

Phases of Informed-Choice PrEP Counseling

This flow chart emerged from socio-behavioral research, including surveys and in-depth interviews with Kenyan and South African women. The research team set out with the goal of adapting the informed-choice approach used in family planning programs for use in PrEP, a prime example of fields learning from each other. The result is very clinic-centered; AVAC has added the column at the far right to reflect additional elements. However, it is a step towards much-needed exploration of how to make informed choice a reality in HIV prevention today.

Introductory phase

The counselor:

Informs client that PrEP is available, explains what it is and asks if client is interested.

The client:

- Expresses interest in PrEP and proceeds to information phase.
- Is not interested in PrEP and proceeds to standard HIV risk-reduction counseling.

Information phase

The counselor:

- Explores the client's current context of risk and preventive behaviors.
- Educates about what different choices (and combinations) such as PrEP, condoms and ART (leading to viral load suppression for known partners living with HIV) can and cannot do.
- Encourages client questions and asks questions to ensure comprehension.

The client:

- Helps the counselor understand her context of risk and preventive behaviors.

Deliberation and decision-making phase

The counselor:

- Helps client apply information to her individual circumstances.
- Provides information and skills to reduce HIV risk and promote overall sexual health.
- Supports client in her informed decision.

The client:

- Considers information and makes a decision about what method(s) are right for her to use.

Concluding phase

- The client finalizes her decision.
- The counselor welcomes her to return in the future if she would like to try a different approach.

Requirements: An advocacy checklist

- Commodities to support client decisions
- Training and supportive supervision for counselor to assess client risk, provide non-judgmental and supportive space for decision-making
- Staffing levels and compensation that support the time needed for conversation
- Peers to support and enhance choices
- Commitment to revisiting client's choice(s) over time
- Monitoring and evaluation approaches to measure decision quality and informed choice

Adapted from: FHI 360. Guidance for Providing Informed-Choice Counseling on Sexual Health for Women Interested in PrEP: Kenya and South Africa. 2016. Accessible at: <https://bit.ly/2NluhnW>.