

MODULE 9:

Identifying and Tracing People Who Do Not Return to the Clinic



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this Module, you will be able to:

- Help prevent missed appointments through good communication and counseling with clients, as well as using appointment reminders
- Describe local policies and procedures to identify and trace clients who have missed appointments
- Obtain and record consent for different types of follow-up
- Describe the ways you can identify clients who have missed appointments
- Conduct a follow-up phone call with a client who has missed an appointment
- Conduct a follow-up home visit with a client who has missed an appointment
- Record key information from a follow-up call or visit
- Provide supportive counseling for clients who are returning to the clinic after missing 1 or more appointments



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- Session 9.1: Introduction: Why Do Clients Miss Clinic Visits?
- Session 9.2: Identifying People Who Do Not Return to the Clinic
- Session 9.3: Strategies to Follow Up with People Who Do Not Return to the Clinic
- Session 9.4: Classroom Practicum on Client Follow-up
- Session 9.5: Module Summary

SESSION 9.1: Introduction: Why Do Clients Miss Clinic Visits?

Common reasons clients miss clinic visits:

- Clinic hours are not convenient
- Work schedule is not flexible
- Long distances to travel
- Lack of funds for transportation to clinic
- Long wait time at the clinic
- Unfriendly environment at clinic
- Embarrassed or ashamed about adherence challenges
- Need to take care of a child or a family member
- Too sick to leave the house and reach the clinic
- Forgot when the next appointment is
- Feel well and do not want to go to the clinic
- Do not understand the importance of returning to the clinic at the right times
- Do not understand when or why the next visit was scheduled
- Moved to another home that is not near the clinic
- Prefer to use traditional medicines
- Went away for a long visit, seasonal work or holiday
- Worried that a family member, neighbor or other clients will see them going to the clinic or at the clinic
- Client died
- Others



You can help prevent clients from missing clinic visits by supporting them to understand how important it is to adhere to the care plan, even if they are not on ART!

SESSION 9.2: Identifying People Who Do Not Return to the Clinic

You can make sure clients' information is recorded and regularly updated in the file at each visit, including:

- Name
- ART or ANC number or health record number
- Sex
- Age
- Physical address and description (if needed)
- Phone contact number (and whether it is their own or someone else's)
- Treatment buddy contact information
- Consent for phone call, SMS (text message) and/or home visit

In some places, clients may not give correct phone and address information on purpose because they do not want to be contacted. The best way to prevent this is to encourage open and honest communication and to explain how important it is to have the correct contact information on file.

Getting consent to follow-up with clients:

It is very important to get each client's consent for follow-up by phone or by a home visit. You should talk with other members of the multidisciplinary team to figure out how a client's consent is noted on the ART or ANC card. You should always check the client's file before following up by phone call or home visit.

Here are some ways to do this:

On the ART or ANC card, near the place where the client's contact information is written, you can use the following notations (adapt to your clinic setting):

SMS

PC

HV

In this example, the client has consented to receive an SMS, a phone call (PC) and a home visit (HV) if he or she misses an appointment at the clinic.

OR

SMS

PC

~~HV~~

In this example, the client has consented to receive an SMS and a phone call (PC), but not a home visit.

OR

~~SMS~~

~~PC~~

~~HV~~

In this example, the client has refused an SMS, a phone call (PC) and a home visit (HV).

It is important to respect every client's right to refuse follow-up SMS, phone calls and home visits.

If clients do not give consent for follow-up, explore their reasons during an individual counseling session and follow up at the next clinic visit.

Identifying clients who have missed an appointment:

There are many tools that can be used to see who has missed an appointment, including:

- ANC and ART clinic appointment books
- Laboratory registers
- Pharmacy registers
- Others

Appointment books:

- Each health facility should have an appointment system in place, including an up-to-date appointment book.
- You should speak with other members of the multidisciplinary team to learn more about the appointment system and your role in this system.
- See *Appendix 9A* for a sample appointment book page.



Appointment reminder cards:

- When each client is done with the clinic visit, he or she should be given an appointment to come back to the clinic.
- It is important to write down the date and time for clients and to explain clearly why they need to come back to the clinic on that day.
- See *Appendix 9B* for a sample appointment card.

Weekly listing of clients who miss appointments:

- At least once each week, you and your team should work together to make a list of all of the people who were at least one week late for their appointment at the clinic, lab or pharmacy.
- Once there is a list of people who have missed appointments, it will be easy to know who needs follow-up.

