

# **Project Title**

## **GF HIV Prevention and Care Management 2021 – 2023 Grant**

### **PLHIV Support Group Monthly Meeting**

#### **Implementing Organization**

Integrated service for displaced people  
(ISDP)

#### **Topic Discuss**

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

**We had an Action point of monthly meeting that held together ART staff, MOH staff, PLWHA, and ISDP our monthly meeting.**

#### **Quarter One 2023**

**31<sup>st</sup> – January 2023 | ART adherence**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 | Preventing OIs and HIV re-infection**

**22<sup>nd</sup> - March 2023 | Dealing with stigma and discrimination**

#### **Locations**

**Bossaso, Garowe, Galkaio, Gardo**

**Puntland-Somalia**

## Introduction

A PLHIV support group is a group of people living with HIV who come together to talk about the challenges, experiences and/or roles that they have in common within their society without being judged, blamed, stigmatized or isolated. Support groups often advocate for members' mutual goals and create awareness about shared challenges. This joint action leads to development and enactment of policies that better serve PLHIV and fosters supportive community environments in which group members can thrive. **This quarter one 2023 the selected topic was ART ADHERENCE** most of the clients in all regions practices adherence of taking ARVs since this program HIV prevention and case management the key factor in effectiveness of ART in a good adherence, poor adherence clients are becoming few since continuously practiced of this PLHIV monthly Support Group come and share ideas although these days cotrimoxazole tablet was out of stock in all ART centres, the estimations of the adherence rates on the information provided by the PLHIV about the intake of medicine during previous days and relished the advantage of taking ARV medicine continuously, Non-adherence to ART was associated with individual factors and exposure to ART. Priority measures to increase adherence to ART should aim to intensify counseling and comprehensive interventions, such as guidance for PLHIV on medication self-management skills the PLHIV life style, and improving adherence monitoring and health care services by the ART centres and PLHIV Support group monthly meeting in region such as Bossaso, Gardo, Garowe and Galkaio. In January the topic discussed of ART ADHERENCE SESSION in all regions in Bossaso, Gardo, Garowe and Galkaio **the total 75 participants of PLHIV clients Female were 56 and Male were 19 PLHIV clients.**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February of quarter one 2023 we discussed about Preventing Opportunistic Infections in HIV/AIDS** HIV attacks the cells of your body's immune system. You need a strong immune system to fight off germs like bacteria and viruses and to fight off many kinds of cancer. HIV may give those cancers or germs a better opportunity to make you sick by weakening your immune system. When germs take advantage of your weakened immune system, they are called opportunistic infections (OI).

**23<sup>rd</sup>-February 2023 Discussion Topic: Prevention Opportunistic infections (OIs)** are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in patients with HIV/AIDS. Although the incidence of OI has reduced since the introduction of highly active antiretroviral therapy (ART) Taking HIV medicine is the best way to prevent getting OIs. HIV medicine can keep your immune system strong and healthy. If you develop an OI, talk to your health care provider about how to treat it. The second of the quarter one February were discussed Prevention Opportunistic Infection of people living with HIV which selected by the ART Doctors to be participated by the PLHIV clients which is needed to get experience and advantage knowledge knowing that how to prevent the opportunistic infections while you in stage of HIV positive this session of Opportunistic infection **total participated is 60 PLHIV clients Female 44 and Male 16 participants.**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Discussion Topic: Dealing with stigma and discrimination** While stigma refers to an attitude or belief, discrimination is the behaviors that result from those attitudes or beliefs. HIV discrimination is the act of treating people living with HIV differently than those without HIV. 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. In march 2023 were discussing with topic of dealing with stigma and discrimination monthly meeting session in all 4 regions Bosaso, Gardo, Garowe, and Galkaio the aim was of knowing that how to deal with stigma and discrimination if you in status of people living with HIV although these days stigma discrimination is not too high then before during this **PLHIV S.G Monthly meeting the total participated 70 people of PLHIV clients female 53 and male 17 in all four regions.**

