

Strengthening Counseling for Adolescents at VMMC Services: Follow-Up Visit Day Two Cue Card

Counseling/Communication Objectives

As a result of this counseling session, adolescent clients will understand:

- Effective wound care and pain management instructions (*refer to the Immediate Postoperative Counseling Cue Card*)
- Warning signs of adverse events/recommendations for contacting clinic staff if client suspects an adverse event (*refer to the Immediate Postoperative Counseling Cue Card*)
- The necessity of abstinence or risk reduction strategies during the healing period and ways to improve compliance with abstinence or mitigate elevated risk of transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV
- Voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) provides only partial protection from HIV transmission
- The need for continued practice of other prevention methods, especially condom use, once the healing process is complete
- The follow-up visit schedule for day seven and importance of addressing challenges to making the day seven return visit
- Additional topics that the counselor deems relevant to the client, such as family planning, gender, including gender-based violence, and perceptions of masculinity
- The locations of facilities the adolescent may visit for support related to these additional topics

Content to Be Delivered During the Session

Physical Exam

Conduct a physical exam, including:

- Assess the status of wound healing and remove or replace dressing as indicated.
- Check and record client's temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration rate.

Wound Care

Reinforce or restate key messages:

- Review wound care instructions provided during immediate postoperative counseling:
 - Keep the wound clean, using clean water and mild soap to wash the penis at least two times each day.
 - Do NOT pull or scratch the wound during healing.
 - Return to school after two days; resume sports when comfortable but not sooner than after five days.
 - Heavy, physical work can disrupt healing and lead to bleeding. Avoid hard, physical work for the first five days after surgery (lifting heavy objects, riding or pushing a bicycle, digging, working at a construction site, etc.).

- Do NOT apply home remedies (herbs, ash, dung) not prescribed by a doctor as they can cause tetanus. Tetanus is a serious bacterial infection that affects the brain and nervous system and can lead to severe muscle spasms, serious breathing difficulties, and death.¹
- Erections for no clear reason, although they may be uncomfortable, are not cause for concern. Urinating at the first urge may reduce frequency of erections.
- Take pain medications as prescribed.
- Come back for second follow-up visit on day seven.
- Provide additional wound care/pain management instructions as needed or requested.

Adverse Event Warning Signs

- Explain that complications from male circumcision are rare, but can be serious if ignored or improperly treated.
- Remind adolescent client of the warning signs of adverse events:
 - Continued bleeding that does not stop or gets worse
 - Swelling or tenderness around the wound (worse than you have now)
 - Increased pain that does not improve with medication
 - Fever (Do you have a thermometer or can your parent/guardian determine if you have a fever?)
 - Swelling or tenderness in the groin
 - Pus coming from the wound
 - Difficulty passing urine/peeing
 - Hardness or stiffness in the lower abdomen (*show them where this is*)
 - Stiffness of the jaw, chest, and/or back, fits and/or convulsions
- If the client experiences any warning signs, he should contact clinic staff immediately at (emergency phone # _____)

Abstinence and Risk Reduction During the Healing Period

- Remind the client of the importance of abstinence (from masturbation/sexual intercourse) during the healing period.
 - **Masturbation** is when people touch their own bodies for sexual pleasure, such as stroking or rubbing the penis when it is erect. Masturbation may result in orgasm/ejaculation, but not always.
 - **Sexual intercourse** typically means when a man inserts his penis into a woman's vagina. It can also refer to oral or anal intercourse.
- Ask the adolescent if he believes he can go along with abstinence recommendations.

See the *Group Counseling Session Cue Card* if needed to provide a more thorough explanation.

¹ Felman, A. (2017) Everything You Need to Know about Tetanus. *Medical News Today*. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/163063.php>

- If NOT, come up with a plan to improve his ability to abstain from masturbation and/or sexual intercourse to reduce the increased HIV risk. Plans may include:
 - Consistent and correct use of condoms
 - Other forms of sexual intimacy that do not involve penetrative sex.

