



Teacher's Introduction to Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Modules

This sample set of five educational modules contains information and educational activities to introduce adolescents (and in special cases, early adolescents) to knowledge and skills related to Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) for HIV/AIDS. It is an example only – drawn from existing information and materials – and is intended to be adapted for use in various contexts or settings.

The sequential modules are designed to help teachers and others working with adolescents to refresh knowledge and information about HIV/AIDS, and to explain more about Voluntary Counselling and Testing. It is assumed that the adolescents have previously received comprehensive HIV/AIDS education.

This resource may be adapted and used within the formal school system, as well as in non-formal educational settings such as extracurricular schools groups, youth groups, AIDS clubs, church groups, community centres, etc.

As the HIV/AIDS pandemic advances, it is increasingly important that services – including Voluntary Counselling and Testing, STI and other medical care, and social, economic and psychological support – are provided along with information and education about HIV/AIDS.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing is an important tool for preventing the spread of HIV – especially in communities with generalised epidemics. It allows adolescents to know their own status and to evaluate their behaviour and its consequences. A negative test result offers a key opportunity to reinforce the importance of safe and risk-reducing behaviours. A positive test result should allow adolescents to receive referrals for counselling, care and support, including opportunities to talk to knowledgeable people who can help them understand what their HIV status means and what responsibilities they have to themselves and others as a result. Despite the importance of VCT, in many countries the majority of young people do not know where they can be tested for HIV – even in countries where services exist.

Challenges to providing high-quality Voluntary Counselling and Testing for adolescents include: the lack of education about VCT among adolescents; low motivation to use VCT services; ethical considerations such as the need to protect adolescents from discrimination; the lack of service availability in resource poor settings; and the lack of youth-friendly health services.

Effective HIV/AIDS education combined with service provision - including VCT - for adolescents can instil them with an accurate understanding of HIV/AIDS, positive values and healthy attitudes toward their own health, and skills to protect themselves and others from the spread of HIV.