SESSION 9.3: Strategies to Follow Up with People Who Do Not Return to the Clinic

Every health facility should have a system to identify clients who have missed appointments and follow them up to bring them back into care!

Phone call or SMS to the client or the client's treatment supporter:

Always follow the policies and procedures at your clinic. Always check that the client has given consent before calling.

Here are some general tips on following up with clients by phone:

- If sending an SMS, use the agreed upon messages. Never give lab results or specific information about the client's care in an SMS.
- If the client still does not call back or return to the clinic after sending an SMS, you can follow up with a phone call.
- If making a phone call, make sure you are in a quiet room.
- Make sure you have all of the client's information and file in front of you before you call.
- Always try and speak with the client her- or himself.
- Use scripts to know what to say when you talk with a client.
 - Tell the client your name.
 - Tell the client your reason for calling (that she or he has missed an appointment for _____ service).
 - Discuss reasons why the client should come back to the clinic.
 - If the client refuses, provide adherence counseling and try to determine why the client will not come back. You could also ask if the client would be willing to accept a home visit so you could talk more in person.
 - If the client accepts, make an appointment at a time and day that is convenient for the client (as soon as possible).
 - Thank the client for taking the time to speak with you.
- Phone calls should be focused on giving basic adherence counseling and getting the client to return to the clinic. Never give test results over the phone!
- Keep information confidential! If you talk to someone other than the client, do not say you are from the ART clinic.
- Record every call and SMS in a call logbook. See *Appendix 9C* for a sample.



Home visit by a community health worker or other Peer Educator linked to the health facility:

If the client has given consent for a home visit, you or other members of the multidisciplinary team can meet with community outreach to plan for follow-up home visits.

Home visit by Peer Educators:

Remember, a home visit should only be conducted if a client has given consent. You should learn more about the home visit policies and procedures at your clinic, but here are some general tips:

- Talk with the rest of the multidisciplinary team before doing any home visiting.
- During the home visit, first introduce yourself and say that you are from the clinic.
- Always try and talk to the client in person and in a private spot. Ask if it is a good time to talk, or if you should come back another time.
- Always keep information confidential when you are speaking with other members of the family or community.
- Once you talk with clients, discuss why they missed the appointment, what makes it hard to come to appointments and how they can come back to the clinic as soon as possible. Help clients make a concrete plan for coming back (such as they will ask a family member to babysit next Tuesday and will get there by taxi).
- Provide adherence counseling and remind clients how important it is that they return to the clinic for specific services.
- Ask clients if you can check in every now and again to see how things are going.
- Always be supportive and never judge clients for missing an appointment.
- Write down the outcomes of all home visits, even if you were not able to find the client.
- Discuss the outcomes of home visits with the rest of the multidisciplinary team. Contact the clinic right away if you find that a client is very ill and try to arrange for her or him to be transferred to the clinic or a hospital.
- If clients still cannot be located during a home visit, do not give up. They might be traveling and eventually come back to the clinic. Keep following up through calls and home visits, even if the first try is not a success.



When clients do return to the clinic for their appointment, it is very important to discuss how important it is to keep appointments and adherence to care and treatment. Some clients may require individual adherence counseling and problem solving.

Communicating with the rest of the multidisciplinary team:

The rest of the multidisciplinary team should be updated on the results of follow-up through SMS, phone calls, and home visits and also be informed of any issues faced. The monthly multidisciplinary meeting is a good time to discuss the outcomes, issues and challenges with patient follow-up.



SESSION 9.4: Classroom Practicum on Client Follow-up

Case Study 1:

The social worker asks you to call B__ because she missed her ART refill appointment 7 days ago. What would you say to B__ on the phone?

B__ tells you that she missed her appointment because she cannot leave her new job to come to the clinic. What would you say to B__?

Case Study 2:

You are asked to call C__, a woman who missed her appointment to pick up her child's HIV test results (which are positive). You check the file and C__ has given consent to call her. You call and a man answers the phone. What would you say?

The man says that he is C__'s husband and you can tell him what is going on. What would you say?

Case Study 3:

You have been trying to reach M__ by phone because he missed his appointment at the clinic. You know the number is working because one time a woman answered but said that M__ was not there. What would you do?

The nurse asks you to get in touch with the PLHIV association to do a home visit. You check M__'s file and notice that he gave consent for a phone call but not for a home visit. What would you do?