Importance of Continued Use of Other Prevention Methods When Resuming Sex

- Emphasize the importance for sexually experienced/active adolescent clients to:
 - Remember that VMMC does not provide total protection from HIV.
 - Use condoms correctly and consistently to reduce risk of HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancy.
 - Reduce the number of sexual partners.
 - Know their HIV status. If they have not tested for HIV, consider doing so with their partner(s).
- Offer a condom demonstration, if you have not done so already.
- Provide written information about any of the topics discussed (if available).
- Provide referrals to additional services (as appropriate/available).
- Encourage the client to bring friends to VMMC if they are interested.

Additional Important Topics

- Assess and introduce as relevant the following topics: family planning,² understanding masculinity and other gender issues, and avoiding violence, including gender-based violence.

Family Planning

Explain:

- Unprotected sex (sex without a condom and/or other contraceptive method) can result in unintended pregnancy.
- Various contraceptive methods in addition to condoms are available. Each method has its particular benefits and challenges. I can refer you to a family planning specialist.
- Talk to your partner about choosing a family planning method that you both agree on. Family planning should be the responsibility of both partners.
- Some contraceptive methods, such as condoms, also protect against STIs. This is called “dual protection.”
- Emergency contraception may be an option if the condom breaks or if another form of contraception was not used and there is the possibility of an unintended pregnancy. Emergency contraception is a pill taken orally by the female partner.

² American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (2017) Counseling adolescents on contraception. Committee Opinion 710, Committee on Adolescent Health Care. <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Adolescent-Health-Care/Counseling-Adolescents-About-Contraception>

Gender/Gender-Based Violence

Explain:

- In all relationships, people may sometimes feel frustrated or angry, or disagree with each other. Using violence to try to solve problems is never acceptable. Such behavior can cause physical and mental harm to the victim.³ Violence is a violation of the victim’s human rights.
- Gender-based violence, harassment, and abuse are behaviors that are offensive, threatening, and/or physically harmful to another person, especially women and girls.
- Sexual harassment can involve comments, gestures, actions, or attention intended to hurt, offend, or intimidate another person. This can include unwanted sexual advances and requests for sexual favors.
- Forcing or coercing a person to have sex is called rape. Rape is a serious crime. Victims of rape are legally entitled to the protection of the criminal justice system.⁴
- Sexual relations should always be consensual—that is, both partners should agree to having sex. It is important to respect your partner’s wishes. In other words, either partner may say “no” at any time.
- Mutual respect means never using violence or power to dominate another person or make them do something they do not want to do.
- A “good man” never uses power or violence against another person.

Masculinity

Explain:

- One issue related to violence is what it means to “be a man” or what some people call “masculinity” or “manhood.”
- Some people incorrectly associate “being a man” with being violent or engaging in violent behaviors such as yelling, hitting, and kicking others, including women.
 - This is NOT correct. Many men and leaders in the community, such as (*list names*), are not violent and are looked up to with respect.
- By understanding and challenging the idea of masculinity, men can expand their views, take better care of their health, and become better partners, fathers, and citizens.
- Is there a man you admire and look up to? Why do you admire him?
- What does it mean to you to be a “good man”?
 - Being a good man means seeking health care rather than not asking for help with health issues. Coming for VMMC is one way of being a good man.
 - Being a good man means not using violence to solve problems, especially against girls and women.
 - Being a good man means taking responsibility for practicing safer sex, discussing and adopting family planning with one’s partner, and protecting oneself and one’s partner from HIV/STIs.

³ International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) (2017) *Deliver+Enable Toolkit: Scaling up Comprehensive Sexuality Education*. IPPF. <https://www.ippf.org/resource/deliverenable-toolkit-scaling-comprehensive-sexuality-education-cse>

⁴ Maternal and Newborn Survival Program (MCSP) (2016) *Adolescent Age & Life-Stage Assessment and Counseling Tools*. Washington, DC: MCSP. <https://www.mcsp.org/resource/adolescent-age-life-stage-assessment-tools-counseling-cards-2/>

- Being a good man means treating girls and women as equals and thus contributing to the full potential of one's relationship, family, and society.
- Being a good man means using condoms correctly and consistently, reducing the number of partners, and not equating sex with dominance and risk-taking, and thus reducing HIV/STI infection and transmission.