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**A Note to the IPCs on the theme of *Motivating our groups to visit a VCTC...Round 2***

**Ground Reality 1**

By now, we can safely assume that there is awareness among our groups about the following:

- It is important to get tested (the advantages of getting a blood test done)
- A blood test is the only way to know one's HIV status
- Where to go for a blood test (VCTC)

**Ground Reality 2**

However, the ground reality is also that VCTC numbers are not increasing.

In other words, our groups know about issues such as importance of blood test and the service of VCTC **mostly as pieces of general information**. However, **they do not see the relevance of this information vis a vis their own behaviour and their own lives**. Hence, they do not go to *Saadhan*.

**Given this background, the communication objectives are:**

- To address the barriers (fears) that stop people from going for a blood test.
- To motivate people to visit *Saadhan*.

**The focus of an IPC session should be on discussing the barriers (fears). This issue should get importance in every session.** Of course, the IPCs will have to provide information on *Saadhan*, but this kind of information-giving should not become the main part of the session.

**Flipchart developed by TRAMP on the theme of *Motivating our groups to visit a VCTC***

**About the flipchart entitled *Saadhan Hai Na! / Win Win both ways!***

The flipchart has 9 pages. And two cards.

The flipchart tells the story of a man named Amar who hesitates to go for a blood test even though he knows that he should get the test done because of his behaviour. There are two main barriers that prevent him (and many other people as well) from going for a blood test.

These barriers are:

- *I know I could be at risk – but I am looking so healthy and well – so why should I go now – if and when I see any signs and symptoms, I may go – but there is no need to think about such things now....*
- *I know I could be at risk – I am thinking of going for a blood test. But what if the blood test turns out to be positive. The very thought terrifies me, because having HIV means death for sure.*

Amar's story is the main focus of the flipchart. However, from time to time, the story-telling is interrupted. The IPC asks questions and makes the group members reflect on the same.

This strategy of interacting with the group while telling the story has been deliberately used. By making the group members talk about Amar and his fears, they get an opportunity to indirectly voice out their own fears. They get a chance to reflect on their own life situation and to decide for themselves what is in their best interest. In this way, we hope that they will not let their fears stop them from using a service that they know is of great benefit to them.

## **How to use the flipchart**

*Show Picture 1 and provide the following narration:*

### **Narration for Picture 1**

This is Amar and his wife Ranoo. They were married a year ago and live in a city. Amar works as an electrician. Ranoo takes on tailoring jobs to increase the family income. They are looking forward to having their first child.

*Turn to Picture 2 and give the following narration:*

### **Narration for Picture 2**

When Ranoo is five months pregnant, Amar takes her to her mother's house in the village. He wants Ranoo to get rest and be with her family.

*Turn to Picture 3 and give the following narration:*

### **Narration of Picture 3**

Without Ranoo, Amar feels lonely. He starts spending time in the bar with his friends. One evening, when he is rather drunk, Amar has sex with the bar girl. This is an encounter of unprotected sex.

### **Ask the group:**

Do you think that this sexual encounter could put Amar at risk of getting the HIV infection? Why do you think so?

The group is likely to respond that Amar could be at risk because he has had sex without using condoms.

Appreciate the response and make the following point:

Just one encounter of unprotected sex carries the risk of getting the HIV infection.

*Turn to Picture 4 and give the following narration:*

### **Narration for Picture 4**

Amar is also aware that unprotected sex carries the risk of HIV infection. And so he is worried. But, he tells himself that since this has happened only once, and since he is feeling healthy and well even one month after the encounter with the bar girl, there is really nothing to worry about. There is no need to go for a blood test right now. In the future, if he sees any signs and symptoms of illness, he may consider going for a blood test.

**Ask the group:**

Why does Amar feel there is no need to go for a blood test immediately?

The group is likely to say – Amar thinks that he is feeling healthy, that he has no signs and symptoms of illness, so there is no need to go right away for a blood test.

**Ask the group:**

Are there any signs and symptoms of HIV?

The group is likely to say – No, there are no signs and symptoms of HIV.

**Sum up this part of the discussion by making the following points:**

Although Amar looks healthy, he could have the HIV infection. This is because there are no signs and symptoms of HIV and hence even a healthy looking person can have the HIV infection. The only way to know whether a person has HIV or not, is by getting the blood test done.

**So, even though Amar looks healthy, he should immediately go for the blood test, because he has had unprotected sex.**

**(IPCs, please keep in mind: Do not** get into the details of the immune system and how HIV weakens the immune system. Just make the points mentioned above, very briefly).

**Ask the group:**

If Amar wanted to get a blood test done, where could he go?

