

TYPES OF COUPLES SEEKING HIV COUNSELLING AND TESTING SERVICES AND THE COUNSELLING ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM

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29 January 2009

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Types of Couples

- ❑ Pre-Sexual Couples
- ❑ Dating or Engaged Couples
- ❑ Married or Cohabiting Couples
- ❑ Polygamous Couples
- ❑ Re-uniting Couples
- ❑ Couples with Children
- ❑ Interracial Couples
- ❑ Same Sex Couples

Counselling Issues



- ❑ There are issues that are common for any counselling session such as:
 - ❑ Dealing with risk reduction issues
 - ❑ Fear
 - ❑ Abandonment
 - ❑ Lack of support
 - ❑ Blame may arise
 - ❑ Issues of worry
 - ❑ Profound sense of loss if both partners are infected

Pre-Sexual Couples

- ❑ Likely to continue or end relationship based on test results.
- ❑ If discordant, it's possible the relationship will dissolve.
- ❑ HIV-infected partner may have reasonable confidentiality concerns that negative partner may disclose results.
- ❑ Counseling session may focus on how the couple will supportively manage changing the course of their relationship.

Dating or Engaged Couples

- ❑ May have limited skills and experience in dealing with stressful and difficult circumstances as a couple
- ❑ May have difficulty continuing relationship if discordant.
- ❑ May be publicly recognized by family and friends as engaged and in a serious relationship.
- ❑ Should partners end relationship based on results, there could be major confidentiality and disclosure implications

Married or Cohabiting Couples



- ❑ Define their lives collectively, as a couple.
- ❑ May have skills and experience in coping together with problems.
- ❑ May have preexisting conflicts and issues in their relationship.
- ❑ Can impede communication and ability to work together to address issues

Polygamous Couples



- ❑ Have complex dynamics.
- ❑ Wives may not be equal partners to husband.
- ❑ If all wives are present, the dynamics of the group can be challenging.
- ❑ If only one wife is present for CHCT, there are potentially problematic implications for the absent wife or wives.

Re-uniting Couples



- ❑ Reasons for separation may influence the dynamics of the CHCT session.
- ❑ Couple may have been separated for a long time.
- ❑ Counselor must acknowledge the existence of past issues.
- ❑ Counselor must keep couple focused on present and future.

Couples with Children



- ❑ More likely to sustain their relationship regardless of results.
- ❑ Are often perceived as a family.
- ❑ Well-being and future of their children is a powerful influence.
- ❑ Desire to have children can influence whether couples remains together.

Interracial Couples



- ❑ Couples' cultural backgrounds may lead to issues during counselling sessions.
- ❑ Different cultures will view interracial couples differently.
- ❑ Therefore, each couple may bring their own set of challenges to the sessions.
- ❑ Counselors must take this into consideration.

Same Sex Couples



- ❑ Legal recognition depends on country.
- ❑ If not legally recognized, may be unable to counsel.
- ❑ Not legally recognized in Zambia. However, it is recognized in other countries within the region.
- ❑ Can include: gay, MSM, lesbian
- ❑ Challenge for counselor to relay messages of risk reduction

Questions

