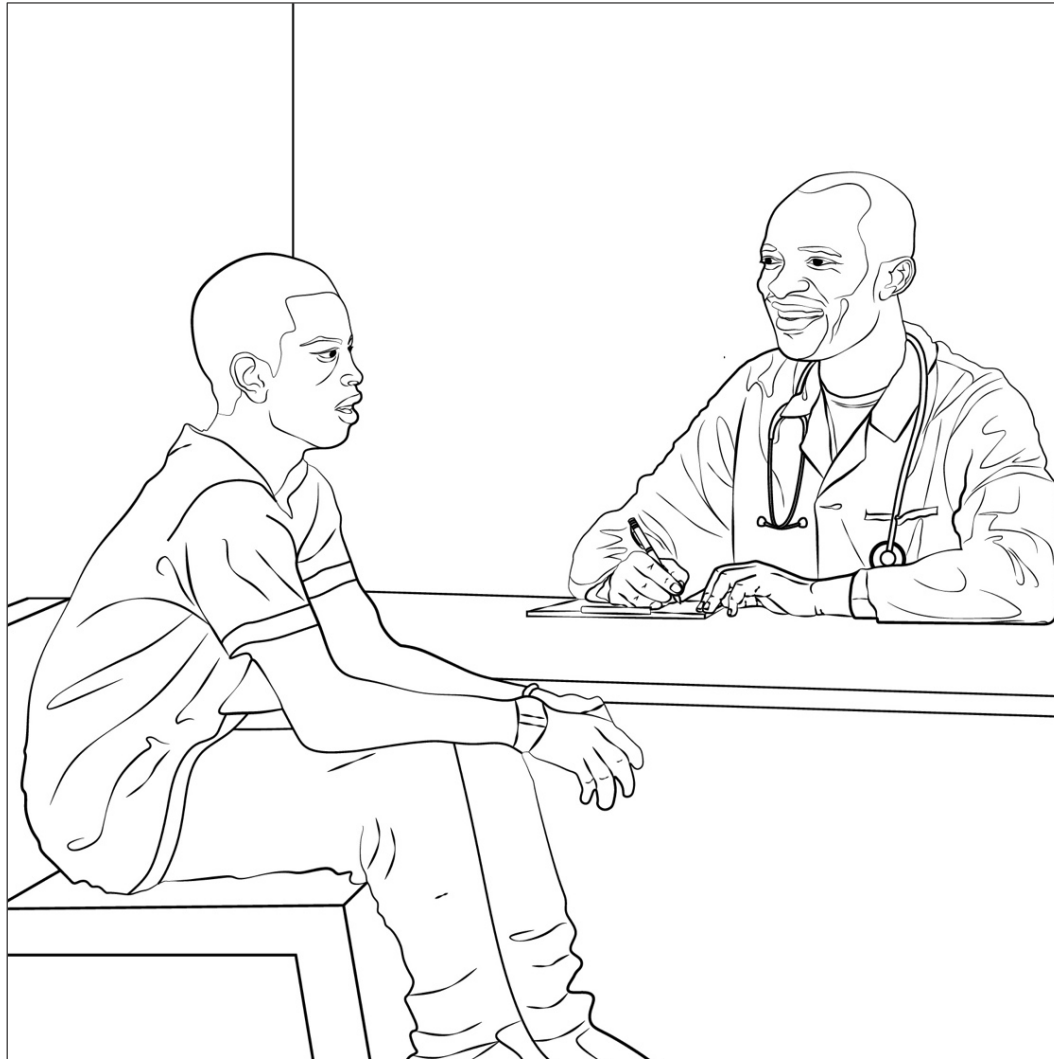
Content for Counselors

- Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable while waiting for your HIV test result?
- Is there anything you would like to talk about to ease any fears about the HIV test?
- We should have the test result in about 15 minutes. Either I (*or another specific provider*) will counsel you about your result as soon as it is ready.
- Be assured that the result will be discussed confidentially and in a private setting, where no one else can hear or see.
- (*If the client is under the legal age of majority, per country policies*) You may be required to bring your parent or guardian to the clinic to discuss your HIV test result.
- Would you like to discuss other topics while waiting for your test result? We can discuss family planning, masculinity and gender-based violence, alcohol or substance use and abuse, or other topics.
- After we discuss your results, I will refer you to the appropriate services for further help and support.