Case Study 4:

You go to the home of P__, a woman in care who has missed her 6-month check-up at the clinic. P__ says she is feeling fine now and is using holy water and herbs, which have made her well. She sees no need to come to the clinic since she feels well. What do you say to P__?

Case Study 5:

You ask the community health worker to visit A__, a PMTCT client who has missed an appointment at the clinic. What would you ask the community health worker to say during the home visit?

The community health worker reports back to you that A__ does not feel well enough to come to the clinic and that she is very busy taking care of her children and husband. What would you do next?

Case Study 6:

You are out in the community with a list of 5 clients to visit at home. You cannot locate the first client's home based on the information you have. What would you do?

You go to the home of another client, named T__, who missed his ART refill date almost 2 weeks ago. A woman answers the door when you knock. What would you say?

You learn that T__ is working in another province for the next 2 months. What would you say?

SESSION 9.5: Module Summary



THE KEY POINTS OF THIS MODULE INCLUDE:

- Your priority should be to help clients understand the need to come to the clinic for all of their appointments. Good communication and counseling – starting when a client enrolls in care – can prevent missed visits.
- All health facilities should have policies and procedures in place to identify and follow up with clients who miss appointments.
- It is important for you to get a client’s consent to send an SMS, call or do a home visit if she or he misses an appointment. You should record this on the client’s file.
- Having an appointment system is the only way to know which clients did not come back to the clinic on time.
- Each week, you can work with the rest of the multidisciplinary team to identify which clients did not return to the clinic on time. This list of clients is the first step in client tracing.
- There are many ways for you to follow up with clients who miss appointments. You should follow the policies and procedures at the clinic. Follow-up can be by SMS, phone call or home visit by you or a community health worker.
- Always keep client information confidential during follow-up SMS, phone calls or home visits. Never disclose that the person is living with HIV or is receiving HIV care to anyone but the client or the treatment supporter.
- It is important that you record the outcomes of ALL follow-up SMS, phone calls and home visits.
- Part of follow-up is to provide individual adherence counseling to identify barriers and come up with solutions. You should provide adherence counseling during follow-up and also when the client returns to the clinic.

APPENDIX 9A: Sample Page from a Clinic Appointment Book (adapt to your local setting)

Date: Thursday – 4 June 2009

	Patient Name	Clinic number (if none, use ANC #)	Phone number	Reason for visit FU=Follow up Rx=Refill C=Counseling LT=Lab test LR=Lab results O=Other (list)	Attend?		If no, action taken			Outcome		Comments (patient died, moved, transferred, wrong phone number on file, etc.)
					Yes	No	SMS	Call	Home visit	Come back	Did not come back	
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												
13												
14												
15												
16												
17												
18												
19												
20												
Total												

APPENDIX 9B: Sample Patient Appointment Card (adapt to your local setting)

Appointment Card	
Name: _____	
Health Facility: _____	
Date	Reason
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
PLEASE COME TO ALL OF YOUR APPOINTMENTS!	
If you cannot attend, call: _____	

APPENDIX 9C: Sample Phone Follow-up Logbook (adapt to your local setting)

Date	Patient name	ART or ANC number	Initials of caller	Phone number	Outcome	Next step	Call duration
					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent SMS <input type="checkbox"/> Phone not working <input type="checkbox"/> No answer <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with patient <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with someone else _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> None – patient will return on ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Try again on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Call treatment buddy <input type="checkbox"/> Home visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent SMS <input type="checkbox"/> Phone not working <input type="checkbox"/> No answer <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with patient <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with someone else _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> None – patient will return on ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Try again on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Call treatment buddy <input type="checkbox"/> Home visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent SMS <input type="checkbox"/> Phone not working <input type="checkbox"/> No answer <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with patient <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with someone else _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> None – patient will return on ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Try again on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Call treatment buddy <input type="checkbox"/> Home visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent SMS <input type="checkbox"/> Phone not working <input type="checkbox"/> No answer <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with patient <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with someone else _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> None – patient will return on ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Try again on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Call treatment buddy <input type="checkbox"/> Home visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
					<input type="checkbox"/> Sent SMS <input type="checkbox"/> Phone not working <input type="checkbox"/> No answer <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with patient <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with someone else _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> None – patient will return on ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Try again on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Call treatment buddy <input type="checkbox"/> Home visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
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