

5.2 HIV Positive Test Result – Post Test Discussion Standard Lab Testing Format

When a standard HIV lab test is positive it is essential to provide clients with post-test information and follow-up. In the event that the testing provider or facility is unable to provide the required post test follow-up processes, the pre-test discussion includes establishing a plan with the client about the general nature of follow-up and how it will occur.

Receiving a diagnosis of HIV is complex and life changing. It is important that the person providing the test result understands that delivering the result is part of a larger process, which also involves establishing follow-up planning for the client.

Key Elements of Providing a Positive HIV Test Result (see also appendix 3)

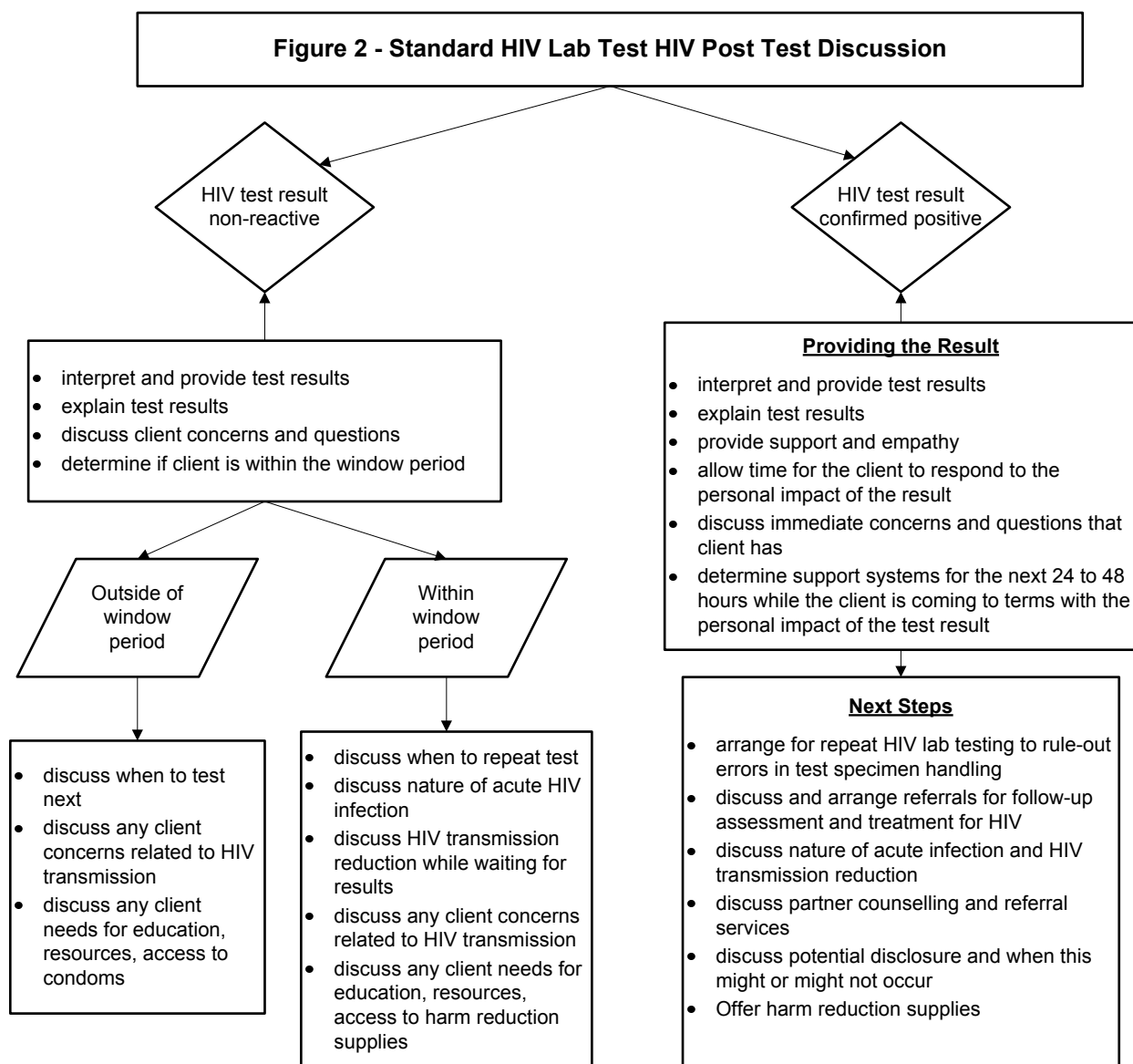
The key elements to providing a positive HIV test result are:

