

## **PLHIV SUPPORT GROUP MONTHLY MEETING**

### **IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION**

Integrated service for displaced people  
(ISDP)

### **Support Group sessions**

PLHIV Support Group monthly meeting should be given a choice of joining all-male/ all-female groups or mixed gender groups in each session  
Should not exceed 20-25 participants' members in the regions such  
Bossaso, Gardo, Galkaio, Garowe

### **Topic Discuss**

All topics to discuss will be pre-planned and contain open ended questions followed by open discussions by choosing for the following selected topics

**24th-April-2022** | Preventing OIs and HIV re-infection

**21st May 2022** | Family Planning and dual Protection

**15th- June-2022** | Dealing with Stigma and Discrimination

### **LOCATIONS**

**Bossaso, Garowe, Galkaio, Gardo**

## Summary

Support groups are a great way to provide a service to the people your organization or initiative works with, without a huge investment of time or money. Moreover, running a support group is a good way to reach out of people living with HIV/AIDS with initiative plan of PLHIV support group monthly meeting, It's also a way to give back to the community - improving or supporting a good public image for your group. Finally, it's just a good thing to do with relatively little effort and cost, a support group can make a significant impact in the lives of people dealing with a problem such as of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Different people and different institutions can provide some support group meeting, but it is important for people living with HIV/AIDS to come together and support one another. People living with HIV/AIDS would know better what their hopes, joys, anxieties, fears and needs are and they are the ones who should define how best they want to be understood and treated.

Support groups monthly meeting can only recruit people who agree to be members firstly its hard to understand the advantage or the meaning of PLHIV support monthly meeting but now it changed so many lives of people living with HIV/AIDS,

Support groups carry out a number of activities which include HIV and AIDS Education Outreach, Group and case management and ART doctors, included with ISDP representatives of the project implementation overseeing of PLHIV support group monthly meeting in all regions such as Bossaso, Gardo, Garowe, Galkaio. This program had changed lives of people living with HIV/AIDS since this meeting started last year a lot of people living with HIV/AIDS got more encouragement about this PLHIV monthly meeting specially was targeting and bringing of people self stigmatized of their HIV status but receiving a lot of consultation and frequently monthly meeting changed their lives.

## Introduction

**Preventing OIs and HIV re-infection** are infections that occur more frequently and are more severe in people with weakened immune systems, including people with HIV. Many OIs are considered AIDS-defining conditions. That means if a person with HIV has one of these conditions, they are diagnosed with AIDS, the most serious stage of HIV infection when you have HIV/AIDS, you're at higher risk of infections your body would normally be able to fight off. They can also be more severe, more frequent, or both. These infections are called opportunistic infection, The risks are higher if you have very low levels of CD4 T cells. These are white blood cells that fight infection. The more severe your HIV infection, the lower your CD4 levels get and the weaker your immune response to invaders. If your CD4 cells drop below 200, that means your HIV infection has progressed to the most severe phase called AID.

HIV and AIDS are affecting an increasing number of women. Sexual and reproductive health rights emphasize equitable access to prevention and care. Unfortunately due to social, economic and political inequities between men and women there is unequal access to prevention, education and care, The rights of individuals and couples to enjoy a healthy sexual life includes the prevention of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.

On May 2022 also we talk about **Family Planning and dual Protection** Generally, motherhood is considered a feminine ideal, hence using barrier methods as a safer sex option presents a significant challenge to many married women who plan to have children. Because of this perception, coupled with unequal power relations and economic disparities, women are unable to insist on safe sexual practices, especially dual protection. Poverty increases vulnerability to unsafe sexual behaviours and practices and it also decreases access to sexual and reproductive health information and services which might expose women to unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions and transmission of HIV and AIDS. Women need to be economically empowered so that they can be assertive and be able to negotiate safe and responsible sexual practices, including the use of condoms. About two thirds of the illiterate adults in the world are females, and this compromises their decision making power in matters that affect their sexual and reproductive health. Education empowerment enables women to make informed choices that help prevent HIV infection and unwanted pregnancy.

We talked about in June end of the quarter 2 **Dealing with stigma and discrimination** As we all know, there is stigma and discrimination in our country. We will not be able to reduce the stigma and discrimination in our country. But we are able to raise awareness in our society. The main factors behind high levels of stigma and discrimination in our country include low levels of HIV knowledge and awareness in the community. People living with HIV often internalize the stigma they experience and begin to develop a negative self-image. They may fear they will be discriminated against or judged negatively if their HIV status is revealed.

## Purpose

Purpose of PLHIV Support group Monthly Meeting provides guidance on group formation, management, activities and monitoring and evaluation. Among others goals, to help people living with HIV (PLHIV) to get organized into support groups, get information on relevant topics to discuss monthly based in order to promote positive living, promote meaningful and active participation within the support group with the new clients and retention, lost followup ART adherence sessions in order to mobilize resources for the operations of the support group. PLHIV support group monthly meeting can any person living with HIV who has voluntarily decided to join a support groups and willing to take part in group activities in monthly based or others,

Support groups are required to meet frequently as they carry out their activities. These meetings could be group therapy meetings, HIV and AIDS education outreach, or planning and review meetings. This part of the PLHIV support group members can conduct an effective meeting can be shared their HIV status and sharing informations.

