

## Suggested Open-Ended Questions

### Step 1. Introduction

- Why did you come to the clinic today?
- What would you like to know before you leave here today?
- What have you heard about AIDS?
- How do you think the virus is passed from one person to another?
- How did you decide to take the HIV test today?

### Step 2. Identify Client's Personal Risk Behavior(s) and Circumstances

- Risk Assessment Questions
- What makes you believe that you might be at risk for HIV?
  - What are you doing in your life that might be putting you at risk for HIV?
  - Tell me about the exposure incident that brought you to the clinic today (when was the last time you had unprotected sex? shared needles?)
  - If you were infected, how do you think you may have been infected?
  - Have you been tested before? If so, when and why? What were the results?
  - How many different people do you have sex with? How often?
  - What is your experience with shooting up drugs? How often do you do this?
  - When was the last time that you put yourself at risk for HIV?
  - What was happening then?
  - When do you have sex without a condom?
  - What are the riskiest things that you are doing?
  - What are the situations in which you are most likely to be putting yourself at risk for HIV?
  - How often do you use drugs or alcohol? How does this influence your HIV risk behaviors?

### Step 3. Identify Safer Goal Behaviors

Questions to Explore Client HIV Risk Reduction Attempts and Safer Goal Behaviors

- Is there a specific time that you remember where you were able to practice safer sex (use needles safely)? What did you do? What made it possible for you to do it?
- How was that for you?
- What are you presently doing to protect yourself?
- What would you like to do to reduce your risk of HIV?

Statements Reinforcing Positive Change Already Made

- It's great that you are here!
- You've taken the first step; you're doing a great job; keep it up!
- The fact that you are concerned about HIV is important.
- It is important that you recognize that you've really been thinking about reducing your HIV risk.
- Look at how much you've already done to protect yourself (be specific).

### Step 4. Develop a Personalized Action Plan

Questions to Explore Client HIV Risk Reduction Attempts and Questions to Explore Personal Barriers and Benefits to Adopting Safer Behaviors

- Is there a specific time that you remember when you were able to practice safer sex (use needles safely)? What did you do? What made it possible for you? How was that for you?
- What are you presently doing to protect yourself?
- What would you like to do to reduce your risk of HIV?
- What do you see as advantages or good things about adopting \_\_\_\_\_ (the safer behavior)?
- What do you see as disadvantages or bad things about adopting \_\_\_\_\_ (the safer behavior)?
- What makes it easy (what situations make it easier for you) to \_\_\_\_\_ (the safer behavior)?
- What makes it difficult (what situations make it difficult for you) \_\_\_\_\_ (the safer behavior)?
- Who (individuals or groups) would approve or support you in adopting \_\_\_\_\_ (the safer behavior)?

Who (individuals or groups) would disapprove or object to you adopting \_\_\_\_\_ (the safer behavior)?

Questions to Use When  
Assisting the Client to  
Develop a Personal Risk  
Reduction Plan

- What one thing can you do to reduce your risk right now?
- What can you do that would work for you?
- What could you do differently?
- How would your sexual practices (drug use practices) have to change for you to stay safe?
- Now that you have identified some steps you could take, how can you go about making this happen?
- What could you do to make it easier to take these steps?
- Who would help to support you in taking these steps?
- When do you think you will have the opportunity to first try this (behavior, discussion, etc.)?
- How realistic is this plan for you?
- What will be the most difficult part of this for you?
- Who can help you?
- What might be good about changing this?
- What will you need to do differently?
- How will things be better for you if you . . . ?

Suggested Statements  
Supporting and Reinforcing  
the Client

- You have really done something good for yourself in putting this plan into place.
- You've taken very positive steps today to help meet some important personal goals.

**Step 5. Make Referrals and Provide Support**

- We've talked about a lot of issues today. Which of the things we've talked about would you like more help with?
- Would you like to talk with an individual counselor about . . . (issue that has been raised)?
- Would you be interested in a support group?
- Is there a particular kind of support or service that you would be willing to consider?

**Step 6. Summarize and Close Session**