## **Objectives of the Support Group**

- ❖ HIV suppression with ART also decrease the inflammation caused by the immune activation associated with chronic HIV infection that contribute with an increased occurrence of cardiovascular,
- ❖ To optimize the programmatic impact of HIV treatment and promote efficiency gains
- ❖ Supports patient education through the different stages of drug adherence counselling is essential.
- ❖ A systematic approach is essential in promoting drug adherence in HIV patients.
- ❖ Support patients in making informed choice on HIV treatment according to individual needs.
- ❖ Assist patient in adopting drug adherence behaviour
- ❖ Enhance patient's ability in managing and maintaining the treatment
- ❖ to monitor the drug adherence level of patient
- ❖ to reinforce patient's drug adherence behaviour
- ❖ to access and manage the adverse effects of HAART
- ❖ Promoting adherence is especially important as these treatments become increasingly available and affordable for people living with HIV
- ❖ ART adherence including having an accurate measure of adherence
- ❖ RT adherence include assessment of the impact of adherence on viral load and clinical outcome,
- ❖ estimated PLHIV eligible for ARV have received ART, a small increase compare
- ❖ continuous increase in the absolute number of PLHIV who received ART, the percentage rate dropped.

- ❖ Explain the path physiology and risk factors of opportunistic infections.
- ❖ Describe the role of antiviral therapy, vaccinations and immunizations in the prevention of opportunistic infections.
- ❖ Outline the common opportunistic infections in HIV patients, risk factors for exposure and prophylactic antibiotics.

**The main objectives:** The main objective of treatment of HIV infection is to reduce the mortality and morbidity caused by the virus and associated conditions, increasing survival, improving the quality of life and preventing HIV transmission. HIV treatment involves the use of combined antiretroviral therapy (ART) to effectively suppress the viral load, preserve (or improve) immune function and reduce the risk of opportunistic infections and cancers commonly associated with HIV. The aim of a drug adherence counselling programme is to enhance adherence for maximising treatment outcome. This would achieve the target of improving individual health clinically and lowering, and also opportunistic infection and reduction with stigma and discrimination

- ✓ Promote peer support groups facilitated by trained PLHIV to address the special needs of fellow PLHIV and their partners.
- ✓ PLHIV Support Group Monthly Meeting purpose of sharing experiences, encouraging disclosure, reducing stigma and discrimination, improving self-esteem,
- ✓ Support groups are also considered an intervention in the management of mental health issues, including alcohol and other substance abuse disorders.
- ✓ The Mentor Mother support group model using mothers living with HIV is a key strategy and for keeping mothers alive.
- ✓ These are. However, these efforts are happening on a small scale and there is a need for the expansion of such efforts at the national scale.
- ✓ Support groups can be set up for many different reasons. Here are a few:
- ✓ 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, neighbors about the disease.
- ✓ To draw strength from other members experiences.
- ✓ To share information around treatment, care and healing.
- ✓ Employment opportunities for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) who are unemployed for various reasons.
- ✓ To educate people about antiretroviral medication and to encourage people to keep taking their medication.

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ PLHIV people should be empowered members with knowledge about HIV/AIDS and help them develop skills.
- ✓ To create networking opportunities in all regions in Puntland for those involved in the support group.
- ✓ To reduce isolation and discrimination while encouraging of developing skill development.

**Participation:** PLHIV Support Group Monthly Meeting Participation of people living with HIV arranged by ART doctors In the regions and selects plhiv clients had changed their lives of PLHIV S.G Monthly meeting and it helped **Meaningful participation** by PLHIV ensures that decisions are made by the people closest to the situation; that PLHIV have ownership over the group; and that PLHIV know the group's vitality is dependent upon their own *needs, interests and participation*.