Note: Name any of the following local services as available/appropriate: STI diagnosis and treatment; contraception/family planning; self-testing; treatment, care, and support for those who have tested HIV-positive; HIV prevention; gender-based violence prevention and reduction; entrepreneurship; legal services; sexual and reproductive health counseling; prevention of school drop-out; and disability rehabilitation.

Provide the client with available written material to review while he is waiting for his test result. Refer him to services using the local referral directory.

If the Client Declines HIV Testing



If the Client Declines HIV Testing

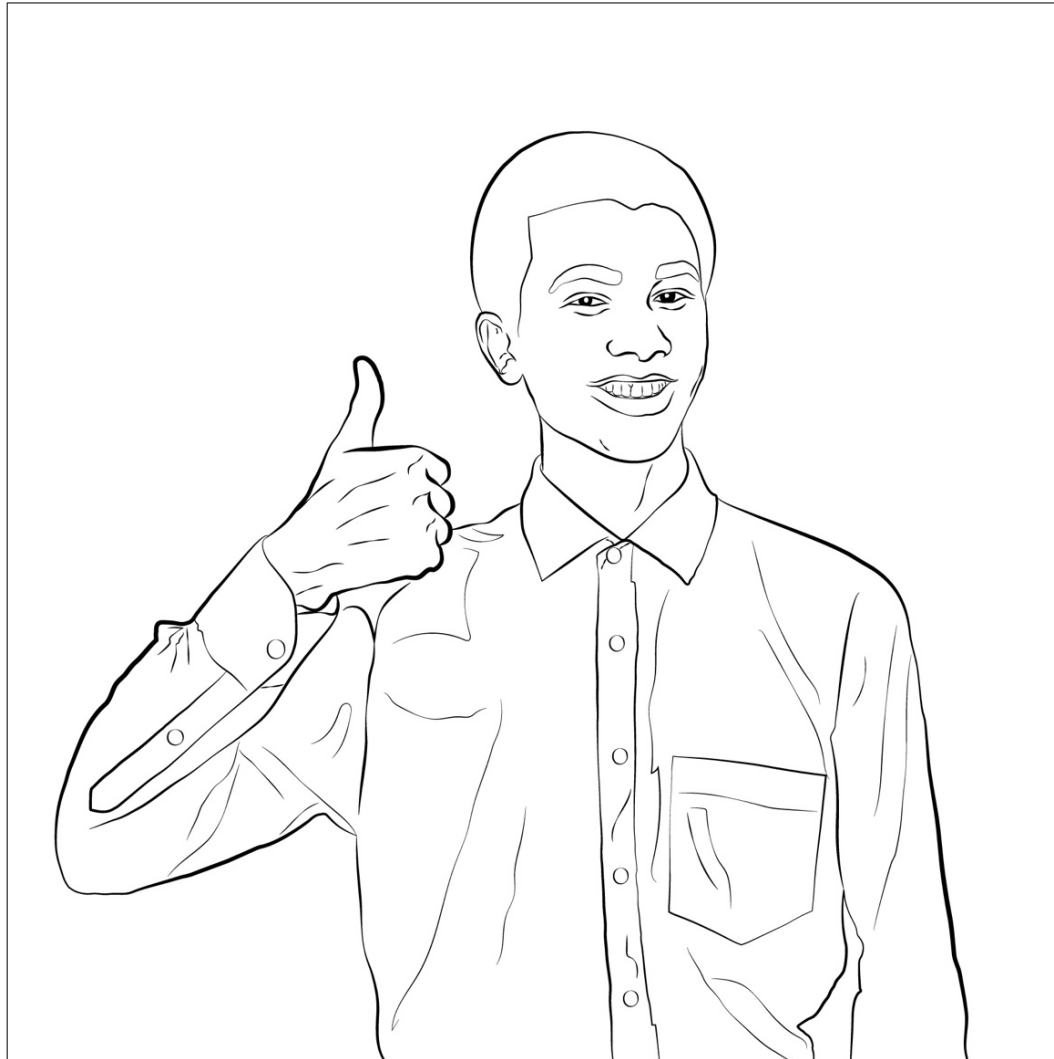
Content for Counselors

- I respect your decision to not get tested. I encourage you to seek HIV testing in the future. Remember the benefits of getting tested.
- **If the HIV test result is negative**, you can put strategies in place to stay negative
- **If the HIV test result is positive**, you can start treatment immediately to control the virus and stay healthy:
 - People who are HIV-positive but have little virus in their bodies are less likely to transmit HIV to others and can live healthy lives.
 - It is important that you use condoms with your sexual partners and/or support your partners to access PrEP.
 - You can still move forward with VMMC if the clinician agrees.
- Consider requesting an HIV test when you come back for your follow-up visits. Remember: The decision is yours!
- Other locations for HIV testing include (*name local services*).
