

Choices in Family Planning

Next Steps Guide

Next Steps

Preliminary Considerations and Planning Steps

- Review the outcomes of your preliminary assessment.
- Rank the challenges/considerations in priority order. Consider which pose the greatest barriers to informed and voluntary decision making, as well as which provide the best opportunities for improvement.
- Consider the time required for possible interventions.
- Identify short-term objectives and long-term strategies (see “Criteria for Next Steps and Strategies,” below).
- For the short-term objectives:
 - ▼ Formulate specific objectives to be achieved within the next six months to strengthen informed and voluntary decision making in your program. Target interventions to each of the five essential elements, and address the challenges/considerations that have been identified at the individual/community, service-delivery, and policy levels. Identify existing resources, and select activities that can be conducted with these resources.
 - ▼ Identify who should conduct the proposed activity, and define roles and responsibilities.
 - ▼ Identify any collaborators to involve.
 - ▼ Set a target date for completion of the objective.
 - ▼ Identify performance indicators for each objective to enable you to monitor progress and recognize success.
- Identify up to three long-term strategies to strengthen informed and voluntary decision making in your program, assuming you had more time and resources.

Criteria for Next Steps and Strategies

- Make the objectives “SMART”: specific; measurable; appropriate to the process and end goals; realistic, incremental steps along the road toward the goals; and time bound. Avoid broad goals like “Increase. . .” and “Improve. . .” unless they are expressed in concrete, measurable terms.
- Identify objectives and strategies that are not already part of an existing plan so that they will add value to the program that is already in place.
- Ask yourself:
 - ▼ Can the objectives and strategies be achieved?
 - ▼ Do the objectives and strategies reflect interventions at the individual/community, service-delivery, and policy levels?
 - ▼ Have any new collaborators not currently involved in SRH or in decision making related to services been identified?

Developing an Action Plan

Complete the following charts, element by element, to record your action plan for short-term objectives and long-term strategies. (The charts are provided as samples; you will probably want to duplicate the format on flipchart paper.) When all the charts are completed, consolidate them into a single informed choice action plan.

1. Service Options Are Available.

What to strive for

- Family planning (FP) services are available where and when individuals need them.
- A choice of methods is offered.
- Options are affordable.
- Referral mechanisms are in place for other methods.
- Linkages exist with other health services.

Next Steps

Objective	By Whom?	By When?	Collaborators	Performance Indicators



Long-Term Strategies

1.

2.

3.

2. The Decision-Making Process Is Voluntary.

What to strive for

- Individuals are free to decide whether or not to use services, without coercion or constraint.
- Clients are free to choose among available methods, without coercion or constraint.
- A range of service options is accessible to all categories of clients, including adolescents and unmarried individuals.
- Service providers are objective regarding all clients and methods.
- The individual’s right to choose is respected and supported.

Next Steps

Objective	By Whom?	By When?	Collaborators	Performance Indicators



Long-Term Strategies

1.

2.

3.

3. Individuals Have Appropriate Information.

What to strive for

- Individuals have access to appropriate and accurate information about services and options.
- Individuals understand their risk for STI/HIV/AIDS and the protection that FP method options provide.
- Service providers assess clients' knowledge, fill any gaps, and correct any misinformation.
- Comprehensible posters and flipcharts are clearly in clients' view.
- Samples of FP methods are available for clients to see and touch.
- Clients understand their options, the essential information about their chosen method or treatment (including benefits and risks, conditions that would render it inadvisable for use, and common side effects),* and the way their choice may affect their personal circumstances.

* Tiahrt Amendment, 1998.

Next Steps

Objective	By Whom?	By When?	Collaborators	Performance Indicators



Long-Term Strategies

1.

2.

3.

4. Good Client-Provider Interaction (CPI), Including Counseling, Is Ensured.

What to strive for

- Clients and service providers have dynamic, two-way interaction.
- Clients actively participate in discussions and are encouraged to ask questions.
- Staff have good communication skills (talking, listening, eliciting, probing, assessing).
- Counseling staff provide individualized care, tailoring the client-provider interaction (CPI) and information to what clients want and need, and addressing individual circumstances and concerns.
- All staff use language and terms that clients can understand.
- Counseling staff have complete and correct information about SRH and available services.
- Staff answer clients' questions fully and clearly.
- All staff are empathetic, respectful, nonjudgmental, and sensitive to power imbalances and gender differences between clients and providers.
- All staff maintain clients' privacy and confidentiality.
- Trained staff are assigned to counsel clients as a routine component of service delivery.
- Counseling serves as the checkpoint to ensure informed and voluntary decision making.
- Memory aids are used by staff and provided to clients.
- The service setting is organized, clean, and cheerful to put clients at ease.
- Auditory and visual privacy are ensured for counseling, regardless of the setting.
- Adequate seating is available during counseling for counselors, clients, and anyone else the clients choose.



Next Steps

Objective	By Whom?	By When?	Collaborators	Performance Indicators



Long-Term Strategies

1.

2.

3.

5. The Social and Rights Context Supports Autonomous Decision Making.

What to strive for

- Laws, policies, and social norms support the following:
 - ▼ Gender equity
 - ▼ Individuals' rights to decide whether and when to have children, and how many*
 - ▼ Clients' right to access SRH information and services regardless of age, sex, marital status, or sexual orientation*
 - ▼ Clients' right to make decisions and to exercise control over their sexuality and reproduction free of discrimination, coercion, and violence
 - ▼ Clients' right to protect their health and prevent disease
 - ▼ Clients' right to privacy, confidentiality, dignity, and safety

* ICPD Programme of Action, 1994.

Next Steps

Objective	By Whom?	By When?	Collaborators	Performance Indicators



Long-Term Strategies

1.

2.

3.