## Objectives

### Objective 1 (Preventing Opportunistic infection and HIV Re-infection)

- Explain the risk factors of opportunistic infections.
- Describe the role of antiviral therapy, vaccinations and immunizations in the prevention of opportunistic infections.
- Identify the development of immune reconstitution syndrome.
- Outline the common opportunistic infections in HIV patients, risk factors
- Advantages of Covid-19 test.
- There are steps you can take to lower your chances of getting an opportunistic infection. It's important to wash your hands often. Most importantly, you should also:
  - **Take your HIV medication every day.** This keeps your HIV in check. That helps keep your immune system as strong as possible.
  - **Practice safe sex.** Sex can spread a lot of opportunistic infections, as well as HIV itself. Make sure to be safe.
  - **Get vaccinated.** Ask your doctor which ones you need.

**Eat healthy foods..** They can strengthen your immune system and help keep infections away. Go heavy on fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains.

## Objective 2 of Family planning and dual protection

Goal 3 addresses gender equality and women empowerment in an effort to encourage women to participate in matters concerning their lives, To provide specific support to adhere to their antiretroviral medications and treatment plan.

- Avoid unintended pregnancy.
- Prevent pregnancies among older women who also face increased risks.
- Reducing infant mortality
- Decreases abortion
- Male and female condoms provide dual protection against unintended pregnancies and against STIs
- Reduces risk of endometrial and ovarian cancer
- Do natural family planning (breastfeeding first 6 months)
- Support your spouse to make family planning
- Every mother should take care of her own health
- Improve your opportunities
- Protect your children's health

## Objective 3

**Dealing with HIV Stigma and Discrimination**, HIV stigma and discrimination affect the emotional well-being and mental health of people living with HIV. People living with HIV often internalize the stigma they experience and begin to develop a negative self-image. They may fear they will be discriminated against or judged negatively if their HIV status is revealed. “Internalized stigma” or “*self-stigma*” happens when a person takes in the negative ideas and stereotypes about people living with HIV and start to apply them to themselves. HIV internalized stigma can lead to feelings of shame, fear of disclosure, isolation, and despair. These feelings can keep people from getting tested and treated for HIV.

HIV internalized stigma can lead to feelings of shame, fear of disclosure, isolation, and despair. These feelings can keep from getting treated for HIV. This stigma and discrimination lead to feelings of hopelessness and shame for those struggling to cope with their situation, which poses a serious challenge to diagnosis and treatment.

At monthly meetings, we support people living with HIV to feel strong enough to defend themselves and be visible in the community.

## Specific objectives

- Explain the risk factors of opportunistic infections.
- Describe the role of antiviral therapy, vaccinations and immunizations in the prevention of opportunistic infections.
- Identify the development of immune reconstitution syndrome.
- Outline the common opportunistic infections in HIV patients, risk factors
- Advantages of Covid-19 test.
- People living HIV/AIDS should take COVID-19 vaccine.
- To provide emotional support and coping mechanisms to those people who are undergoing a difficult time in their lives, and are willing to be part of a support group.
- To provide information for its members so that they can understand the disease and be able to educate their family members, friends, colleagues, neighbours about the disease.
- To draw strength from other members experiences.
- To share information around treatment, care and healing.
- To educate people about antiretroviral medication and to encourage people to keep taking their medication.
- To build a social network of people with similar problems.
- To improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.
- To ensure that a person living with HIV/AIDS can live a positive and productive life.
- To empower members with knowledge about HIV/AIDS and help they develop skills.
- To create networking opportunities for those involved in the support group.
- To reduce isolation and discrimination while encouraging acceptance around HIV/AIDS.
- To expose the disease and promote de-stigmatization and community acceptance of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.
- To strengthen HIV prevention messages by encouraging the community to have contact with people living with HIV/AIDS.

## PLHIV support group monthly meeting receive counseling

**The facilitation team** was case management worker and ART doctors and ISDP PHLHIV Field officer and Project coordinator fully coordinating in all sessions and make sure that have enough knowledge and experience related the HIV AIDS. As well as this meeting focused on and frequently question asked that People with HIV Have Other Health Conditions?

- ✓ How can we prevent re-infections when you are in taking in separate medication of HIV?
- ✓ Yes. It's common for people with HIV to have other health issues.
- ✓ Some of these issues may be directly related to HIV or its treatment. Others may be completely unrelated.
- ✓ These health conditions can mean more doctors' visits, lab tests, and medications to keep up with.
- ✓ If you have HIV, the best thing you can do to **stay healthy** is to take HIV medicine (called antiretroviral therapy or ART) exactly as prescribed and get and keep an undetectable viral load a level of HIV in your blood so low that a standard lab test can't detect it.