- Another option to ensure confidentiality is self-testing. You conduct the test on your own, following directions from a testing counselor.
- Are you interested in self-testing?

Note: If the client expresses interest in self-testing, provide a self-test or a referral.

Provide the same information that is provided to clients while waiting for their test results (see previous page). This should include written information and referrals to relevant or requested services.

Post-HIV-Test Counseling for Adolescents Who Test Negative



Post-HIV-Test Counseling for Adolescents Who Test Negative

Note: Encourage the adolescent client to invite his parent/guardian or friend to be present during counseling to support him, if he chooses.

Content for Counselors

- Your test result is negative. A negative result means that you are not living with HIV.
- It is important to take steps to avoid being exposed to HIV.
- Can you tell me one way to avoid getting HIV? Do you have any questions about this?
 - Remember, abstaining and using condoms correctly and consistently are two effective ways to avoid getting HIV.
 - Remember, VMMC is only partially protective against HIV. To be fully protected, you must use condoms during penetrative and oral sex. Condoms also reduce the chances of contracting or transmitting other STIs and can help prevent unintended pregnancies
- Do you think you have been exposed to HIV recently? Can you tell me how you think you could have been exposed to HIV?

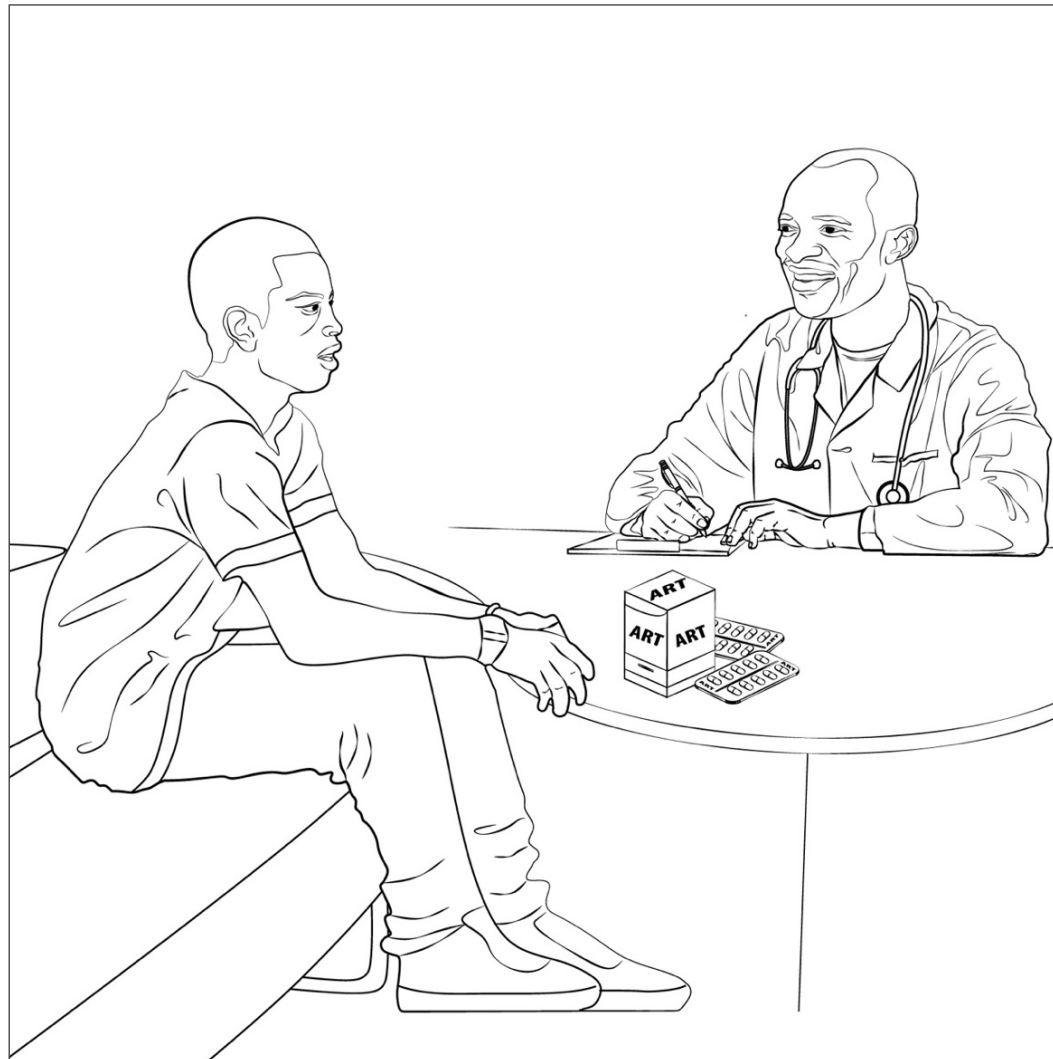
Note: Take care NOT to pass judgement on any client, regardless of risk behaviors or any other factors.

