

### High Acuity Session

#### Core Session 1: Engagement in HIV Care

*Overarching session goal: participants will have the HIV information, health literacy, and motivation needed to take steps toward managing their health and staying well*

Participants who meet one or more of the following criteria will receive two separate HIV care- focused core sessions: 1A, “Enhanced Assessment and Preparation” and then 1B, “Psychoeducation and Health Education”.

Criteria:

Criteria A- score of 12 (80%) or lower on HIV Treatment Knowledge Scale

Criteria B- detectable HIV RNA viral load

Criteria C- not currently taking HIV medications

Criteria D- no appointment with healthcare provider in past 6 months and no upcoming appointment scheduled

Those not meeting any of the above criteria will receive one HIV care core session, 1B, “Psychoeducation and Health Education”.

**High Acuity Session**  
**Core Session 1A: Engagement in HIV Care**  
Enhanced Assessment and Preparation

**1. Check in**

- ☐ Consent for session and description of current location
- ☐ Ensure adequate connection with video conferencing platform or troubleshoot, if necessary
- ☐ Confirm level of privacy (using headphones, being in a private location without others around, re-scheduling if unable to get to a private location)
- ☐ Check in on how the previous week went (challenging and/or positive experiences)

**2. Assessment**

- ☐ Current acceptance and understanding of HIV diagnosis  
*“What were the circumstances around your diagnosis with HIV? In what ways has being HIV-positive affected your life (positive and negative)?” “Where did you learn about HIV?” “Where could you go if you had questions?”*
- ☐ Stigma-related beliefs about HIV and HIV care  
*“Sometimes people with HIV feel ashamed or bad about themselves for being HIV+; to what degree has this been true for you? How do you feel about other people who are HIV+?”*
- ☐ Past experiences in health care and impacts on current thoughts about care  
*“How do you feel about getting medical care in general, based on what you’ve experienced before? How do you feel about your current clinic, doctors, or experiences getting care?”*
- ☐ Current medication regimen, appointment attendance, and lab-work routines  
*“What are you currently doing in terms of taking medications, seeing a doctor, or getting blood tests for HIV done?”*
- ☐ Strengths and challenges related to current HIV care routines  
*“What’s going well in managing your HIV? What’s been hard in managing your HIV?”*

**3. Review HIV treatment knowledge assessment**

*The counselor can review the most recent answers (baseline for intervention group and 4-month follow-up for waitlist control arm) prior to the session.*

- ☐ Discuss incorrect answers and provide correct information and supporting information behind each
- ☐ Ask whether the participant has any additional questions about HIV or HIV care and provide additional education as needed

**4. Assess and Enhance Motivation**

*The discussion topics below may be helpful to assess and enhance motivation to access HIV care. The goal is for the participant to gain self-awareness and identify motivations to follow through with their routine HIV care.*

- ☐ Identify HIV care-related barriers that if resolved would have the most positive impact on health and overall life satisfaction
- ☐ Discuss participant motivators, including personal goals, values, social support, etc. and apply them to the barriers at hand

**5. Check out**

- ☐ Provide information about second core session (follow-up on today’s session)

- ☐ Elicit participant's thoughts about the session, identifying any issues or concerns
- ☐ Provide a positive reflection to the participant related to a strength they possess or their willingness to participate in the conversation

**Low Acuity Session**  
**Core Session 1B: Engagement in HIV Care**  
Psychoeducation and Health Education

Participants who do not meet any of the criteria for receiving 2 core sessions will skip session 1A and begin here.

*Feel free to share relevant information about HIV care during (via screenshare) or after the session (via email/text). This could include educational handouts on topics such as: HIV treatment, medication adherence, or lab work*

**1. Check in**

- ☐ Consent for session and description of current location
- ☐ Ensure adequate connection with video conferencing platform or troubleshoot, if necessary
- ☐ Confirm level of privacy (using headphones, being in a private location without others around, re-scheduling if unable to get to a private location)
- ☐ Check in on how the previous week went (challenging and/or positive experiences)
- ☐ Any information or content from the previous week that stood out or that the participant would like to focus on in more depth (if participant received 1A)

