



Module 1: The Role of an HIV Test Counsellor



Allow 40 minutes if presenting this module as part of a full day training

This module is an introduction to the job of HIV test counselling. It makes many references to other modules that come later in the training. Reassure trainees that they can return to this material as they need, and make sure they get the introductory trainee handout for this session and that they have the link to the training slides at <https://hivtestingontario.ca/poc/counsellor-training/>. If you prefer, you can also download all of the handouts as a package to print and distribute to trainees, however it may be easier to use these documents on the training site, so that they can follow the links offered more easily.

The Training Slides (40 minutes)

Present the slide deck (HIV_Counselling_Role.pptx) to your trainee group, or have an individual trainee read and review it. If you are presenting the slides, points to consider while presenting are available in the notes section of the slides.

Follow-up Discussion with Trainees

Talk with the trainee about how you will structure the training at your site. In addition to the training modules, most sites have trainees shadow existing counselling staff, role play counselling with colleagues or volunteers and practice blood drawing and testing before they meet with clients. Often sites ensure that a more experienced person is working near-by and accessible to the trainee, when they first start counselling and testing clients. The Ministry recommends that a person has read at least 25 tests before they work alone. (If volumes and staffing needs demand, this requirement can be partially met using the interpretation quiz included in the module on Performing the INSTI HIV test)

If you did not present this module to a group of trainees, take time to talk to the trainees about what they have just learned and to answer questions about anything they did not understand. This kind of conversation is recommended after every module, when trainees are reviewing the slides alone. Make sure to invite questions, and ensure that they know and understand the following:

- Your site is committed to the ARCCH principles; they are not just theory; they are part of the work of every employee.
- The kind of clients your site typically sees, and the priority populations they come from. If you have specific resources about counselling these groups or about local agencies that support this population, share these with the trainees.
- Talk about the local agencies your counsellors typically refer clients to, and let the trainee know where they can find information about these client resources. Give trainees information about where people can be referred for PEP and PrEP in your area, and how you refer people to HIV care.
- Review how client records are stored and confidentiality is protected at your site



Testing Knowledge (5 minutes)

A brief quiz is available for this content, both as a PDF for individual training and in a Powerpoint format for group review.

Quiz Answers

1 c)	5 b)	9 d) [all]
2 d)	6 b)	10. a)
3 f)	7 e) [all]	
4 f) [both a) and d)]	8 f)	

Interactive Learning - Shadowing

The best approach to interactive learning for this material is to have a trainee shadow a more experienced counsellor. At most sites, a new counsellor will do this sort of shadowing for two days, ideally seeing at least 6-10 testing interactions. **Clients must always be asked prior to an appointment if they are willing to have their appointment observed by a trainee.**

Encourage the trainees to observe not just the process of testing, but also the way a counsellor interacts with a client and asks questions around their needs and behaviours. Encourage the experienced counsellors being observed to sit with the trainee after each testing appointment to talk about how the appointment went, the choices they made in asking questions, and about any conversation that the trainee did not understand.

Visiting another site

If testing volumes at your site mean that the trainee will not see multiple testing interactions over the span of two days, arrangements can be made to shadow counsellors at another testing site. Contact the AIDS and Hepatitis C Program at the Ministry (email: POCT@ontario.ca) Remember that the responsibility to train counsellors remains at the site where they will work. You are not sending them to another site for training, only to observe a higher volume of tests being performed.