If the client discloses being sexually active and engaging in high-risk behaviors:

Note: High-risk behaviors include transactional sex, sex with many partners, and sex with partners who are living with HIV.

- Remember to use condoms correctly and consistently.
- Consider getting PrEP (*if it is available locally*). If taken every day, PrEP can significantly reduce the chances of acquiring HIV, even if a person engages in high-risk behaviors. PrEP is not a substitute for condoms as it does not protect against STIs. (*If the client is interested, refer him to services where he can obtain PrEP.*)
- Your sexual partner(s) may also be eligible for PrEP. Please tell your partner(s) about PrEP and where to go to get it.
- Remember, it is critical to abstain from sex for six weeks after VMMC. If this is not possible, you must use condoms correctly and consistently when having sex.

Post-HIV-Test Counseling for Adolescents Who Test Positive



Post-HIV-Test Counseling for Adolescents Who Test Positive

Content for Counselors

- The HIV test shows that you tested positive for HIV.

Note: Be sure to convey results in a compassionate, respectful way. Acknowledge emotions, show empathy, and encourage the adolescent client to take positive action where possible. If country HIV testing guidelines require it, ensure that a parent or guardian is present to discuss results for clients under the legal age of majority. See also **Disclosure to Adolescent Clients Under the Legal Age of Majority**.

- The test results must be confirmed with a second HIV test. *(Explain the steps for the second test and when the results will be available.)*
- HIV cannot be cured but it can be successfully treated. Treatment stops the spread of HIV in the body so that a person living with HIV does not get very sick. By reducing the amount of HIV in the body, treatment can also make them less likely to transmit HIV to others.
- It is important to start treatment as soon as possible. The sooner you start taking your antiretrovirals (ARVs), the better your health will be in the long term.
- People living with HIV who take their ARVs as instructed can live long, healthy, normal lives.
- At the end of our conversation, I will explain how to access treatment.
- I am here to support you and answer any questions. *(Pause to let the client process the results.)*
- How do you feel? *(Acknowledge client's feelings as a normal reaction to receiving news of a positive test result.)*
- Do you have any questions for me? *(Refer to the **Post-HIV Test Counseling Cue Card** for possible questions and their answers as well as common misconceptions.)*

Note: Provide active linkage to care.

