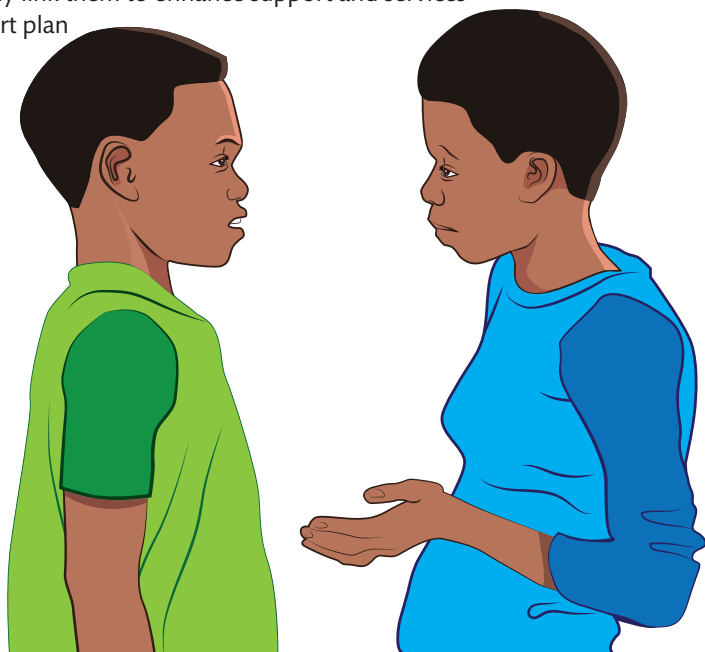


# SUPPORTING YOUR PEERS TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THEIR HIV STATUS

**Your role as a CATS in supporting your client to understand and accept their status is to:**

- Give information on what the HIV test results mean
- Support caregivers and clinic staff to talk to clients about the HIV test result, including disclosure
- Share your own experience
- Link them to the services they need
- Go with those who need extra support to attend services
- Advocate for their right to be provided with services and be involved in their health care decisions
- Follow up to make sure they got the services they wanted and were referred to
- Work with other clinic staff to plan and help with their ongoing care and support
- Flag challenges that need referral
- Make referrals and actively link them to enhance support and services
- Support enhanced support plan



# Information And Counselling After HIV Testing Or Disclosure



## Where:

Clinic  
Home



## When:

After HIV testing  
or disclosure



## HIV Positive result or after disclosure

- Understanding of the positive result, HIV and need for treatment, care and support services
- Their feelings and worries
- The benefits of knowing their HIV status
- Support system and finding someone that they can trust and disclose to
- Your own story, if appropriate and safe to do so
- What will happen next including the importance of engaging in treatment, care and support services
- Any barriers to attending services
- Their rights to health and support services
- Starting ART - see Adherence section for more information
- **Health Check In, Mental Health Check In, Disability Identification Tool, Social Protection Check In**
- Importance of support services – e.g. CATS, support groups
- Any questions or worries
- Any red flags for referral

## HIV Negative result

- Understanding of the negative result, HIV and available prevention services
- The meaning of a negative result
- HIV risks and healthy lifestyle e.g. protected sex, reducing number of partners, delaying sexual debut
- When to test again
- Any questions or worries
- Any red flags for referral

## Additional points to cover with caregivers

- Importance of talking about HIV and the test result with their child
- If not ready for full disclosure, the need to work towards full naming of HIV and support that is available to help with this
- The role that caregivers play in supporting their child and making sure they access services
- Benefits of peer support services
- Need to test other children in the house
- Available services for the caregiver



## RED FLAG

- Any client who tests HIV positive and:
  - Is not coping with the test result or is identified as 'high risk' for a mental health condition using the Zvandiri Mental Health Screening Tool (See Mental Health Section)
  - Is pregnant
  - Is unwell (i.e. says yes to 1 or more of the Health Check-In questions)
  - Does not have a caregiver or support system
  - Has a disability or impairment i.e. answers yes to 1 or more of the disability identification tool questions
  - Reports sexual and physical abuse or answers yes to 1 or more of the Social Protection Check- In questions
  - Does not want to attend services or have further support
  - Face barriers to attending services
- Caregivers who:
  - Do not want their child to access post-test services
  - Needs help with full naming of HIV and disclosure
  - Is not coping with their child's test result
  - Face barriers to support their child to attend services



## Urgent

If a client mentions suicide or thinking about **harming themselves**, take them seriously.

