COUNSELOR’S GUIDE FOR DOCUMENTATION OF IAC BARRIERS AND ACTION PLAN

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| **UNDERSTANDING HIV** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Lack of proper knowledge on how HIV affects the body, and how ARVs work to suppress the VL and how ARVs should be taken. | * Educate about HIV, viral load and adherence. | * Attend VL clinic group sessions |
| **PILL STORAGE** | | |
| Poor pill storage.  Removes pills from the tin and keeps them in papers where they lose potency due to moisture or heat | * Always keep your pills in the tin. * Keep the tin in a dry place, in a shade away from heat. | * Keep your pills in the tin. Only remove the ones you are going to swallow and keep them in a plastic envelop (at most for 3 days). |
| **ARVs and FOOD** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Swallowing pills using milk or porridge. Or swallowing pills immediately after eating a heavy meal.  (can prevent the absorption of ARVs from the intestine and stop the medicine from working) | * Swallow pills using clean safe drinking water or natural fresh juice. * Leave a space of 1 hour between eating a heavy meal and swallowing medicine. | * Swallow pills using clean safe drinking water or natural fresh juice. * Leave a space of 1 hour between eating a heavy meal and swallowing medicine. * Always take your pills at the right time. |
| Missed pills on some days or delayed to swallow by more than 1 hour because has not yet eaten food and fears drugs may have a bad effect. | * Eat a small snack then swallow your medicine as you wait for food. * Always take your pills at the right time. * Link the child to OVC program to provide food at home. | * Prepare porridge from maize flour and take 1 cup, wait for 1 hour then swallow your pills. * Eat a small snack (1 chapati, banana, bread etc) then swallow your medicine as you wait for food. * Send child to OVC social worker for enrollment on food support. |
| **WORK ISSUES** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Missed pills on some days or delayed to swallow by more than 1 hour because forgets to swallow because of busy daily schedule. | * Use daily reminders to remember time for taking drugs. * Always take your pills at the right time. | * Set phone alarm reminder 10 minutes before time to swallow. * Use a daily program on TV or radio as a reminder e.g. the news * Use wall clock or wrist watch to always read the time. * Using the call for prayers eg the muslim call for prayers, cocks crowing. |
| Missed pills on some days or delayed to swallow by more than 1 hour because comes back home late from work. | * Change time for swallowing drugs to a convenient time after work. * Carry the pills to your workplace and swallow at the right time from a private place. | * Set new time for swallowing pills when client has returned home from work. * Put pills in a medicine envelop (not more than 3 days) and carry these to work with you so you can swallow at the right time. |
| **TRAVEL, NO TRANSPORT, IMPRISONMENT** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Missed doses because had travelled without enough medicine and pills ran out. | * Ensure that you have enough medicine when travelling. Put the medicine in the travel bag first. | * Come to the facility first to pick medicine before travelling. * Send a treatment supporter to pick medicine on your behalf and bring to you if you can’t do it yourself. * Go to a nearby facility and ask for a temporary refill if you have no medicine left. * Ask for a transfer out letter if you are going far and will take a long time without coming back. |
| Long distance to travel from home to the facility sometimes without transport. | * Ensure you have enough drugs. | * Ask the doctor to give you long refill on request. * Send treatment supporter to get drugs for you. |
| Missed doses because of imprisonment. | * Ask for ARVs from the prison officer. * Get in touch with your treatment supporter to come and get drugs for you. | * Tell prison officers about your status and ask them to get for you ARVs (and water to use to take the drugs) at the right time every day. * Ask prison officer to allow you call your treatment supporter so that he/she can bring your medicine to you. |
| **SUBSTANCE USE: ALCOHOL & HERBAL MEDICINE** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Uses alcohol, cigarettes and other substances of abuse which prevents the medicine from working well or makes you forget the right time to swallow ARVs. | * Stop using alcohol, cigarettes and other substances of abuse. * Get professional counseling and treatment to break the addiction. | * Write referral to professional psychiatrist for treatment to stop addiction to alcohol or smoking. * Link client to CSOs or networks of PLHIV e.g. the Uganda Harm reduction network for professional support. |
| Uses herbal medicine for other diseases (e.g. cough, stomach pain, fertility, cleansing) which can prevent ARVs from working well. | * Stop using herbal medicine because it can stop ARVs from working. Avoid self-medication. | * When you are not well, come here or go to the nearest hospital for treatment. Stop using herbal medicine. * Attend VL clinic group sessions. |
| **OTHER PATIENT ILLNESS & DRUG REACTIONS** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Missed pills on some days or delayed to swallow by more than 1 hour because was sick and admitted in hospital. | * Don’t stop taking ARVs even when admitted in hospital except if it has been stopped by the doctor. | * Escort the client to the doctor for clinical assessment and treatment of any sickness affecting the patient. * Avoid self-medication. |
| Missed pills on some days or delayed to swallow by more than 1 hour because experienced strong side-effects of the ARVs | * Come to hospital if you suspect you have got side-effects from the ARVs. * Avoid self-medication. | * Escort the client to the doctor for assessment and management of drug side-effects. |
| Missed pills on some days because of pill burden (taking many pills for other conditions alongside the ARVs) | * Don’t stop taking ARVs except if it has been stopped by the doctor. * Explain importance of good adherence. | * Always take your pills at the right time. * Escort the client to the doctor for review of other concurrent medication. |