Disclosure of HIV-Positive Status



Disclosure of HIV-Positive Status

Content for Counselors

- Telling your HIV status to a person close to you, whom you trust, can help you get important support.
- Talking to the right people can help you find peace of mind so you can stop worrying and reduce stress, which can help you stay healthier.
- Others can give you support and help you stay **physically healthy**, for example, by helping to ensure you take your medication correctly and consistently.
- Support from others can help you stay **emotionally healthy** so you can deal with the emotional challenges you may face living with HIV.
- If you are interested, health care staff can help you disclose your status to others. And (if the adolescent is sexually active), we can help you to notify your sexual partners that they should get tested for HIV. (*Provide referrals as needed/requested.*)
- Although there are more benefits than risks to disclosing one's HIV status, it is worth considering the following risks before telling someone your status:
 - Some people may discriminate or treat people living with HIV unfairly. This is often due to ignorance about how HIV is and is not transmitted. Consider whether the person you are thinking of disclosing to is open to discussing these points, or if their attitudes are so fixed that it would be better to wait or not disclose to them at all.
 - Some people may refuse to associate with people living with HIV or exclude them from certain activities. Again, this could be due to fear and ignorance. Consider whether they might be open to a discussion about how HIV is and is not transmitted.
 - Trust is the key issue when considering to whom to disclose your HIV status. Some people may become so emotional or irrational that they could physically hurt or abuse a person living with HIV. Consider how much you trust a person you might disclose your HIV status to to not violate or abuse you physically.
- Is there anyone close to you to whom you would consider telling your HIV status?
 - If so, are you comfortable telling that person your status?
 - Do you have any questions about how to do it?
- In addition to telling another person(s) your HIV status, consider encouraging your partner and/or family members (as appropriate) to take an HIV test.
- You may still undergo VMMC, but the procedure does not reduce the HIV transmission risk to partners.

Abstinence During the Healing Period



Abstinence During the Healing Period

Content for Counselors

- HIV-positive men are at higher risk of transmitting HIV during the VMMC healing period so it's critical to abstain from sex for six weeks. If this is not possible, you must use condoms correctly and consistently when having sex.

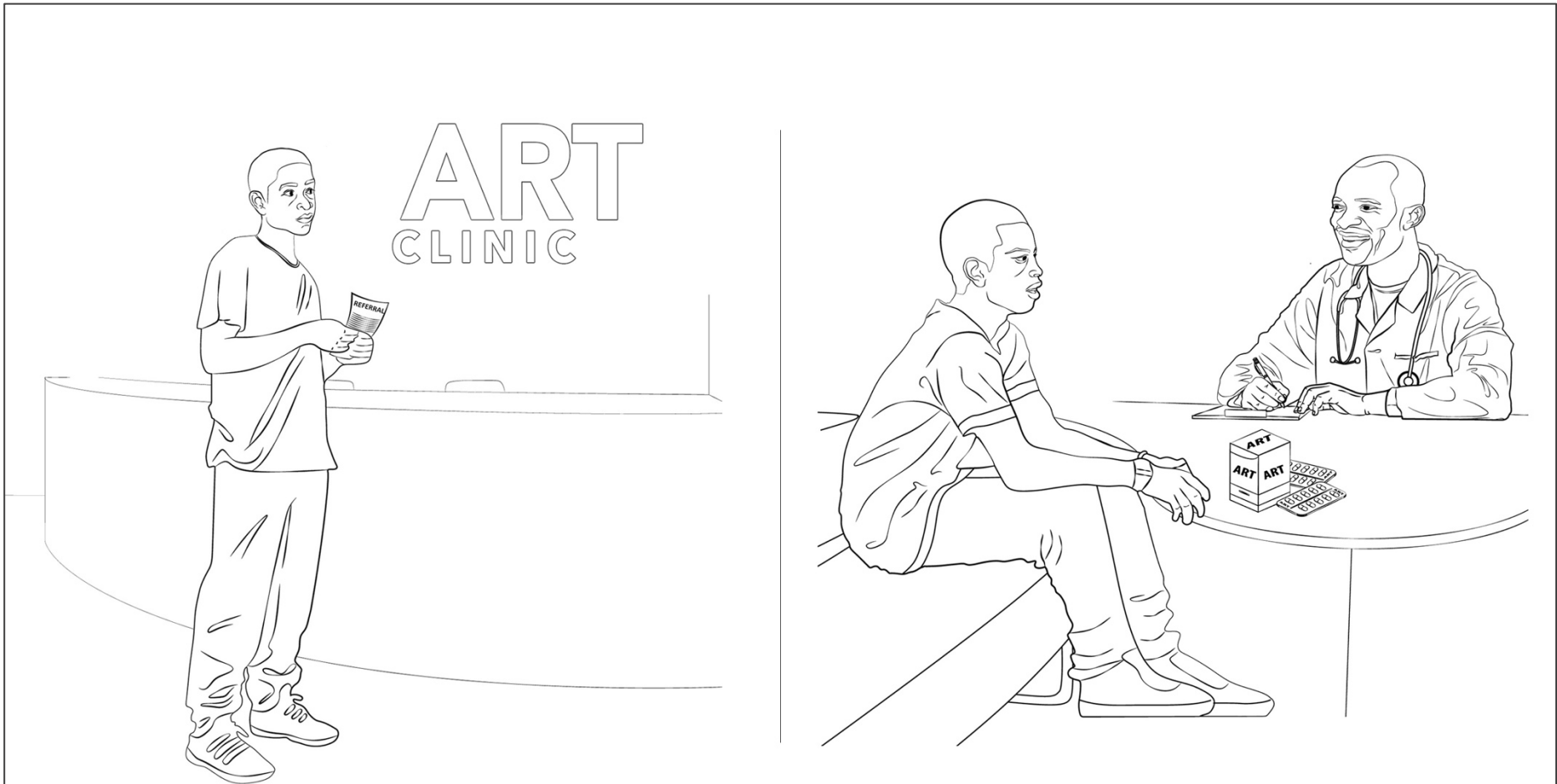
For clients who ARE sexually active:

