

Why Is Outreach Important?

- Because CHCT is a new option in many communities, many people do not know that it is possible to receive counseling and testing as a couple.
 - Frequently, people do not know where the counseling and testing sites are in their community.
 - More people learn about counseling and testing services when the program actively recruits participants.
 - Outreach can help couples during decision-making about whether to receive CHCT.
 - Types of outreach include:
 - Community outreach
 - Door-to-door outreach
 - Media outreach
 - Radio drama and theater
 - Outreach through antenatal clinics
 - Outreach in the workplace
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Community Outreach

Community outreach involves a range of activities at the community-wide level that are intended to gain support, awareness, and interest for CHCT programs. They can also help couples make the decision to come in for CHCT.

Key points for successful community outreach include:

- **Obtaining buy-in from local leaders.** In any community, the first step is to get the local leaders invested in the importance of CHCT and how it can help the community.
- **Displaying posters advertising CHCT** at local community centers, churches, adult education centers, and public buildings. When using posters to advertise CHCT, it's important to decide where you will advertise and to obtain appropriate permission.
- **Making presentations to various groups**, such as churches and community centers, to encourage participation in CHCT and to encourage referrals.

- **Recruiting and training influential, social people in the community**, such as barbers, bartenders, and taxi drivers, to talk about CHCT and to invite couples to receive CHCT. These people will need brief training to teach them the basics of why CHCT is important and how to give referral information, such as clinic locations and hours of operation.

In one study, community outreach resulted in nearly 60% of the participants hearing about HIV counseling and testing services through a relative, friend, or neighbor. (Source: *Balmer 2000*)¹

Door-to-Door Outreach

Door-to-door outreach is more focused than community outreach. It focuses on reaching couples individually and personally inviting them to come in for CHCT.

Some important aspects of door-to-door outreach include:

- CHCT or VCT clients can be recruited as outreach workers to go door-to-door in their communities to invite couples to receive CHCT.
- Outreach workers should conduct brief door-to-door visits during which they:
 - Invite couples to come in for CHCT
 - Explain briefly why CHCT is important
 - Provide information about clinic locations and hours
- Outreach workers should receive a brief training or seminar with CHCT site staff about CHCT and how to deliver messages.
- Outreach workers may answer basic questions or provide testimonials about CHCT, but they are NOT counselors and should not attempt to counsel couples.

In a study of over 7000 individuals and couples who received counseling and testing, 70% heard about the site where they received testing through outreach workers. Eighty percent said they had not previously known where to get services. (Source: *McKenna 1997*)

Media Outreach

- Media advertising, such as advertising on the radio, is one way to let the community know about sites offering VCT and CHCT.
- Media outreach has been less successful at actually getting people to come in for CHCT. In studies, less than 10% of people who come in for VCT learn about it through the radio. (Sources: *Balmer 2000, McKenna 1997*) In order to be effective, media outreach should be combined with other strategies.

Outreach through Fictional Drama

Fictional drama involving stories about CHCT and other HIV-related issues can help increase social acceptance of CHCT in the community and help couples to decide to come in for CHCT.

- In Botswana and Zimbabwe, radio dramas have had storylines about couples dealing with their results, PMTCT, and other HIV-related issues.
 - Fictional drama:
 - Creates role models
 - Starts discussions
 - Increases awareness and acceptance of CHCT
 - Reinforces key messages
 - Motivates people to get tested and change their behaviors
 - Street and community theater and outreach drama can also portray CHCT-related stories.
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Outreach through Antenatal Clinics and PMTCT Programs

- CHCT staff can target antenatal clinics through their community outreach efforts.
 - Posters with information about CHCT services can be displayed at antenatal clinics.
 - Many women at antenatal clinics are interested in HIV counseling and testing.
 - Antenatal clinic staff can encourage women to seek CHCT with their partners.
 - Some antenatal clinics send women home with personalized letters from the clinic's program director asking the couple to come into the clinic for HIV testing.
 - In some communities, antenatal clinics can double as CHCT sites and women can be encouraged to bring their partners in with them.
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Outreach in the Workplace

Workplace recruitment can be used to target men. Because men are frequently the decision-making partners in couple relationships, outreach strategies directed toward men are important.

- In studies, large numbers of couples have been recruited for counseling and testing by targeting large employers and the military. (*Sources: Lurie 2003, Ryder 2000*)

- CHCT staff can target large and small employers in their community outreach efforts.
- Many larger companies have peer health educators who can give out information about CHCT programs.

It is important to consider which strategies would work best for your site.

Notes:

Closing Exercise

Please complete any of these sentences to summarize your experience in this training. You will be asked to share one with the group.

I learned... _____

I feel... _____

I was surprised... _____

I'm wondering... _____

I've rediscovered... _____

I figured out... _____

I appreciated... _____

I felt challenged... _____

I'm clearer about... _____

References

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