| **NON-DISCLOSURE, RE-INFECTION FROM PARTNER & GBV** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Missed pills on some days or delayed to swallow by more than 1 hour because the undisclosed partner was at home. | * Educate on the benefits of disclosure. * Plan to disclose to the partner. Counselor to provide supported disclosure. * Change time for swallowing drugs to a convenient time when no one is seeing you. | * Develop disclosure plan. * Set new time for swallowing pills when the partner or other visitors are not watching. * Keep drugs in a place where you alone can easily get them at the correct time when other people are not watching. * Always take your pills at the right time. |
| Gender based violence and intimate partner violence.   * Depression from emotional & psychological abuse. * Partner refuses client from swallowing drugs or throws away drugs. * Physical injuries. | * GBV counseling and support. * Link to other support services for victims of GBV or IPV | * GBV counseling and support. * Link to other support services for victims of GBV or IPV. |
| Unprotected sexual intercourse with partner of unknown status or positive partner with a possibly high VL can cause re-infection with resistant virus. | * Always use condoms * Know your partner’s HIV status or most recent VL if already on ART. | * Negotiate for safe sex with your partner. * Counselor provide condoms to client. * Support the client to know partner’s HIV status by bringing him/her for APN. |
| **STRESS FACTORS** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Missed doses because of psychological stress of losing a close relative. | * Bereavement counseling. Accept that God has taken away the person, to a better place. * Focus your thoughts on the people who need you that are still alive and on the plans you have for your future. | * Provide Bereavement counseling. * Link to support group for depression. * Focus on your life plans and on your loved ones who are still alive and need you. |
| Missed doses because of psychological stress of losing a job and having financial difficulty. | * Advise on stress management while maintaining good adherence. * Always take your pills at the right time. * Look for another job. * Ask your relatives or friends for financial help and support. | * Counsel on living positively and fighting stress by thinking good thoughts. * Encourage to continue taking ART well in spite of the stressful thoughts. * Link to support group for depression. * Keep searching for another job. * Educate about saving money for difficult times in the future. |
| Experiences stigma and discrimination because of their HIV status.  As a result, they feel worthless, unlovable, depressed and lose interest in life. | Counsel on positive living.   * Accept your status (you will always be positive and it will not change), * Understand that you can be healthy and productive at work or school (even better than negative people) if you take your ARVs well. * Focus on your life and happiness. | * Teach client how to handle stigma and discrimination at personal level * Advise on where to report in case they experience stigma & discrimination. * Link to psychosocial support groups and networks of PLHIV for support to deal with stigma & discrimination. * Link children to OVC for support. |
| Pill fatigue. Tired of taking ARVs | * Counsel on positive living.   But if you take your ARVs well, you will be healthy and strong, able to work and make your life dreams come true. | * Identify the most important dreams that the client wants to fulfill e.g. educating children and they get degrees, building own house, driving own car etc. * Support client to understand that he/she needs to take ARVs well in order to accomplish their life dreams. * Link adolescent to Psychosocial support group. |
| Peer pressure from friends who have a bad influence. Sometimes misses swallowing medicine because of these peers. | Counsel on positive living.   * Teach client to think before making any choice that is likely to affect their life badly. * Join peer groups that are supportive and encourage you to take your medicine well. | * Link to psychosocial support groups and networks of PLHIV for support. * Life skills training and support. * Link to community rehabilitation programs or networks of PLHIV to integrate people into positive support groups. |
| **CHILDREN ISSUES** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Missed pills on some days or delayed to swallow by more than 1 hour because of school. | * For boarding school, make sure the child has someone to support them to take the medicine well. * For day school, choose convenient time for taking the medicine in the morning before going to school and evening after coming back from school. | * Ask the doctor to write for you a letter for the child that requests the school administration to provide additional support for the child to take medicine well. * Ask the school administration to get someone like a nurse or teacher who will be keeping the child’s medicine and give them at the right time. * Change the time so that the child swallows pills while still at home as you directly observe. |
| Multiple other caretakers of a child who do not know how to administer the medicine well to the child. | * Educate other caretakers how to give the child medicine correctly. * Take full responsibility for your child’s health because they are fully dependent on you. | * Educate other caretakers how to give the child medicine correctly. * Bring other caretaker to attend IAC together to learn how to correctly administer medicine to the child. |
| Caretaker not observing the child as they take the medicine so they hide or throw away the pills on some days. | * Always observe your child when they are taking medicine and make sure they have swallowed. | * Set the time for the child to take the medicine when you are at home so that you can observe them to make sure they have swallowed it. |
| Unable to swallow the formulation of the medicine given to them, especially children. Pills are too big and get stuck in the throat. | * Give appropriate drug formulation for age. | * Doctor changes to appropriate drug formulation. * Educate caretaker about how to give the right formulation. |
| **HEALTH WORKER FACTORS** | | |
| **BARRIERS (ROOT CAUSE)** | **STRATEGIES** | **POSSIBLE ACTION PLANS** |
| Bad attitude of some health workers towards clients forces them to miss some scheduled appointments and run out of medicine. |  |  |