Follow the **CART** steps in the Mental Health section

If a client mentions thoughts about **harming others**, take them seriously. Remove yourself from this situation and contact your ZM and clinic by phone.

## Referrals And Linkage Is Important



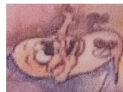
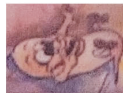
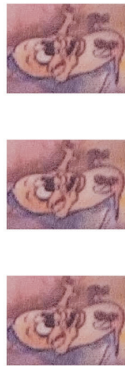
### Reminder

CAYP face many difficulties in getting the services they need. As CATS, you can help your clients to manage these. After testing is a key time for you to support your client, whether positive or negative, by linking and referring them to other services. The type of referral depends on the needs of the client and could include:

- Prevention Services e.g. VMMC, Sexual Reproductive Health and GBV services
- Treatment and Care Services e.g. ART, PMTCT and TB
- Support services e.g. CATS, disability services and support groups
- Social protection services e.g. abuse, neglect and cash transfers



## Talking about HIV and ART



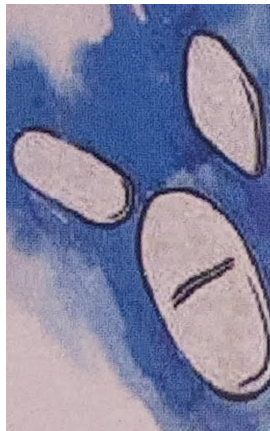
As time passes, the amount of HIV in the body becomes more. (**High \Viral Load**)

The number of warriors (CD4 cells) in the body becomes less (**LOW CD4 count**)

The immune system therefore becomes **weaker and weaker**

When the immune system is weak, the body **cannot fight off infections**.

This is why people with HIV become sick



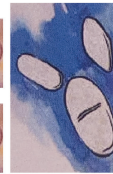
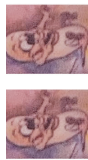
But there are now medicines which **fight against HIV**

These are called **Antiretroviral medicines** (or ARVs)

ARVs **control the HIV virus**, making it difficult for it to multiply

So the amount of HIV in the body becomes less.

**When the viral load is so low that it cannot be seen in a blood test, it is UNDETECTABLE**



With less HIV in the body, the warriors (CD4 cells) are therefore **protected**.  
The number of strong CD4 cells increases

The immune system is **stronger** and it is possible to fight against infections again.

**ARVs work very well but they are not a cure -they cannot remove HIV completely**

**You must adhere:**

- Take every single dose
- At the right time
- For Life

## Talking about HIV and ART

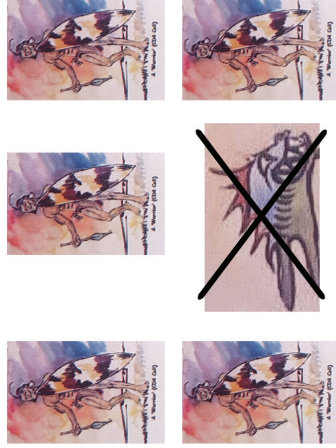


The **immune system** is the part of the body which **protects** us from illnesses

The immune system is made up of different '**cells**' which work together to protect us from illness. They keep us, **strong and healthy**.

These cells are found in the blood and in other parts of the body. They are small and cannot be seen with our eyes.

The scientific name for these cells is **CD4 cells**. We find it helpful to think of them like '**warriors**'. Some call them '**soldiers**'



The warriors (or CD4 cells) work together to fight off infections and keep us **strong and healthy**.

If there are lots of strong warriors (CD4 cells) in the blood, the immune system is said to be strong

This means that the **body can fight** off infections

**Strong warriors = Strong immune system**

HIV is a **virus**. Viruses are germs. Some other well known viruses are fly or measles

When HIV enters the human body, it uses the warriors (CD4 cells) to make more HIV

Over time, more and more HIV is made and the amount of HIV in the body increases

Unfortunately, when HIV uses the warrior (CD4 cells) to make more HIV, it also **damages the warriors**. The warriors become weak and few in number

**Weak Warriors = Weak Immune System**