Module 1: Introduction to Partner Notification Services

Activity 1-X: Addressing Fears and Concerns

Learning Exercise

Time: 20 minutes

The purpose of this activity is to allow learners the opportunity to voice their fears and concerns about PNS, to address misperceptions about PNS, and to identify solutions and opportunities that PNS provides. During the activity, pay particular attention to learners that appear particularly fearful or skeptical about PNS, and take note of learners who seem more open to identifying solutions and benefits so that you can call on them to be positive change agents during other activities.

*Instructions:*

* Evenly split the group into 3 smaller groups: one ***provider*** group, another ***index client*** group, and a final ***partner*** group. Aim to have 6-8 people in each group, no more than 10.
* Distribute a ¼ sheet of paper and a writing utensil to each person.
* Instruct each person in the ***provider*** group to anonymously write a fear or a concern that a provider might have about providing PNS.
* Instruct each person in the ***index client*** group to anonymously write a fear or concern that an index client might have about accepting PNS and having their partners notified about their risk of exposure to HIV.
* Instruct each person in the ***partner*** group to anonymously write a fear or concern that partners might have about being notified of their potential exposure to HIV.
* Tell them to be as specific and as honest as possible, but not in such a way that they could be easily identified.
* After everyone has written one fear/concern, collect each fear/concern from the provider group into a hat, basket, or bowl; then from the ***index client*** group; and finally from the ***partner*** group. Keep each group’s papers in a separate hat, basket, or bowl.

*Small Group Facilitation:*

* Shuffle the sheets of paper and pass out one per person; note that they may end up with someone else’s paper or their own paper. If they end up with their own paper, they should not tell the group, but rather go on with the exercise since the activity is anonymous.
* Ask the participants to take turns reading aloud the fear or concern that is on their paper. After they have read the fear or concern aloud, they should attempt to explain what the person who wrote the fear means. They should not give their opinion about whether the person is right or wrong to have this fear, but simply explain what the reader has said.
* After each fear or concern is read and explained, then ask another learner to respond to that fear with a solution or opportunity. Note that the purpose is not to tell the person their fear is wrong or right, but to validate the concern and use solution-focused language to address that concern.
* Once a fear or concern has been validated and addressed, then go on to the next fear or concern.
* Allow 1-2 minutes for each person to read and explain what is on their sheet of paper, and another 1-2 minutes for validating and addressing that concern.

*Large Group Discussion:*

* After all the fears/concerns have been read and validated/addressed, come back together as a large group. Ask each group to share one or two fears or concerns and how these were addressed within their group.
* Facilitate a group discussion about fears and concerns for 5 minutes. Be sure to validate and address any lingering fears or concerns that exist among the learners.
* Ensure learners that the purpose of the training is to build their skills and confidence to appropriately provide PNS, and that by the end of their training it is likely that their fears or concerns will have been addressed.
* Revisit fears or concerns about PNS when closing out the training.

*Alternative Facilitation:*

* Rather than splitting the group into 3 smaller groups, if you only have one facilitator it might be easier to keep the group together in one large group.
* Put three newsprints on the front wall – one labeled ***provider,*** one labeled ***index client,*** and another labeled ***partner.***
* Hand out 3-5 post-it notes to each participant and ask them to identify one fear or concern that each group might have about PNS.
* Once they are done writing their fears or concerns, they should come up and place the post-it note in the corresponding category.
* Ask them to stay standing at the front of the room once they have placed their post-it notes.
* Once the entire group has placed their post-it notes on the newsprint, ask for a volunteer to read the fears/concerns aloud, starting with the concerns of the provider.
* Read a selection of provider fears/concerns, then ask participants to select one fear/concern to validate and address.
* What solution-focused language would they use to validate and address that concern? How would they identify the opportunity in PNS to address the concern?
* Read and address as many fears or concerns as you have time for, before moving on to the next category (index client). Process in the same way, then move on to the final category (partner).
* After you have read and addressed fears/concerns from each of the three categories, ask participants to return to their seats and facilitate a large group discussion.
* Ask participants if the exercise was helpful for realizing that many people share similar fears that they do. Ask participants if they found it useful to think about how to validate the fears/concerns, and also use solution-focused language to address the concerns.