**Confidentiality Area:** PLHIV S.G monthly meeting sessions held in once a monthly for each region group and held in a safe place or appropriate area and comfortable of the meeting and confidentiality which is agreed at the PLHIV Network Daryeel ISDP 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

**Quarterly Discussion Topics:** Quarter one 2023 discussion topics selected to discuss pre-planned of the quarterly work plan of the quarter before it started the quarter, the first month of January we discussed the advantage of ART Adherence session, the second month of February 2023, and based on according their situations issues which is required to be talked about it the ground based requirements of their needs and support and then we discuss and agree **Quarter One 2023 31 January we discussed ART adherenc, 23 february 2023 we also discussed Preventing OIs and HIV re-infection, the third month end of the quarter one 2023 we discussed 22<sup>nd</sup> March dealing with stigma and discrimination.**

**ART ADHERENCE:** drug adherence counselling is a four-stage approach that incorporates principles of learning theory, the daily living challenges of the patient and the complexity of medical and psychosocial factors specific to HIV practice. The four-stage approach, which is now a standard at the Integrated Treatment Centre, consists

of (a) General preparation, (b) Treatment initiation, (c) Consolidation; and (d) Maintenance. Drug adherence interventions integrate affective, behavioural, and cognitive strategies. Affective strategies are designed to optimise social and emotional support. Behavioural strategies are designed to shape, reinforce or influence behaviour. Cognitive interventions are designed to teach, clarify and provide treatment information

**Preventing OIs and HIV re-infection:** The best way to prevent OIs infections is by taking your HIV medicines. Other steps you can take to help prevent OIs

**#/gender of participants per session:** Number of participants per session should not exceed 20-25 members. PLHIV should be given a choice of joining all-male/ all-female groups or mixed gender groups. The participants of PLHIV S.G Monthly Meeting on this quarter one 2023 were total 205 participants which female were 153 and 52 male.

**Quarter one 2023 PLHIV Support Group Monthly Meeting detailed in total reached in Bossaso, GardoGarowe, Galkaio**

QUARTER One: PLHIV SUPPORT GROUP MONTHLY MEETING			
TOTAL REACHED BOTH FEMALE AND MALE IN ALL REGIONS			
MONTHLY	# Female	# Male	TOTAL
31 <sup>st</sup> - January-2023	56	19	75
23 <sup>rd</sup> – February -2023	44	16	60
19 <sup>th</sup> –March- 2023	53	17	70
<b>TOTAL REACHED</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>205</b>

**Arrangement Time**

Meetings are usually ones a month, depending on what group decided in its establishment of the monthly meeting. It is important to arrange a time that suits all members, and to respect one another’s time.

- ❖ Consulting with ART Doctors take a good role of preparation of the participants arrangement and appropriate time to make it happen of the meeting PLHIV S.G Monthly Meeting how long you will meet.
- ❖ Check back in every couple of months to make sure group members are still happy with the schedule. If there is difficulty, talk as a group to set a new time, place and duration of meetings.
- ❖ We prepare for the meeting when its agreed WHEN/ WHERE/TIME.
- ❖ If it seems the meeting will go over time, check first with the group to find out if they can stay later.
- ❖ Decide together to lengthen the meeting or stop on time and continue next time.
- ❖ If a session is interrupted, start it up again like this: Re-introduce the topic o Summarize what you covered already o Continue where you left off

**Sharing personal experiences:** PLHIV Support group monthly meeting increased a way of feeling confidentiality of Sharing personal experience is a wonderful way to provide correct information and everyone's condition of ARV adherence in order to develop and improve their life style and leave together properly in their a community leader if you can share your experiences during a community meeting.

**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:

**The facilitation team:** the 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.

**Conclusions:** Implementing support groups as an intervention is expected to have a high impact on morbidity and retention in care and a moderate impact of people living with HIV. Support groups improve disclosure with potential prevention benefits but the impact on ongoing transmission is uncertain. PLHIV support groups can potentially advance implementation monthly meeting while improving nutrition care and support, psychosocial wellbeing, and adherence to ART. Such a comprehensive approach does provide the much-needed support the clients Retention ARVs, people living HIV will get confidentiality to know each other and support each other and change the wrong cultural contexts in the society and between them. Changing stigma in a lasting way will require coordinated efforts, based on the best possible evidence, which are supported at the national level and planned and implemented by a representative coalition of stakeholders. Engaging a wide range of stakeholders would facilitate consensus building and provide the support needed to overcome major obstacles to the implementation of effective anti-stigma programs Best practices in choosing effective messages first require that a communications campaign develop well-defined goals for each specific group targeted. Effective messages can then be tailored to the specific target audience for the defined goals. Since adherence is good PLHIV clients taking properly the rate of opportunities infection is reduced