**2. Brief Assessment (if participant did not receive 1A)**

- ☐ Current acceptance and understanding of HIV diagnosis
- ☐ Stigma-related beliefs about HIV and HIV care
- ☐ Past experiences in health care and impacts on current thoughts about care
- ☐ Current medication regimen, appointment attendance, and lab-work routines
- ☐ Strengths and challenges related to current HIV care routines

**3. Review HIV treatment knowledge assessment (if participant did not receive 1A)**

*The counselor can review the most recent answers (baseline for intervention group and 4-month follow-up for waitlist control arm) prior to the session.*

- ☐ Discuss incorrect answers and provide correct information and supporting information behind each
- ☐ Ask whether the participant has any additional questions about HIV or HIV care and provide additional education as needed

**4. Psychoeducation and Health Education**

*As described below, assess the participant's level of knowledge about the basics of HIV and HIV care. Then work with participants to fill in their knowledge gaps. The following are suggested topics that could be helpful. The counselor can also offer to email written information as needed to supplement the information provided verbally.*

**A. Attending clinic visits**

*"How do you fit your HIV care into your schedule? How do you get the best medical care possible for your HIV? How do you deal with stress related to HIV appointments, prescriptions, or insurance coverage? How do you prepare emotionally for your appointments?"*

- ☐ Fitting clinic appointments into schedule and how to cancel/re-schedule
- ☐ Choosing and sticking with a PCP, clinic, and/or medical group

- ☐ Constructively responding to issues with medical team, medical group, or insurance
- ☐ Managing health appointment-related anxiety

B. HIV Pharmacology

*“Which HIV medications are you taking? What’s your understanding of how your HIV medications work? What’s your understanding about the different types of HIV medications?”*

- ☐ Review participant’s HIV medications using this resource as needed:  
<https://www.poz.com/article/2020-hiv-drug-chart>
- ☐ Types of HIV medications and their interventions on different stages of the HIV life cycle
- ☐ Purpose of HIV combination medications
- ☐ HIV drug resistance and medication resistance testing

C. Medication-Taking

*“What have your experiences with HIV medications been? What challenges have you had getting or taking HIV medications, and how have you worked around them? What’s your understanding of the consequences if you miss a dose or stop taking your medications? What is your understanding of what you should do instead?”*

- ☐ Requesting and troubleshooting insurance, co-pays, and refill
- ☐ Finding and staying with a convenient pharmacy with good services (pill boxes, delivery, etc.) and pricing
- ☐ Systems for remembering to take medication
- ☐ Common side effects of ART and how to work around them
- ☐ Consequences of interrupting or stopping medications completely

D. Getting labs done

*“What’s your understanding of how CD4 and viral load testing work and why they’re important? What has your experience been with getting your blood drawn for lab tests? What kind of challenges have you faced related to blood work, and how have you worked around them?”*

- ☐ Viral load testing and detectable/undetectable status
- ☐ CD4 testing and result ranges (500-1800 is average range for healthy adults)
- ☐ Dealing with anxieties around lab results that are out of range
- ☐ Dealing with difficulties getting blood drawn due to injection drug use

E. Medical literacy

*“What do you know about insurance and benefit programs for people living with HIV? How do you decide whether to call the advice nurse, schedule an appointment, go to urgent care, or go to an emergency room? What have you heard about PrEP for sexual partners of HIV-positive people?”*

- ☐ Health insurance (where to get it and how to maintain it) and ADAP benefits
- ☐ Levels and types of health care (PCP vs. specialists vs. advice nurse vs. urgent care vs. emergency services) and when to seek each type of care
- ☐ PrEP for sexual partners of people living with HIV

## 5. Assessing and Enhancing Motivation

*The discussion topics below may be helpful to assess and enhance motivation to access HIV care. The goal is for the participant to gain self-awareness and identify motivations to follow through with their routine HIV care.*

- ☐ Identify HIV care-related barriers that if resolved would have the most positive impact on health and overall life satisfaction
- ☐ Discuss participant motivators, including personal goals, values, social support, etc. and apply them to the barriers at hand
- ☐ Encourage participant to follow up with the counselor about these barriers at a separate session (menu option A or other applicable options)

