

# A BRIEF GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS



Partnership for Health - Medication Adherence has a seven-step approach for conducting a brief medication adherence counseling intervention with people with HIV, to be integrated within each clinic visit during routine medical care. Adoption of this intervention as a standard of care helps establish a partnership with patients to increase their knowledge, self-efficacy, and behaviors associated with adherence to antiretroviral treatment (ART).

## STEP 1:

### Establish trust and communication



The first step begins immediately upon greeting the patient, continues throughout the visit, and builds over time as the provider and patient have subsequent visits and interactions.

#### This step includes:

- Ensure confidentiality
- Maintain a nonjudgmental attitude
- Promote mutual respect
- Rely on clear and appropriate communication of information
- Employ active listening techniques:
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - Reflect
  - Restate
  - Redirect
  - Affirm
  - Nonverbal communication

The *Ways to Build Trust* resource provides additional guidance for employing active listening techniques.

## STEP 2:

### Emphasize the importance of adherence



Introduce the adherence conversation by connecting the patient's current health status with adherence to treatment medication(s).

- Review current health status (e.g., current or previous opportunistic infections, lab results)
- Discuss expectations of treatment, including achieving and maintaining viral suppression

**STEP 3:****Discuss the treatment plan and address any questions**

This step can help reveal concerns or questions the patient may have about how and when they take their medication(s).

- Reiterate information about the medication(s)
- Stress importance of a pill schedule
- Clarify dosing instructions (i.e., when to take and instructions on food and fluid intake)
- Discuss plans for storing medications

**Questions to ask include:**

“What medication(s) are you currently taking?”

“How are you taking your medication(s)?”

**STEP 4:****Ask specific questions about the patient’s adherence and identify concerns or barriers**

This step is about prompting the patient to think about related factors that may be creating barriers to maintaining adherence.

**Questions to ask include:**

“How many doses have you missed in the last 2 weeks?”

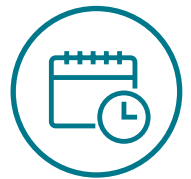
“What seems to get in the way of you taking your medicine?”

“What was going on when you missed a dose this past week?”

“When are you most successful at taking your medicine according to plan?”

**STEP 5:****Problem-solve barriers, identify strategies, and set a behavioral goal to improve adherence**

- Refer to an adherence strategies brochure to identify a strategy for overcoming barrier(s)
- Help recognize behavioral cues or routines linked to the ART regimen that do or do not support adherence
- Make a direct referral for the patient to see the adherence counselor and/or pharmacist for additional support and counseling

**STEP 6:****Create a tailored medication schedule that establishes behavioral cues and routines**

- Use the medication schedule to record the patient’s regimen, identified solutions, behavioral cues or routines
- Review the schedule and make adjustments as necessary during subsequent visits
- Maintain a copy of the schedule in the patient’s record

**STEP 7:****Motivate the patient to commit to an adherence goal**

- Encourage the patient to identify a goal that supports adherence to ART
- Help identify personal support for achieving the adherence goal

**FOLLOW-UP**

During each routine visit, repeat or adapt the seven steps to:

- ✓ Make adjustments to previously established adherence goals as needed;
- ✓ Reinforce the importance of adherence; and
- ✓ Establish new goals with the patient as appropriate.