- After the healing period and always, it is important to use condoms correctly and consistently to prevent onward transmission.
- If your viral load is very low, transmission risk is minimal. You can still have safe sexual relationships. More information on onward transmission of HIV will be provided at the center where you go to get treatment.
- Wound care will be especially important to protect against onward transmission of HIV.

For clients who ARE NOT sexually active:

- Although you are not sexually active yet, you should keep in mind that if/when you begin to have sex, you must always use condoms correctly and consistently to prevent onward transmission of HIV.
- Keeping your viral load low by taking your ARVs consistently will also help you to keep HIV transmission to a minimum.
- You can always get more information about these topics at the center where you will get your treatment.

Referrals

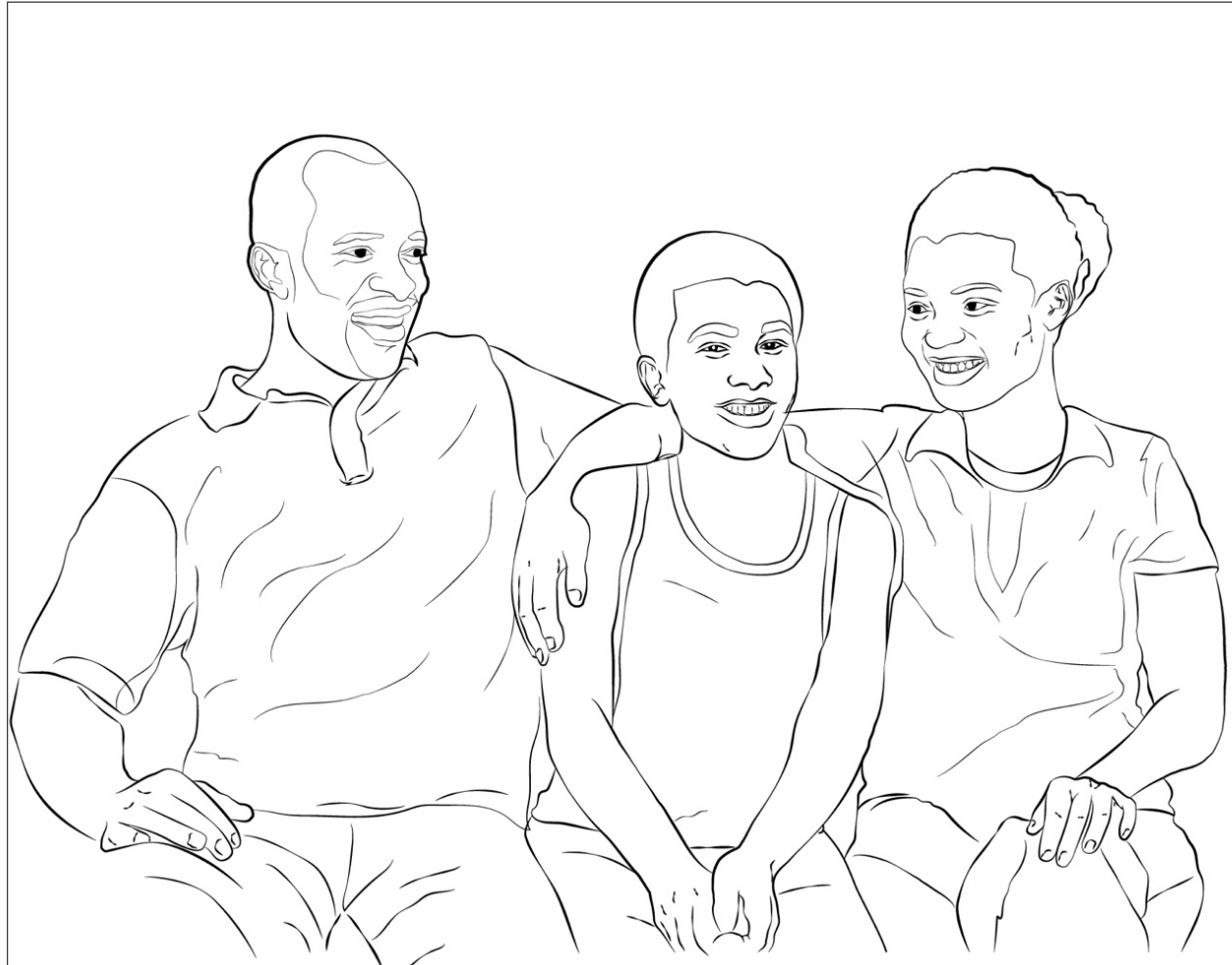


Referrals

Content for Counselors

- Care and treatment services are available to help you live a healthy and happy life. These services are located at _____ (*give names and addresses of services*).
- I will make sure that you get a referral so you can go promptly to care and treatment services to get a full, initial assessment and begin treatment as soon as possible.
- Antiretroviral therapy is available at _____ (*name of service*) (*indicate if the services are free-of-charge*).
- Do you have any further questions about HIV and VMMC?

Disclosure to Adolescent Clients Under the Legal Age of Majority



Disclosure to Adolescent Clients Under the Legal Age of Majority

Note: National guidelines on disclosure to adolescents under the legal age of majority may require that a parent/legal guardian be present (*confirm against national guidelines*). Certain ethical decisions should be made in consultation with the adolescent AND the parent/guardian—for example, the adolescent’s right to know his HIV status versus the parent’s right to decide. Acknowledge the parent’s/guardian’s right to decide and state that you believe they will act in the best interest of the adolescent.

