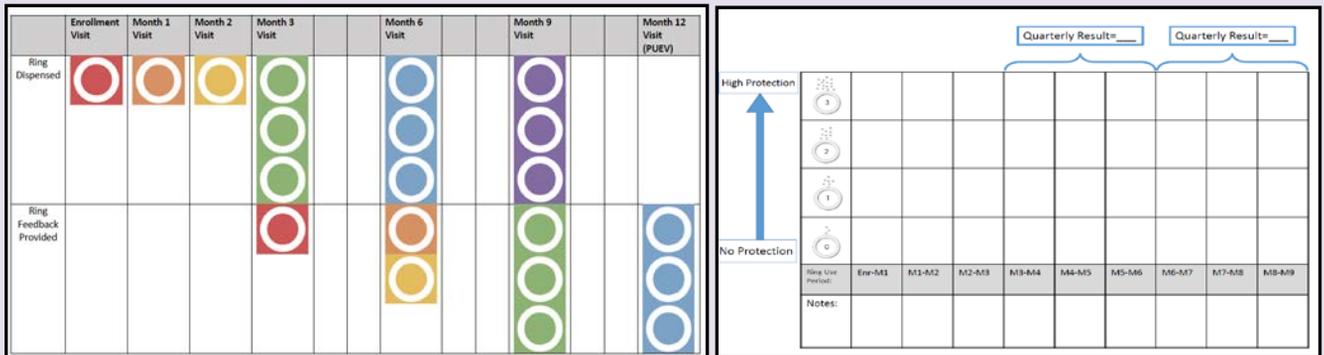


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Discussing drug levels for multiple rings

As participants begin to attend their Month 6 counseling sessions, they will start to receive drug level results for multiple rings. As you prepare for these sessions, remember to use the *Residual Drug Level Feedback Timeline*, which offers a color-coded way of clarifying which ring is being discussed at which visit, and the *Residual Drug Level Feedback Over Time* form, where you can mark the drug level for each ring discussed thus far for the participant. Copies of these tools are included in the back of the counseling manual and are also available on the HOPE study website.



Counseling Details

All those little things we say...

The best counseling sessions are those that sound like natural conversations. Usually, this requires that the counselor use his/her own words in completing some of the tasks in the session and that he/she respond naturally to what the participant is saying. This makes the interaction much more genuine, which is great. However, when you do this, be aware of little things you might say that actually detract from the client-centeredness of the interaction. For example...

“That is great, you got a level 3 of protection! That is exactly what we want you to do in the study.”

“I can see you are disappointed in getting a level of 2. You mentioned that you removed the Ring a couple of times to wash it. If you want to get a level of 3, make sure you don’t remove the Ring at all, always keep it inside you.”

(Continued on next page)



Counseling Details

All those little things we say... (Continued)

These are supportive statements, but notice how in the first example, the focus is changed from what the participant wants for herself to what the study team wants. A more client-centered response would be “That is great, you got a level 3 of protection! I know that was your goal and I am so happy that you did it!” This statement keeps the focus on the participant’s own goals, instead of the study team’s goals.

For the second example, we want to evoke the participant’s interest in increasing her level of protection, so instead of suggesting what she might do, a more client-centered approach would be to say something like “If you really want to increase your level of protection to 3, what do you think you might do differently?” This gets the participant herself to state that she will keep the Ring in, so its her own decision, not us telling her to do it.

So, as you do your sessions, stay alert to little things you might say that can detract from the participant’s sense of choice. If you notice yourself including phrases such as “you should...” “try to...” or “we would like you to...” you are probably being less client-centered than you intended.

Missing Robots!

We are noticing that some counselors are skipping over the robot slides on the flipchart. Although you do not have to rigidly go through these slides during every session, these slides are there to assist with two very important elements of the counseling session, so you should not completely skip them.

The first robot slide is to help clarify for the counselor whether the participant wants to make any changes to her HIV prevention plan. This is important because if the participant does not want to make any changes, then any attempts by the counselor to get the participant to make changes will likely result in defensiveness from the participant.

The second robot is to help the participant problem-solve obstacles (if there were any) or identify her plan for continuing to succeed (if she had no obstacles). Those who had difficulties may really benefit from thinking through what they might do differently. For participants doing well, speaking about what helped her to succeed and how she plans to continue can be very motivating. So, even if you don’t have an extensive conversation regarding these slides, don’t completely skip them!

Oh Oh!

At the end of the counseling sessions, some counselors are still using a closed-ended question to inquire whether the participant has questions about using the ring or the other HIV prevention approaches she selected! Remember, the full, open-ended question is now in the revised flip chart, you can actually just read the question if you would like.