**Confidentiality Area:** Support Group sessions can be held once a month for each group and held in the ART centre or at the Network/NGO premises (depending on feasibility, accessibility). The area chosen for the meeting should be a place that the PLHIV feel comfortable as well as they asked their consent to participate the meeting in order to keep their choices and congenitally as project their mental wellbeing And where they can get Counselling is the first step in the uptake of HIV/AIDS-related health care services Confidentiality thus establishes trust between the two parties because it enables clients to conceal their status

### **Topic Discussions: the following topics may help PLHIV including:**

All topics to discuss will be pre-planned and contain open ended questions followed by open discussions, while upholding meeting etiquette. and this meeting discussed the OI and deeply discussed what is OI and how to deal with it

- ✓ Preventing OIs and HIV re-infection,
- ✓ Family Planning and dual Protection
- ✓ Dealing with Stigma and Discrimination

**PLHIV Support Group Monthly Meeting Overview the total reached in all four regions such as Bossaso, Gardo, Garowe, Galkaio.**

<b>PLHIV S.G MONTHLY ACTIVITY 1: 24th-ARPIL-2022</b>			
<b>DISCUSSION TOPIC: Preventing Ois and HIV re-infection</b>			
<b>REGIONS</b>	<b># Female</b>	<b># Male</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1-Bossaso	11	4	15
2-Gardo	7	3	10
3-Garowe	7	4	11
4-Galkaio	9	6	15
<b>TOTAL REACHED</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>51</b>

<b>PLHIV S.G MONTHLY ACTIVITY 2: 21st -MAY-2022</b>			
<b>DISCUSSION TOPIC: Family Planning and dual Protection</b>			
<b>REGIONS</b>	<b># Female</b>	<b># Male</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1-Bossaso	10	10	20
2-Gardo	11	5	16
3-Garowe	3	12	15
4-Galkaio	12	8	20
<b>TOTAL REACHED</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>71</b>

<b>PLHIV S.G MONTHLY ACTIVITY 3: 15th-JUNE-2022</b>			
<b>DISCUSSION TOPIC: Dealing with Stigma and Discrimination</b>			
<b>REGIONS</b>	<b># Female</b>	<b># Male</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1-Bossaso	7	8	15
2-Gardo	10	5	15
3-Garowe	13	2	15
4-Galkaio	13	7	20
<b>TOTAL REACHED</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>65</b>

<b>PLHIV SUPPORT GROUP MONTHLY MEETING IN ALL 4 REGIONS PUNTLAND-SOMALIA</b>				
<b>Regions</b>	<b>April,2022</b>	<b>May,2022</b>	<b>June,2022</b>	<b>Total</b>
1-Bossaso	15	20	15	50
2-Gardo	10	16	15	41
3-Garowe	11	15	15	41
4-Galkaio	15	20	20	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>187</b>

<b>PLHIV SUPPORT GROUP MONTHLY MEETING QUARTER TWO</b>			
<b>TOTAL REACHED BOTH MALE AND FEMALE IN ALL REGIONS</b>			
<b>MONTHLY</b>	<b># Female</b>	<b># Male</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
24th-April-2022	34	17	51
21st May 2022	36	35	71
15th- June-2022	43	22	65
<b>TOTAL REACHED</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>187</b>

**Duration of PLHIV S.G Monthly Meeting:** Most support group meetings last between an hour and two hours. If the group is caught up in a particularly intense discussion or in helping a member solve a problem, you might go a few extra minutes, but generally it's best to stop before everyone is tired and eager to leave. When the discussion is winding down or when a previously agreed-upon ending time has arrived, wrap things up. Here are some ways you can close the meeting:



**Conclusions:** Support groups can potentially advance implementation while improving nutrition care and support, psychosocial wellbeing, and adherence to ART. Such a comprehensive approach does provide the much-needed support to implementation. This mutual partnership can be replicated in similar contexts in furthering implementation research. Further research is warranted to determine preferred format and timing of peer support groups, optimum number of support group members and other allied health care practitioners that can be included in the multi-disciplinary model.

Implementing PLHIV Support Group Monthly meeting as an intervention is expected to have a high impact on morbidity and retention in care and a moderate impact on mortality and quality of life of PLHIV.

**Recommendations:** to increase the Support group meetings and awareness for drug benefits as well as refresh training of ART adherence because there are PLHIV lived outside the capital cities such as nomadic areas or villages settlements which is far away from the meeting held place and they didn't access to participate support group monthly meeting improve disclosure with potential prevention benefits but the impact on ongoing transmission is uncertain.

- Nutritional support should not be only considered malnutrition people also should be given both of them.
- Priority measures to increase adherence to ART should aim to intensify counselling and comprehensive interventions,
- Guidance for PLHIV on medication self-management skills, tailoring the regimen to the PLHIV life style.
- Improving adherence monitoring and health care service.