- being prepared before conveying the result
- having time available to spend with the client to provide support following delivery of the result
- knowing the resources and referrals available for clients with a positive test
- being compassionate, direct, and honest when delivering the HIV result
- providing time for the client to process the result before launching into next steps
- understanding that each person will react differently to being told he or she has a positive HIV test and has HIV infection
- emphasizing the chronic nature of HIV and the treatments and supports that are available
- determining sources of emotional support
- developing a follow-up plan including:
 - availability of partner counseling & referral services
 - referrals to medical follow-up
 - referrals or written materials about available community resources
 - information about HIV infection and ways of reducing forward transmission of the virus to others
 - arranging for a repeat standard HIV blood test
 - making an appointment for a follow-up visit as needed
- documenting the discussion and follow-up plan

5.2 HIV Positive Test Result – Post Test Discussion Standard Lab Testing Format continued

When the standard HIV lab test is positive (see figure 2), the post-test discussion includes:

1. Informing the client in a simple and straight-forward manner that the test is a confirmed reactive or positive HIV result. The test has detected antibodies to HIV and the person is infected with HIV
2. Providing the client time to consider the result
3. Ensuring that the client understands the result
4. Determining the impact of the result on the client
5. Inviting the client to ask questions
6. Providing support and empathy for emotions that the client might have in response to the test result
7. Determining support systems for the next 24 to 48 hours while client is coming to terms with the personal impact of the result
8. Discussing immediate concerns that the client may have such as partners, families, impact of results, and disclosure of results
9. Describing follow-up services available including treatment, care, counselling, and other community-based services
10. Discussing partner counseling and referral services
11. Discussing client options for disclosure of result, when this might occur and to whom for example, partners, contacts, other health care providers, and discuss when disclosure may not need to occur
12. Discussing the nature of acute HIV infection and the increased ability to transmit the virus during this phase of HIV infection
13. Discussing ways to prevent forward transmission of HIV
14. Offer or arrange for access to harm reduction supplies
15. Discuss potential legal requirements for disclosure when participating in activities that may transmit the virus to another person
16. Arranging for a second blood test to rule-out rare errors that might occur in the testing process
17. Arranging for follow-up visits or referrals for treatment, care, counselling, and other community-based supports
18. As per agency or regulatory body requirements, documenting the discussion in client record



9.0 APPENDIX 3 – WORKING WITH CLIENTS WHEN THE HIV TEST RESULT IS POSITIVE

The following guides are examples of how health care providers may lead discussions with clients when providing a positive HIV result for a standard HIV test:

1. State the test result in a direct manner with a neutral tone
 - “Your HIV test result is positive, this means that you have been infected with HIV”
 - “your HIV test result is positive. What this means is that at some point you were exposed to HIV and you have an HIV infection”
2. Address client concerns & sources of emotional support
 - “what is on your mind right now?”
 - “who could be supportive of you as you are dealing with this?”
 - “it is important to take care of yourself emotionally now, how have you handled stressful situations in the past?”
3. Make a short term plan
 - “what will you do after you leave here? Who will you talk to about this news?”
 - “knowing that you have HIV, who else are you are concerned about”
 - “is there something that you will need to change or do differently now that you have HIV”
4. Make a follow-up plan
 - “We have talked about a lot today. What do you think will be most the important for you to deal with first?”
 - “Before we make a follow-up appointment, what other questions do you have for me today?”
 - “You may think of questions or have concerns after you leave here today. If you have questions you may contact me tomorrow to talk about it further”