**6. Check out**

- ☐ Elicit participant's thoughts about the session, identifying any issues or concerns
- ☐ Provide a positive reflection to the participant related to a strength they possess or their willingness to participate in the conversation

## Menu Session

### Option E: Social Support (non-family support)

*Overarching session goal:* participants have the communication and problem-solving skills needed to help them effectively maintain long-term supportive social relationships that help them manage their health, stay accountable to their goals, and stay well

*Feel free to share relevant information about social support during (via screenshare) or after the session (via email/text). This could include educational handouts on topics such as: how to build relationships, how to set boundaries. Counselors can also provide resources such as local social networking opportunities at community organizations.*

Topics falling into this category include:

- Relationships with friends
- Relationships with classmates and co-workers
- Sources of positive and negative influence
- Sources of mutual support for wellness
- Needs for increased social supports

#### 1. Check in

- ☐ Consent for session and description of current location
- ☐ Ensure adequate connection with video conferencing platform or troubleshoot, if necessary
- ☐ Confirm level of privacy (using headphones, being in a private location without others around, re-scheduling if unable to get to a private location)
- ☐ Check in on how the previous week went (challenging and/or positive experiences)
- ☐ Check in on previous session goal and degree to which it was successful
- ☐ Create a modified follow-up plan if goal was not attempted or was unsuccessful

#### 2. Assess and elicit information on focus area

*Sample information elicited:* Sources of social support, positive influences in life, types of support desired from others, challenges maintaining mutually supportive relationships with others, ability and willingness to seek social support as needed, interest in and willingness to increase sources of social support

- ☐ Identify one or multiple social challenge(s) impacting health and overall wellbeing  
“What would be most helpful to talk about today? What would have the biggest impact on your health today?”
- ☐ Elicit information about the frequency, severity, and impact of the challenge(s) on the participant’s daily life
- ☐ Explore areas of strengths and difficulties related to the social challenge(s)

#### 3. Identify/verbalize a barrier to treatment adherence and overall health that is related to social support

*Sample barriers:* lack of social supports around health, reluctance to seek support for health issues as needed, difficulty finding new sources of social support related to health, difficulty maintaining mutually supportive relationships with others, challenges around boundaries with social supports, social anxiety or distrust of others impacting social relationships

- ☐ Identify and verbalize one mutually agreed upon social-related barrier to engagement in HIV care or promotion of own health

#### 4. Provide feedback and education

*Sample educational topics: communication techniques, boundary-setting, assertiveness, conflict resolution, mutual support techniques, ways of finding additional social supports, managing social anxiety, information about the impact of trauma on relationships with others*

- ☐ Normalize concerns and the existence of the barrier (as appropriate)
- ☐ Provide feedback about the importance of addressing the social barrier and help the participant identify the impact of the barrier on their health
- ☐ Provide psychoeducation and health education as needed

#### 5. Enhance motivation and self-efficacy

- ☐ Assess current stage of change using the importance ruler
- ☐ Use motivational interviewing techniques to enhance motivation and self-efficacy

#### 6. Problem-solve

- ☐ Collaboratively brainstorm several ways of addressing and decreasing the identified barrier
- ☐ Encourage the participant to choose the best option for them to focus on over the next week

#### 7. Develop a goal and make a plan

*Sample goals: decrease social-related stress and anxiety, increase ability to safely self-disclose to social contacts, increase social support, increase quality of communication with social contacts, increase awareness of ways to address challenges with social contacts, identify ways to manage HIV care confidentiality (if not disclosed to others)*

- ☐ Develop a goal for the week (ideally using the SMART goal format) based on the participant's chosen way of addressing the barrier
- ☐ If the participant is unable to identify a goal without prompting, suggest several options to help the participant start brainstorming goals that feel relevant to them
- ☐ If the participant declines to set a goal after brainstorming and encouragement, skip the next two steps and move on to check out
- ☐ Assess self-efficacy using the confidence ruler
- ☐ Identify internal resources, external resources, strengths, or past successes that the participant can draw on to achieve their goal

#### 8. Check out

- ☐ Elicit participant's thoughts about the session, identifying any issues or concerns
- ☐ Provide a positive reflection to the participant related to a strength they possess or their willingness to participate in the conversation