*Allow the group to respond.*

*Then, show the Card that has the picture of the Saadhan Clinic on it. (On one side of this card, there is a picture of the static Saadhan Clinic, and on the other side, there is a picture of the mobile van. Show the side of the card that is relevant to your part).*

*Give the following narration.*

A person can get a blood test done at a government hospital. Or at PSI's Saadhan Clinic. The Saadhan Clinic is at...

**(IPCs, please keep in mind:** At this point, just give the location and address of the *Saadhan Clinic*. **Do not** give the timings, the days the Clinic is open, etc. This is to ensure that you do not get diverted into giving logistical details about the Clinic.)

**Now ask the group:**

In addition to getting a blood test done, is there any other benefit that Amar would get if he goes to *Saadhan Clinic*?

*Allow the group to respond.*

*Show the Card that has the picture of the counsellor and make the following points:*

Even before the blood test is done at *Saadhan*, Amar will meet a counsellor. A counsellor is a trained and caring person who will talk to Amar and clarify his doubts and concerns. The counsellor will also explain the procedure for the blood test and help Amar to be mentally prepared for the result of the blood test.

Amar will also be told that whatever he says to the counsellor will be kept totally confidential. Nobody can come to know what they discussed. What is more, the result of the test will be told only to him and not to anybody else, not even his wife.

The result of Amar's blood test could be either negative or positive. If the result is negative – that is, if Amar does not have the HIV infection, the counsellor would motivate and encourage Amar to use condoms for every sexual encounter so that he can continue to remain HIV negative.

*Turn to Picture 5 and give the following narration:*

Narration for Picture 5

But in our story, Amar does not go to the *Saadhan Clinic*. So, he still does not know whether he has or does not have the HIV infection. His worries continue....

Amar stays away from his friends and from the bar. One festival day, his friends come home and refuse to leave till Amar agrees to join them for some fun.

They even buy Amar's favorite liquor. That night, Amar has sex with another girl. This is also an encounter of unprotected sex.

*Turn to either Picture 6i (static Saadhan Clinic) or Picture 6ii (mobile Saadhan Clinic) as applicable to your port and give the following narration:*

Narration for Pictures 6i and 6ii

Now Amar is really worried. He knows that he could have increased his chance of getting HIV. Should he go to *Saadhan* and get the blood test done? But, what if the blood test turns out to be positive? What if he has got the HIV infection? The very thought terrifies him. He thinks having HIV means death for sure. All these fears stop him from going to *Saadhan*.

**Ask the group:**

We can understand that Amar is scared. We would all feel scared if we were in his place. But, do you think he is right in thinking that having HIV means death for sure?

*Allow the group to respond.*

*Show the Card that has the picture of the counsellor and make the following points:*

Even if Amar has the HIV infection, this does NOT mean death for sure.

This is exactly what the counsellor at *Saadhan* would explain to Amar. The counsellor will provide information and support on how Amar can take more care of his health, so that he can continue to earn to work and look after his family.

So, if Amar goes to *Saadhan*, he will be greatly reassured – that it is possible to lead a healthy, normal life even if a person has HIV.

*Now, turn to Picture 7 and give the following narration:*

Narration for Picture 7

Time goes by and Amar receives news that his wife has delivered a baby boy. He feels very happy.

But, the thought that he is now a father also increases his worry. He feels very guilty. In the few months that his wife was away, he has put his life at risk. If anything were to happen to him, what will his wife and child do?

He decides to get the blood test done. He gathers his courage and goes to *Saadhan*.

*Turn to Picture 8 and give the following narration:*

Narration for Picture 8

Amar has taken a very important step. A step that will safeguard not only his own health and life, but also the health and life of his wife.

Irrespective of the result, going to *Saadhan* will benefit Amar.

If Amar is HIV negative, that means if he does not have HIV, at *Saadhan*, he will get motivation and encouragement to remain HIV negative in future.

If Amar is HIV positive, that means if he has got HIV, at *Saadhan* he will be given hope and guidance as to what he should do to take care of his health so that he carry on with his normal life, continue to earn his livelihood and be able to take care of his family. He will also be come to know what he should do to prevent transmitting HIV to his wife.

***Show the last picture (Picture 9) and sum up the activity by making the following points:***

Finally, Amar overcame his fears and took the right step.

But there are many people who let their fears stop them from going for a blood test. These people know that they are at risk. They may even go right up to the door of *Saadhan Clinic* and come away without going inside. By not taking this important step, they put their health and their life at risk.

The service is there – the *Saadhan Clinic* is there – the counsellor is there – but each one of us will have to decide for ourselves, what we should do – whether we should keep living in fear, or take that important, courageous step of going to *Saadhan* and thus safeguarding our health and life and the health and life of our loved ones.

If you need any more information about *Saadhan* – where it is, what the timings are etc., please come to us. We will be around for some time.

The TRAMP Collective  
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