

# FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR GROUP ART PREPARATION SESSION #2

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- Welcome participants, thank them for coming, and introduce yourself.
- Encourage active participation and discuss confidentiality.
- Give an overview of the topics that will be covered in the session.

## 2. REVIEW FROM SESSION 1

**? Ask and discuss: *Can anyone recall the key points we discussed in our first group session? Are there any questions about the information we talked about during the last session?***

### Key Points:

- A person can get HIV from unprotected sex, mother-to-child transmission, or exposure to infected blood.
- There are many ways we can prevent the spread of HIV (give examples).
- HIV attacks the CD4 cells and, over time, makes it harder to fight infections.
- There are many things we can do to “live positively” with HIV and keep our minds and bodies healthy.
- PLHIV need lifelong care and treatment, including prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections, regular check-ups and lab tests, adherence counseling and support, and ART.
- ARVs are medicines that help lower the amount of HIV in the body. ART does not cure HIV, but it can increase our CD4 cell count, make us live longer, and improve our quality of life.
- ART must be taken at the same time, every day, for your whole life. Being on ART is a lifetime commitment.

## 3. UNDERSTANDING OUR MEDICATIONS

**? Ask and discuss: *How do we take our ARVs? I am going to show you each medicine and talk about how and when to take it.***

### Key Points:

- Show and pass around each ARV and cotrimoxazole (box, bottle, and tablet) and explain:
  - The names of the medicine (brand name, generic name, other common names)
  - The dose of the medicine
  - The timing to take the medicine (how many times per day and when during the day)
  - If the medicine should be taken with food or on an empty stomach
- Store medicines in a safe place – away from children, water, and direct sun.
- Sometimes there may be changes to the shape, color, size, packaging, and dosing of your medicines. This can be confusing, so it is important to listen carefully to the instructions at each visit.
- Always ask someone at the clinic if you are not sure how to take your medicines.

## 4. THE IMPORTANCE OF ADHERENCE

**? Ask and discuss: *What do we mean by “adherence?” Why is adherence to ART so important?***

### Key Points:

- Adherence describes how faithfully you stick to, and participate in, your HIV care and treatment plan, including:
  - Continuing your care and treatment plan
  - Taking medicines to prevent and treat OIs
  - Taking ART the right way, every day, for your whole life
  - Not taking any “breaks” from ART
  - Coming to all of your clinic and refill appointments
  - Having a healthy lifestyle and avoiding risky behaviors
- Very good adherence is needed for ART to work. With very good adherence, you will feel better, not get sick as much, and improve your quality of life. Good adherence also helps prevent new HIV infections.
- If you do not adhere to the care and treatment plan, the HIV will grow stronger in your body. Your CD4 cell count will go down and you can get more infections and illnesses. You can also develop “drug resistance,” which means that the ARVs you are taking may not work anymore.

## 5. ADHERENCE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

**? Ask and discuss: *What are some of the things that might make it hard to take our medications on time, every day? What are some ways we can improve our adherence?***

### **Key Points:**

- No one is perfect! You should feel comfortable talking with us about your adherence challenges.
- **Make an adherence plan:** It is important to make an adherence plan that fits with your life.
  - Try to make your care and treatment part of your everyday life and routine (give examples).
  - Use reminders, such as your cell phone, Bukhana, a watch, pill boxes, and medicine calendars.
  - Try to plan ahead to make sure you have enough transport money and time to come to your appointments. If you cannot keep your appointment, it is good to call the clinic to let them know.
  - Try to disclose to someone you trust and find a treatment supporter that can assist you.
  - Join a support group. You can also talk to counselors and Expert Clients at the clinic any time.
  - Plan ahead if you will need to take your medicines away from home (give examples).
- **Side effects:** Some people have side effects from ARVs (common side effects are nausea, vomiting, headache, diarrhea, problems sleeping, feeling tired, and changes in body shape).
  - Most side effects are not serious and will go away after a few weeks. There are also some ways to relieve side effects at home (give examples).
  - Some side effects are serious. Come to the clinic right away if you have: a red rash, high fever, problems breathing, a bad headache, numbness in the hands or feet, or very bad vomiting or diarrhea.
  - Never make the decision alone to stop taking ARVs – instead, come to the clinic right away.

## 6. WHAT TO DO ABOUT MISSED DOSES

**? Ask and discuss: *It is very important that you do not miss any doses of ARVs. If this happens often, the ARVs will not work. However, no one is perfect and there may be a time when you miss a dose or a clinic appointment. What should you do if this happens?***

### **Key Points:**

- For medicines taken 2 times per day, take the missed dose if your next dose is schedule for more than 6 hours away. Do not take the missed dose if the next does is less than 6 hours away (give examples).
- For medicines taken 1 time per day, take the missed dose if you remember within 12 hours of the scheduled dose time. Do not take the missed dose if the next dose is less than 12 hours away (give examples).
- Never take two doses at a time. Always ask someone at the clinic if you are not sure.
- If you miss a clinic appointment, come as soon as possible. If you can, call the clinic to let them know.

## 7. LIVING POSITIVELY WITH HIV AND ON ART

**? Ask and discuss: *What are some of the ways we live positively with HIV and on ART?***

### **Key Points:**

- Take ART the right way, every day, for life! Never share ARVs or stop taking ARVs on your own.
- Come to all clinic and refill appointments on time. Share any adherence challenges you are facing.
- Prevent and treat OIs. This includes taking cotrimoxazole and preventing and treating tuberculosis.
- Try to eat enough, healthy foods from all of the food groups.
- Find support in your community, including having a treatment supporter and joining a support group.
- Bring family members in for HIV testing, care, and treatment.
- Remember that you can still pass HIV to others even if you are on ART. Practice safe sex with condoms.
- Use condoms and/or other family planning methods if you do not want to get pregnant.
- If you or your partner is pregnant, come to the clinic right away for ANC and PMTCT services.

## 8. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS AND CLOSING

- Ask participants if they can recall some of the key points of the session.
- Answer any questions and remind participants that individual counseling is always available.
- Remind participants of the next steps, including an individual counseling session.
- Thank participants for coming.