Content for Counselors

If the client’s parent/guardian is present:

- Will you agree to disclose the adolescent’s HIV test results to him at this time?

Note: If the parent/guardian agrees to disclosure, refer to **Post-HIV Test Counseling for Adolescents Who Test Positive**, to explain to the adolescent and his parent/guardian that he has tested positive for HIV.

- If a confirmatory test confirms an HIV-positive result, you (the parent/guardian) may also be HIV-positive.
- If this is the case, open and honest discussions about your HIV status with the adolescent can have many benefits to your emotional and physical health.

If the parent/guardian does not agree to disclose the results to the adolescent:

- I urge you to consider whether the adolescent may benefit from disclosure of his HIV status. These could include medical, psychological, and material benefits.
- Do you believe disclosure to the adolescent might cause some financial, social, or psychological/emotional harm or burden to him or his family? Could the adolescent cause harm to the family later on by disclosing his status? (*Discuss any of these issues with the parent/guardian to see if they can be resolved to allow disclosure to the adolescent.*)

For adolescent clients under the legal age of majority who test positive and whose parent/guardian is not present:

- According to national guidelines, the parent/guardian of an adolescent under the legal age of majority must come to discuss his HIV test results together.

Note: Speak to the adolescent’s parent/guardian and counsel the adolescent, referring him to the points guiding disclosure. Offer testing to the parent/guardian and encourage them to get their other biological children tested.